**COUNCIL MINUTES: Sunday, September. 20, 2020, 1:00pm via Zoom**

Present: Vanessa Deutschmann, Dale Fixsen, Vicki Jenkins-Long, Ken Katzen, Ellen King, Kathy Marshall, Claire Matheny, and Anne Yenchko

Absent: None

Guests: Annora Bailey, Don Benson, Normale Doyle, Ellen Leiserson, Don Link, Bonnie Orrison, and Sandy Queen

Taking Minutes: Kathy Marshall

**AGENDA**

Vanessa led us in prayer.

Ellen welcomed and thanked the guests for attending.

Vicki provided the jest.

**Affirmations**:

Claire commended Michael Cleveland and Don Benson for all their work preparing for the major Tech Team upgrade of KC's audio-visual equipment. Ellen thanked Building & Grounds for keeping up with the building repairs and maintenance, despite not having community Barn Work Days. And Vicki expressed her gratitude for this month's Worship Task Group, and the music providers for always finding a way for the worship music to match the mood of the service—she finds it very uplifting.

**Minutes**:

There being no corrections,

**MOTION was made and approved to accept the Council Minutes for August 23, 2020; and**

**MOTION was made and approved to accept the Community Meeting Minutes for August 30, 2020.**

**COVID-19**

**Tech Team/Re-Entry Team:**

Don reported that the Wi-Fi extenders are working well and that all the equipment for them is now in the third stall on the first floor and there is no longer a router in the church office. Michael will soon order and set up the balance of the equipment that is necessary, but this project is taking longer than was projected.

Sandy and Don discussed the new Maryland guidelines for occupancy, raising the limit to 100 in an indoor space. The downstairs will still be limited to 25, but the upstairs will need measured and plotted to determine if the room is able to accommodate more than the current 50-person limit. Sandy keeps in touch with wedding rental industry informational presentations online, and reported that the industry feels if the contract for the space specifically states the limits and rules for occupancy for a renter's event, it is felt the venue would not incur liability. Normale pointed out the frequency of liability lawsuits. Despite the suitable language coverage, entities are often sued out of greed.

Vanessa asked about the airflow in the building, since airflow is a major concern regarding the spread of COVID-19. Don has already done some research and noted that circulation problems are often an issue in older buildings. Allan noted that our current air handlers do not have HEPA filters. He will discuss with B&G and report back to Council. Dale reminded Council that there are also ceiling fans already installed upstairs in addition to the air handling system. He encouraged KC to do the right thing in this situation for our worshippers' health and safety, and not be completely ruled by any possible legal ramifications.

Vicki asked about post-event sanitation procedures after Saturday events held in the building. The virus is said to die after 48 to 60 hours. Don said there have been 3 instances of COVID-19 cleanings performed on the Monday after Saturday events. Kaleb Afework did 2 of them, and he now has school work to schedule so may not be readily available. Pioneer Cleaning did the other one, but they are closed on Monday when we would need them. Don will talk with Pioneer about a possible Monday cleaning after the 2 rental events scheduled for October 10. Sandy knows someone to ask to do the cleaning and sanitizing for a Sunday and will report back if that person is interested.

Discussion about allowing meetings in downstairs room. Scheduling, cleaning, and sanitizing remain outstanding issues. It was agreed to continue this discussion at October's Council meeting, along with consideration of how far past October 31 the building will remain closed.

While the weather still permits, the WLT Re-Entry Team would like to plan an inside Zoom worship service on Sunday, October 18 for 25 attendees in the downstairs room with the doors open and fans blowing. Theresa Gale will donate a large TV and assist with the laptop connection that will allow the audience to see and hear well. Allan will research the possibilities for healthy airflow in the downstairs room. Don noted that as the project status is currently behind schedule, it is not likely that the Tech Team will complete installations for upstairs worship by the October 31 deadline.

Further discussion continued about how and when Council will have information adequate to make decisions for October. Possibly another meeting will be needed, or the communication may be done by email.

**MOTION was made and approved to have the Worship Leadership Team plan and prepare for in-person worship services on Sunday, October 18, 25, and November 1, using the downstairs middle room, a large screen tv, and a laptop, with doors open and air circulation maximized.**

The Rental Team will see that any additional rentals booked will only use the side door by the elevator entrance, and the renters will be restricted to usage of the upstairs room and restrooms, in order to keep usage by the worship service attendees completely separate in their downstairs entrance and restroom.

Discussion about the Reynolds Recital scheduled for November. Again the scheduling, cleaning, and sanitizing remain outstanding issues. Issue to be addressed at next Council meeting or sooner if necessary, via Zoom and/or email.

Now that KC has good strong Wi-Fi capability, Don B will post signs indicating that KC is a “hotspot” for computer use by our surrounding neighbors. It was suggested that some local advertising be done, and Don and Ken volunteered to put an announcement in the Town Center neighborhood newsletter, and in the Columbia Patch online news outlet.

**Leadership Teams**

**Building & Grounds Leadership Team:**

Allan reviewed the topics listed in his report:

The B&G Leadership Team will hold their third Mini Barn Work Day on October 17, as regular Barn Work Days cannot be held during the pandemic. These work days are limited to BGLT members only, in order to allow for social distancing. Anyone else who is interested in participating should contact Allan beforehand.

The Capital Needs Assessment prepared by John Brandenburg and Dale Fixsen will be presented to the Finance Leadership Team for discussion. BGLT proposes to increase the monthly budgeted amount for Capital Projects from $1000 to $1300.

The estimate for the Smoke and Fire Alarm project is such that BGLT will contact Howard County to request that the project be allowed to be accomplished in multiple year phases. Allan noted that KC currently meets all the fire and safety requirements for an older building, as grandfathered in by Howard County. KC has always passed their inspections.

A proposal under consideration is to refresh the downstairs restrooms and meditation room with new paint and flooring, and to investigate converting the downstairs bathrooms into one that is ADA compliant.

Don L indicated that the goal of refurbishing the downstairs bathrooms is very different and much less costly than the proposal to make the bathroom ADA compliant. Discussion on the impact of construction requirements of the ADA compliance. B&G will await Council's decision on whether to go forward or not.

**Community Life Leadership Team:**

There are quite a few good things happening right now in KC's community life, just not under the formal banner of this Leadership Team. They plan to re-convene sometime soon.

**Finance Leadership Team:**

Dale shared and reviewed briefly the Treasurer’s Summary as of August 31. Pledges and offerings are up for now so the KC financial picture still looks good, despite the loss of so much rental income due to COVID-19. The Howard Community College Endowment Scholarship Fund has reached $28,000, and for the first time a scholarship can be awarded this semester in KC’s name. Outreach will meet in October for the second quarter disbursements. Funds are being held for the major tech purchases. Budget projection aims to end 2020 with a minimal net loss, if any.

Funds are still being held for the labyrinth installation. Don B announced that the installation is now tentatively scheduled to begin October 19, since Connecticut and New Jersey have removed Maryland from the list of states from which a time of quarantine is required for the workers to return home.

FLT is checking to see if any other KC legal documents require changes. Thanks to Theresa Gale for agreeing to be the new Resident Agent of record for the State of Maryland.

Don Link shared his various new budget projections as of August. The donations have trended upwards but it cannot be assumed that this will last. Some pledges have been overpaid, and offering has been twice the usual amount for this time of year. He is hopeful these trends continue and will prepare an update for next month.

**Human Resources Leadership Team:**

Anne reported the team met September 17 and brought two items from the report to Council's attention. Item 1 is a possible change in how Amy is paid. Bonnie O from FLT noted that since the pandemic crisis, Amy has successfully taken on additional duties and hours. As Office Administrator during this time, Council approved paying her the full amount budgeted regardless of the number of hours reported. Since HR has regularly approved “time off” with pay, e.g. jury duty, vacation, and sick time, HR is considering whether we should treat the position as Employee with pay distributed for hours worked vs. as Employee with salary paid. Anne will discuss with Amy and a decision will be made in consultation with FLT and HRLT.

Item 2. Pinkerton has informed KC that they will no longer be conducting background checks. HR will rely on CJIS/FBI fingerprinting services for the interim while they check into another company which Pinkerton has recommended for background checks.

**Spiritual Enrichment Leadership Team:**

Vanessa has no formal report, as they have not met for awhile, but spiritual enrichment continues to be experienced. In related matters, Claire reported the following:

--Out of the Visioning Team came the suggestion for a book discussion on Brian McLaren's The Great Spiritual Migration. Four sessions have been planned.

--Annora Bailey is continuing a book discussion on anti-racism. The participants in the Stamped sessions will select their next book out of the long list of good materials that has been collected as they studied together.

Ken Katzen of the VD&I subgroup submitted a report, and noted the overlap between the various teams actively promoting spiritual enrichment themes. Post-COVID-19, VD&I will re-start the relational interviews project. Other research is being done to attempt to discover some of the names of the enslaved people who lived and worked on the KC property.

**Worship Leadership Team:**

Theresa submitted a report, and Claire segued into her EM report.

**Enabling Minister’s Report:**

Claire highlighted some issues from the report she submitted. An in-person worship service is being planned for Sunday, September 27 in the Sacred Garden at 4:00 pm, honoring all the safety and sanitation precautions. Prior to the worship service, there will be an interment of the ashes of John Hamilton's parents at 3:00. There will be another interment of ashes, Sherrie Nolan's, the day before (9/26) at 1:00 pm.

A Caller's Meeting has been planned. Also the Retreat Committee plans to engage with the Callers and CARE groups as they work on the procedures for the annual retreat and commitment in these very constrained times. A church-wide mailing is a possibility, hoping to give people a sense of connection. The appropriate paperwork will be able to be delivered to the church mail slot in person, or electronically. There is hope for an online retreat experience on Saturday, November 14, and perhaps an eating-together Zoom activity to mimic the retreat dinner experience, again attempting to re-create the in-person connectivity KC has been able to experience in past years. Commitment Sunday will be Sunday, November 15, post-election this year.

Claire met recently with HR, and shared with them how things are going and flowing in her life. Her children are in school, and she now has more flexibility in her time. There have been 2 occasions where she could have masked and socially distant pastoral care moments.

Bonnie O noted that there is a budget for the proposed retreat mailing.

Don L sent FLT a proposal on the 2021 pledging process, and received positive comments from them afterward. The main concern is that pledges be received in a timely manner. FLT recommends that in lieu of any paperwork delivered to the church mail slot, or electronically forwarded to FLT, that a simple email indicating the person's name and amount of pledge would be acceptable procedure to be honored by FLT. A signed paper document is not required, so FLT would ask that the commitment mailing not include a pledge form. Claire asked for the language for this process, and Don L will send it to her for including in the mailing. The plan is to mail September 30. Ellen noted that there are some people not comfortable with emailing, so Don L agreed that a paper pledge form can be included with the mailing but that emailing the pledge information will assure the information is posted much faster than any return by mail.

Bonnie O raised the issue of privacy. Ordinarily pledge information is only seen by FLT, so she suggested that there be some kind of envelope notification that the pledge form should be opened only by FLT.

**Parking Lot:**

**Cold Weather Shelter update:**

Ellen shared that this year's contribution to supporting the CWS will be a financial obligation rather than a personnel obligation. Soon she will send a survey to KC to see if people are willing to serve again this year, and in what capacity, given the changes to the process. If KC cannot provide enough people to assist, then there will be an opportunity to partner with another church, instead of taking on the whole commitment as was done in the past.

**Re-naming the Building:**

Ellen reported that there have been requests for a Zoom discussion meeting before the Discernment. It is difficult to address important issues when the pandemic does not permit the usual face to face discussion allowed by casual in-person conversations. Ken has collated the comments from the 3 informational meetings and will share the collated list with Council for their approval, prior to disseminating it any further. Though the informational meetings were announced as providing only a hearing of researched facts, some participants felt they should have had a place to voice their opinion, and the idea of having a discussion meeting ensures that all voices have been heard, whether for or against. Council discussed what mechanics would make such a discussion meeting successful. Ellen asked Vanessa (as vice-president) to preside momentarily so Ellen could propose the following Motion:

**MOTION was made and approved to form a group to make a plan for a Zoom Discussion Meeting to include breakout rooms, and to choose a date for said meeting which would be prior to the Discernment Meeting.**

Those volunteering for the group included Ellen, Don L, Vanessa, and Ken, and Annora Bailey will be asked to join to share her Zoom skills.

**Nominating Committee:**

Anne volunteered to chair the 2021 Nominating Committee and to solicit 2 others to join her.

**Poetry and Prose Book Project:**  – to be addressed next month

**Donating to Individual Financial Needs:**

Response to email to community regarding KC helping those in financial need will be addressed next month.

Vanessa led us in the closing prayer.

Next Month:

Facilitator – Ellen Chaplain – Vicki

Jest – Ken Process Observer – Dale

Timekeeper – Vanessa Parking Lot – Ellen

Dates to Remember:

Worship in the Sacred Garden, Sunday, September 27 at 4:00 pm

Executive meeting – TBD if necessary

Discernment - Sunday, October 11, 2020 at 2:00 pm via Zoom

Next Council meeting – Sunday, October 18, at 1:00 pm via Zoom

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Marshall, Council Secretary