

BCC Cabinet Meeting Minutes

Date: 9/13/2020

Submitted by: Sanjay Cherian

In Attendance (via Zoom videoconference):

Name	Role	Voting?
Catherine Merrill	Minister	N
Ann Desrochers	Moderator	Y
Carol Cherian	Deacons/Fundraising	Y
Sanjay Cherian	Clerk	Y
Susan Haight	Trustees	Y
Amy Razzaboni	Outreach	Y
Bill Dunbar	Finance	Y
Rena Duncklee	Treasurer	Y
Candy Tiner	Publicity	Y

The meeting started at 8:01 am with a prayer from Rev Cath. We had a voting quorum.

Calendar Review

- Senior luncheon Oct 17th to be added to calendar.

Review of Prior minutes

- Bill moved to accept the minutes, Candy seconded; the motion passed unanimously.
- Ann has had a request to make Cabinet minutes public. Should we put them on the web site or email them to [all]. Cath is hesitant to email to [all] to avoid overloading people with traffic and causing them to start ignoring mails. We decided to put the minutes on the web site. Ann requested that Candy only put them up after approval by Cabinet.

Finance & Treasurer's Report

BCC YTD Financial Summary	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs Expenses + / -
August	\$68,133	\$55,214	\$12,919

- Bill reported on Easy Tithe
 - The plan costs us nothing and has no contract so we can make an easy exit if necessary.
 - Costs
 - by credit card: 2.6% processing fee + 0.39 transaction fee
 - by check: .75% processing fee + 0.39 transaction fee
 - Bill showed a spreadsheet model of pledges and Take Home Meals.

- Megan had told him that a lot of people want to pay by credit card so we would have more sales with that option.
- Bill demonstrated the Easy Tithe interface.
- Sanjay asked for a confidentiality clause on the prayer request form. Cath clarified his intent and suggested adding the word “confidential” to the title “prayer request.”
- Bill and Rena have reviewed the reports that are generated. Only Bill and Rena can see them. Rena can see a daily report against which she can balance bank statements.
- Ann asked if scheduling recurring payments reduce the fees. Bill: no
- Ann: is this linked to our main account or a separate account? Bill: Currently main account. We are looking at using a savings account. We have switched settings so that we get net funds after fees. That way we don’t have to give them access to withdraw funds from our account. Rena transfers money out of checking when the balance gets too high so she thinks we should keep checking as the account linked to Easy Tithe.
- Carol: is it very secure? Is our checking balance at risk? Bill: it’s very safe on their end. The donor gets confirmation of transaction to cell phone or email.
- Ann: do they have PCI compliance? Bill will follow up.
- Carol: for the Take Home Meal, who gets the order? Bill: it’s configurable. Ann: can multiple email recipients be selected? Bill: yes, and this has been tested. Ann: thinking for THM we should have 2-3 people keeping track of it. Bill: forms cost us nothing to setup.
- Carol: with the capital fund, the interface seemed like a lot of pages. We don’t want our web site to look like money is all we’re focused on. Bill: separate pages were so that separate, focused links could be sent for solicitation campaigns. There will be a single general page for our web site.
- Ann: is it easy to edit out the capital campaign stuff until it’s started. Bill: yes.
- Carol: as a visual person, is there a way to edit the appearance of page to fit in with our web site? Bill: there are limited things he can do with the page. Carol: the color and picture are very jarring to her relative to the web site. Bill: it’s the only picture he had. Color schemes are limited. Ann: there may be a place to put hex codes for color directly into the page design.
- Sanjay: has become sensitive to data privacy. Has anybody checked the terms of service to see who has access to our data so that our donors don’t become solicitation or advertising targets? Bill: not yet but over 400 churches are using it. Ann: is taking note to have someone read the Terms Of Service carefully before going live.
- Cath: a company she worked for had an online payment system that worked but one weekend, they deposited triple the correct amount then backed it out but the finance person had to clean up every transaction. Afterwards, they switched to a separate account so that the client’s personal accounting wouldn’t become tedious. Susan: felt separate accounts would help.
- Candy: when we decide to go live, how long will it take to make it effective? Bill: it’s live now. As soon as he provides a link, she can embed it. We’ve already tested with credit card, texting, and a refund. Rena has seen the money go into our account.
- Cath: we will start stewardship in the fall. She would like to put this information on the pledge form so we need to make sure we’re in sync. Ann: when are we releasing the pledge form? Cath: plans to start stewardship in a couple of weeks. Ann: should we coordinate the online giving launch with the stewardship campaign? Cath: it’s up to the finance folks. If we want to separate Take Home Meals and start that earlier, we can. It was observed that Take Home Meals for this month are taken care of.
- Ann: do we want to pick one of these things to sync the online giving activation with? Carol: suggests we sync with stewardship campaign. There was general agreement.
- Susan moved to accept the deployment of Easy Tithe with edits for visual consistency in sync with our stewardship campaign launch, Amy seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

- Bill asked Carol to send him acceptable colors and pictures.
- Bill: we had stopped funding outreach organizations in March when we first froze spending. Since then, we got someone's full pledge/donation of \$20k which has helped us considerably. Bill has been working with the food pantry in Nashua. It costs them \$300-400 to buy 3,000 lbs of food. We have \$3,400 allocated to help the remaining organizations. Service organizations that support many people are struggling and we are doing better. Bill moved to resume funding outreach-supported organizations we'd budgeted for, Susan seconded; the motion passed unanimously. Amy thanked everyone for the support and generosity.

Stewardship

- Cath: Our stewardship campaign was going to start on September 20th but we will wait. The campaign will likely be shorter this year but giving tends to be at the beginning and end so a shortened middle shouldn't hurt. She was going to make it online with a personal engagement about why people do what they do. She doesn't want stewardship reliant on having in-person worship. We're going to try to give preference to online people so that they don't have a noticeably worse experience than people who could come in person. We don't want to risk having the live service recorded well enough to distribute. [Post-meeting clarification from Cath: There's a risk that technical issues may prevent us from having a usable recording of the live service. Furthermore, the service would have to be edited to exclude our playing of YouTube videos and be reformatted as a playlist with inserted links to the original YouTube videos.]

Thoughts on Reopening the Church / Guidelines

[Note: we decided to pursue weekly worship as captured later in this section.]

- New guidelines were published with UV light information.
- Cath: in the Deacon's meeting, they talked about what they would like to do to be guideline compliant. The net result is that there's going to be a lot more direction of people as to what they should and shouldn't do. There won't be greeters so it will be a lot bossier. Still, they felt it was better than trying to make the indoor service feel the way it did before because it conveys safety and care for the health of attendees. The first couple of indoor worship services will be more stilted.
- Susan: her brother's church just resumed indoor services in Maine following all restrictive guidelines. Despite the guidelines, it's been embraced because it meant they could be back together in some form. She thinks our approach will be accepted.
- Cath: asks for patience while we work out the kinks. Ann: can some of the bossiness come from signs that might not stick well to grass for outdoor worship but will stick to floors and surfaces in-building? Bill: can we use tape to signal restrictions without verbal bossiness? Cath: agrees and that's part of the plan but things like everyone sitting in the back won't be possible anymore. There's going to be a lot more noticeable structure in what people are asked to do.
- We're going to try to do every other week in-person worship rather than weekly. This allows time for people who get sick to notice before we're together again.
- Kids are going back to school – we're trying to follow what they do. Ann: the guidelines don't specifically say we're following the school: they just reference local guidelines. Should we be specific about school? Candy: what about when they're not in school, e.g. summer? Cath: we're just trying to get to Christmas. Susan: we should be mindful of the SAU's plans but not restrict ourselves completely. Carol: school may shut down but the town may not. Amy: agrees with not restricting ourselves to following the schools. School may shut down over a couple of cases. Does that mean we should?
- Cath: just deciding on indoor vs outdoor worship for today took a lot of discussion. Following the school makes it easier. If we don't want to put it in the guidelines, that's fine but she doesn't want to make our decision each week complicated. She also doesn't want to be the sole person making the decision. Following the school was a rule of thumb that would be careful but not overly restrictive,

given that schools would try to stay open as much as possible. Amy: just don't restrict us on paper to the school's decision but give it some weight. She doesn't like sudden shifts like in March where we were open one day and closed the next. Cath: we learned in March that schools make decisions on a Friday for the coming Monday.

- Sanjay: it sounds like we want the school to be our default decision but retain the ability to override. Cath: we already talked about things like what if one class closed and concluded that we wouldn't close for that.
- Amy: so who is making the decision right now? Cath: minister, reaching out to Deacons and Ann as needed. She doesn't want to do communion in church because she has to touch a lot of stuff before putting it in her mouth. Ann: likes communion on Zoom because everyone can participate the same way.
- Ann: is going to leave the word "local" in the guidelines. In practice, we're using school as the local authority for a guideline but we're not tied to it. Cath: as a result, there may be some whiplash in the decisions in terms of a quick response and then a correction but it's in the nature of having to make a decision.
- Candy: has been contacted by Boy Scouts. She doesn't know if they want to meet yet but they want to know if they have the option.
- Carol: as a Deacon, she has heard from people who strongly feel we should meet every week if we can. She conveyed our issues and Cath's individual concerns, suggesting that maybe Cath could lead worship every other week but someone could read her words on the alternate weeks. People are afraid we're losing people, we're dying as an institution, and not taking full advantage of the time we have which is now. Carol wants people to feel free to speak up. Amy noted that she continues to be in favor of frequent in-person worship.
- Cath: if we want to meet every week, speak up, but being in Maine, she's very aware of events that were infection spreaders like the Millinocket wedding. She doesn't want that to be us.
- Ann: asked for clarification if the Deacons were previously recommending every other week in-person worship but are now changing their opinion? Carol: Deacons support in-person worship every other week but are just bringing up that people want to do it every week for discussion.
- Bill: is in favor of every week because the other church in town is meeting every week as is the Catholic church. Other churches are trying to get back to some semblance of normal. Maybe church is the only place people get this feeling. Susan: agrees because we've got the mechanisms for disinfecting and preserving the health of the body but we should be ready to change if we have to. Amy: is in favor of every week, knowing that we can change if it doesn't work. Thinks everybody would be okay with change in response to events because that's just the way things are these days.
- Ann: should we delay opening by one week and go to every week worship? Cath: we should start on the 20th, skip a week (27th), do another in-person service the second week (October 4th) so we can learn from the first one. Do it weekly indoors after that.
- Ann: how do we handle communion if we do every week? Cath will work on it. Carol thinks people are deciding on attendance week-by-week for themselves.
- Susan: if worship is indoors on 20th, she and Bill will run the UV light on Saturday. Cath: can they coordinate with Sue Laub because the church could probably use a vacuuming and dusting. Ann: would Cath like her to go in to measure and mark off pews? Cath: yes. Carol: will bring in a 6' piece of PVC to show the reality of safe spacing.
- Ann: how to handle outside groups re: Candy's q.
 - Bill: if it's an outside group, they should be trained on the use of UV light to set up after meeting. Ann: do we really want the outside person doing this or have a church volunteer? There are risks in using the equipment. Consensus was we should use church person.
 - Carol: for Scouts, the answer should be no. Susan: we can tell them we're in the process of figuring out our processes in anticipation of outside groups coming in again.

- Ann: should we decide on outside groups at the October Cabinet meeting? Consensus was yes.
- Cath: having children in feels different than AA/adults. This place won't be as clean as schools are.
- Amy: are AA and scouts the only people who've asked about using the building. Candy: yes.

Christmas Faire Report

- Carol reported that they had a meeting by Zoom in the past week with 6-8 people. There won't be a Faire as we know it this year. Instead, over October to December, they will have efforts towards fund-raising to try to make up the amount of the Faire income. For October, there's a trio of whoopie pies to go with the Take Home Meal. In November, there's a trio of dips. In December, there will be chicken or beef pot pies.
- We're going to sell raffle tickets for 3 big-ticket items instead of smaller baskets or gift cards. Items include a fire pit with smore's stuff, a lottery/sports ticket tree, an experience like a cruise on Winnepesaukee. They haven't decided on ticket prices yet. There will be a lot of food.
- If there's a tree lighting, we will do a very limited soup /chili supper with a few soups (4-5) and chilis (hot/medium/mild), packaged for door pickup. They're hoping to reduce work and still generate income.
- Re: raffle tickets, we will sell them with Take Home Meal pickups. If members want to take books and sell them to their circles, that would be great. We will advertise on Facebook, our website, and maybe a poster in town. We may offer a business in town the opportunity to sell tickets for us, e.g. the library, Pure Foods. The drawing will be 2 weeks before Christmas. Bill: will develop forms for online giving for anything they want.
- Cath: it sounds possible that we might not raise as much money as in the past. She thinks that as the Cabinet, we should give Carol & company full support but know that we will be working with finance to handle any shortfalls. She doesn't want anyone risking their health to make money.

Other Items

- Susan: she & Russell will be touching up the letters on east side of the sign but otherwise, the straps are up so the sign is functional.
- We have the UV light and she and Bill know how to use it so it will be going into service. Cath: requested to "zap" her office once.
- We thanked Susan for getting the sign restored.
- Amy thanked everyone for keeping things together since March through this tough time.

Outreach Report

- Senior Luncheon Oct 17th-Pick up or delivery
- Amy has been trying to contact by phone the organizations we support to let them know we are thinking of them and ask if there is anything specific they would like us to include in our prayers for them.
- Amy is making a list of the items that they are accepting during this time & any virtual fundraisers they will be hosting for the rest of the year.
- Outreach will be sending out monthly all church emails to inform the congregation how our Organizations are doing, what services they are able to continue to provide during this pandemic, and what they could use for assistance or donations. We will highlight one or two a month.
- Discussing a food drive for a week in October. People can drop off food donations in a bin outside the church that someone will be checking everyday and bringing in to the church. We will distribute to our local food pantries.

Minister's Report:

September 2020 (through 9/6)

Since this goes in the church's record, the Covid-19 global pandemic led the church to stop in person meetings and services on March 13, 2020.

- Averaging 25.26 hours/week, which puts me between 114 hours under and 14 hours over since Sept. 15. This time last year, I was 9 to 117 hours over.
- Pastoral counseling over the phone.
- Virtual coffee hours on 8/9, 8/16, 8/23, 8/30, 9/6.
- Online Prayer Group: 8/5, 8/12, 8/19, 8/26, 9/2.
- Gathering Joys & Concerns ahead of the service.
- Beginning worship plan for Advent – Transfiguration.
- UMC meeting on building worship attendance during Covid-19 (which did not turn out to be what the meeting was actually about) on 8/25
- Chasing down missing donation check from May's take home meal.
- Call with Carol about the Christmas Faire

Services:

- 8/9: [Zoom communion & worship] Letting go of the belief that rules can put us in charge of salvation.
- 8/16: [In person worship as well as on-line] When we can't find Jesus, focus on the Canaanite women around us who are doing his work.
- 8/23: Accept the gifts God has given us and allot that internal transformation transform the world around us.
- 8/30: [In person worship as well as on-line, joint service with Second Congregational Church of Newcastle (UCC), Maine] Living in the real world means not only loving God and our neighbors, but accepting love when our doubts drive us under.
- 9/6: [Zoom communion and worship] Jesus laid out a process of reconciliation that relies on us valuing relationships more than being right.

Regular Meetings:

Cabinet, Deacons, Moderator/Minister

The meeting was closed in prayer at 9:26 am by Rev. Cath.