

# BCC Cabinet Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 01/09/2022

**Submitted by:** Sanjay Cherian

## In Attendance (via Zoom videoconference):

Name	Role	Voting?
Catherine Merrill	Minister	N
Ann Desrochers	Moderator	Y
Sanjay Cherian	Clerk	Y
Susan Haight	Trustees	Y
Amy Razzaboni (Zoom)	Outreach	Y
Bill Dunbar	Finance	Y
Rena Duncklee	Treasurer	Y
Jill Aitken (Zoom)	Deacons	Y

The meeting started at 8:31 am with a prayer from Rev Cath. We had a quorum.

## Calendar Review

- Annual Reports due January 14<sup>th</sup>. Ann wants them at least available at draft level when the meeting notice goes out.
- THM is January 21<sup>st</sup>; the add-on is being prepared ahead of time
- 2/6 - Annual Meeting
- There was a question about how a Scouts meeting came to be on our calendar for today when it shouldn't be. Nobody present knew.

## Review of Prior minutes

- Bill moved to accept December's meeting minutes as corrected over email, Susan seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

## Annual Meeting

- Should we hold this meeting in-person, Zoom-only, or in hybrid form?
  - Cath is more comfortable with the spacing upstairs but people won't be able to see each other, which is important for Annual Meeting.
  - Ann asked if it was hard to move the TV cart to Fellowship Hall. Sanjay said he can do it but will also have to bring a studio microphone to make sure Zoom participants can hear the discussion clearly. Jill confirmed that this was necessary.
  - We recalled that we did Annual Meeting exclusively by Zoom last year and had a quorum.
    - For quorum calculations, Candy keeps attendance data. Cath has numbers for the weeks other than when she was out. Jill: Deacons kept track while Cath was out so they can generate those numbers.
    - We will need the quorum information before 16<sup>th</sup>. Sanjay will generate the quorum requirement since he needs the underlying data for the clerk's report. He can reach

out to all Deacons but Candy & Barbara are the primary contacts. Barbara did the count most weeks.

- Bill recommends a Zoom-only Annual Meeting.
- Cabinet consensus was that this is fine.
- Ann: if we're still having in-person worship, what time should we schedule a Zoom-only Annual Meeting? Cath: 11:30 gives everyone but Cindy & Barbara enough time to get home. Cath will join from her office.
- Another option: should we make that morning's worship service online-only?
  - Sanjay felt he needed some spiritual element before a business-oriented Zoom to get into the right state of mind.
  - Decision: we will do a live service, not pre-recorded, only on Zoom. The 2/6 live Zoom worship will be recorded and made available for people who are not watching live.
  - We talked about doing 2 separate Zoom meetings back-to-back so that there's a separation between the two. That way we can go from the sacred space to the business space.
  - Jill: it might be good to have only one Zoom for both and leave it up. This helps people who are not tech savvy to not have to miss anything while trying to switch meetings. We decided to do that.
- Meeting Content:
  - Budget is essential
  - Need to recap BSA situation for everyone
  - Nominating report
- We decided there will be a Trustees' presentation about future plans.
- Cath: do we want a reflection at the meeting on how things have changed because of Covid and how each committee has changed its way of doing business as this meeting is a record of the state of the church?
  - Susan: thinks this is a good idea. She mentioned it in her Trustee's report but it's not in depth.
  - Ann: thinks everyone mentioned it in their individual reports last year.
  - Cath: thinks everyone's tried really hard and done extra work because of Covid so she wants to acknowledge it for the record. Outreach, THM, Finance, etc. had to learn how to be creative.
  - Ann: will work with Cath on figuring this out.
  - Amy: feels a summation is a good idea and will put something in the Outreach report anyway. Cath can sum it up after we go around the board reports. Jill: agrees.
- Sanjay: if we are going to have a post-Annual Meeting discussion on the future of the church, do we want to introduce it during Annual Meeting and get feedback about structure, duration, appetite for conversation, etc.? Ann: yes.

## **Fundraising**

- Ann hasn't heard if the town is doing a winter carnival. This would be one of the big town events we could align our fundraising events with.
  - Cath: when they did it before, they approached the church because they wanted a warm bathroom near the fields. If we haven't heard by now, it's not likely to happen. It's usually in February on President's Day weekend.
  - Amy confirmed that there's nothing about winter carnival on the town website right now.

## **Reopening Guidelines**

- They have only changed to point at current documents rather than ones from a year ago. Consensus was that this is sufficient.

- Cath: Christmas Eve attendance was about 26 people in the parking lot for the outdoor service and about 20 in the sanctuary, which is low. Is there a low-water mark where we change our perspective on holding in-person worship? Cath's pulpit location is the safest place in the sanctuary except for the pianist.
- Ann thinks the people who are currently coming feel safe. Sanjay clarified that he doesn't feel safe but needs church more than he needs guaranteed safety.
  - Amy agrees that people who are coming feel comfortable. If she's not comfortable or feels sick, she'll stay home.
  - Bill: since we're open now, he'd hate to go backwards and have to start from scratch. Will we lose people if we close again?
- Cath: was looking at doing a book group for epiphany. She didn't feel comfortable going into people's homes. We need airflow so the Social Hall will be better. We could theoretically do it over Zoom. Does this feel cavalier given Omicron?
  - Bill: up to people in the book group.
  - Susan: agrees and notes that it will be easy enough to space 10-12 people here and run the UV machine afterwards.
- Building usage guidelines:
  - just a reminder that we were going to update it with information on behalf of the Trustees.
  - Susan: the biggest thing is heat – building users forgetting to lower it after use.
  - Ann's biggest concern is the certificate of liability from the organizations. She doesn't know what our liability would be if a kid got hurt.

## **Church Vision Discussion**

- Sanjay summarized that slides have been given to Ann and Cath and we are going to revise them.

## **Discussion Megan's Faith Formation Suggestion:**

- Ann summarized Megan's proposal as advertising a bounded program for children with a begin date and an end date rather than saying we'll have a Take Home craft or story for whoever shows up. It may be a 6-week program around Lent and Easter. Given Omicron, would this be a good time to invite outside children to come to church?
  - Susan noted that Nashua just announced school closures.
  - Bill clarified that the closure is because they couldn't get teachers, not because of Covid in the schools.
- Jill: it doesn't seem like the best time to do such a program. When she thinks about Sunday School, it's got kids under 5 who can't be vaccinated. Sanjay: agrees that right now is not a good time.
- Amy: when would the program be? When is Lent/Easter this year? Cath: Ash Wednesday is 3/2. Easter is 17<sup>th</sup> of April. (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday).
- Cath: The other thing to think about is if we wanted to do something in May with a preference for outdoors activity. It would change the content a bit since it's not Lent/Easter. It can be not so Christian-focused or more open-ended about why believe in God? It's complicated if we have to include rabbis, etc.
  - Sanjay: doesn't think we need to make the content aligned with calendar. Kids don't know the church calendar so we can cover whatever.
  - Susan: in spring time, we can cover resurrection themes with things blooming.
  - Cath: if we're doing something in May, we still have to start working now. Ann: if we're doing a Lent/Easter theme, we have lots of content we can draw from.
- Bill: what if we have something generic, not geared to Christmas, etc. What if it's something more general like "why believe in God," "why you'd want to get a Christian education," etc.? He recalls how confirmation classes had different people come in and talk about their religions or visit other churches. He thinks the older kids got something out of it.

- Ann: will start thinking about a more generic program.
- Susan: THM crafts are continuing. She talked to a woman called Sherry from KS with her husband. They're trying different churches and she says she misses our coffee houses. She wants to help with crafts. Susan invited her to come to church on Sunday and get a feel for us. Sherry is very impressed with our community outreach.

### Finance & Treasurer's Report

BCC YTD Financial Summary	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs Expenses + / -
December	\$100,731	\$89,522	\$11,209

- Stewardship
  - \$ 35,395 is the final pledge total. Last year, we budgeted \$45,435 and got to about \$4,000 deficit.
  - This year, we're at about 38.8% deficit on total revenue.
  - Cash reserves started at \$50,221 and ended at \$65,001. Over the past years, we seem to accumulate extra money, often from unexpected donations of \$10-20k that can't be counted on. But over the years, we've never had to go into trust funds.
- Bill thinks we're in good shape. We're very conservative on revenue. Megan guided him to budget \$7,000 for THM but we made \$12,000 this year and already have a lot of orders for January's meal. Sanjay: we should follow Megan's guidance because every year there's a risk of burnout and we don't want to ignore that.
- There's no TD Affinity revenue.
- Amazon Smile is going great and brought in more than we budgeted last year.
- Bill sent a budget to everyone.

### Band Rehearsal:

- Sanjay asked if the band could rehearse in the sanctuary on Monday evenings at 6:30 to be able to space themselves out more and have open windows for airflow. They'd like to keep working on music and fellowship even if live music at church isn't feasible but aren't comfortable working in the small youth room.
- Jill noted anonymity concerns with AA meeting downstairs at the same time.
- Cath: part of being a church is supporting smaller groups getting together so she would like to support the band. If she was having them get together, she would rather they meet in a large room than a small room. If it's going to happen, she'd much rather the sanctuary than the room in the back.
- Cath: when we practice, she can hear us but is not unable to hear herself think even when amps are fired up. She would want to support it and have Candy check with AA. She's tried to support AA's anonymity but they wander into her office and talk freely. If we use the back stairwell, we should be able to have 2 uses of the church at the same time.
- Susan: the Trustees are okay with it as long as the windows get closed afterwards.
- Jill: agrees with what Cath and Susan said.
- Consensus: Sanjay will ask Candy to check with AA and the band will wait until we hear back.
- [After worship, Susan received confirmation that the Monday AA group has stopped meeting so there is no calendar conflict.]

### Deacons' Report

- Met on 12/19. All focus was on Christmas Eve.

- Now all focus is on Lent and Easter.
- For anyone in church today, the plan was to undecorate the church after worship. Can we make an announcement looking for volunteers to undecorate?
- Amy: can undecorate downstairs this coming week to take down the things she put up. She will have her son take down stuff outside.
  - Susan: can we leave outside lights up until end of January? There was a request from somewhere to honor first responders, nurses, doctors, etc. for everything they went through last year.
  - Amy agreed to wait.

## **Outreach Report**

- Ended up adopting a family in Brookline for Christmas. They provided breakfast and dinner baskets, gifts for the family, and gift cards.
- They bought gifts for a young girl in Brookline.
- Amy thinks the town has hired a new welfare officer but also that they separated the welfare office and food pantry again so she will reach out to get details.
- Outreach hasn't met yet to discuss any plans for this year.

## **Minister's Report: (6/7 through 1/2)**

Since this goes in the church's record, because of the Covid-19 global pandemic, we continue to offer in-person worship services weekly, which we have been doing since 3/21/2021. That service is recorded, edited and posted for those who aren't able to come to the sanctuary. This period also includes 10 weeks of medical leave while I had my knee replaced.

- Averaging 27.1 hours/week, which puts me between 5 hours under to 35 hours over since Sept. 12. This time last year, I was averaging 27.5 hours/week.
- Funeral for Ross Jensen, 8/20/2021
- Arranging coverage for Barbara Thaxter's funeral when I wasn't able to return to the pulpit as quickly as I hoped.
- Preparing three Christmas Eve services (one on-line, two in-person)
- Pastoral counseling in person & on the phone
- Knee Replacement surgery & recovery
- One last Prayer Group before summer hiatus on June 9.
- Coordinating the church's response to the BSA bankruptcy reorganization balloting.
- Locating the detailed write up Carol left for hosting the Spaghetti Supper.
- Flagging need for someone to head up Stewardship this fall.
- Helping with Stewardship campaign details
- Working with Ann to finalize job description for CE Director. Sending out a batch of individualized emails to see if we can get a referral for a candidate.
- Virtual coffee hours on 6/13, 6/20, 6/27, 7/18, 8/8 (not every coffee hour was attended, but I was there for at least 15 minutes just to be sure)
- Attending Christmas Tree lighting, Soup & Chili and Christmas Raffle
- Working with the Deacons on Advent and Christmas plans
- Pulling together Household Prayers for period when I expected to be away with knee replacement surgery
- Cutting the alternative service together for 6/20, so the deacons could help decide how we were going to offer remote worship going forward.
- Writing Christmas letter
- Coordinating with Chief Quigley about the July 4th Bell Ringing.
- Attended a Community Conversations project meeting.
- Sending a welcome note from the church to new Brookline Public Library director.

- Happy Retirement card to Helen MacGlashan from Sanjay (as chair of the Search Committee) and me.
- Finishing & publishing the worship plan for July, August and the first half of September (B Proper 9 - 19).
- Worship planning for second half of September, October and most of November (B Proper 20 - Reign of Christ).
- Finishing & publishing the worship plan for January and February (C Epiphany - Transfiguration).
- Attended a 90 minute workshop on Healthy Pastoral Relations committees, sponsored by the National setting of the UCC.
- July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Holidays
- Doing background reading on the Psalms in general and on the Infancy Narrative in Luke.
- Drafting a 9/11 commemoration that won't be used this year because of my recovery from surgery
- Completed background check and on-line ethics training for UMC.
- Provided Pastoral coverage for Judie Bryant at Pilgrim Church UCC in Nashua, Tanya Stormo Rasmussen at Hollis Congregational Church and Veronica Walsh Don at the Mason Congregational Church.
- Completing 2021 Information Review form for Hillsborough Association.
- Did state jury duty for one day.

### **Services:**

- 6/13: Other groups in town have challenges in describing why they do what they do, too.
- 6/20: How the classification of psalms makes it easier to speak to God.
- 6/27: What the psalms, written from a human perspective teach up about God
- 7/4: A brief, patriotic service before the parade!
- 7/11: Communion service, reminding ourselves that it is God's mission, not ours.
- 7/18: Looking to God and to each other to see how to make a church out of the diversity of people we live and worship with.
- 7/25: We don't need to be big enough to take on a challenge. We just have to be open to God.
- 8/1: Communion service, the bread of heaven can be the love we offer each other, as well as Lemon Blossoms or wafers from the communion pods.
- 8/8: Rules can guide us but losing sight of the goal can allow us to revert to who we were before we were saved.
- 8/15: What changes when we look at communion as closer to metabolism than metaphor?
- 8/22: Eternal life is balancing body and spirit, right here, right now.
- 11/14: Salvation is a process, no matter what we think the end of the world looks like. Beginning of Stewardship.
- 11/21: The truth of the Kingdom is about taking care of the vulnerable that are hidden, even just hidden in parts, like the real Pilate hiding behind his role.
- 11/28: Investing in human connection, not disaster preparation, to be ready for the coming kingdom.
- 12/5: How do we turn around the crooked and rough places inside ourselves to change the world?
- 12/12: Communion Sunday (more chairs!). We only have to work for justice, nothing superhuman.
- 12/19: We need to watch for God working not only in human lives, but in the systems of power.
- 12/24: God helped us find our way home to our manger.
- 12/26: On-line service only. Losing Jesus in a crowd might tell us more about the assumptions we're making about where Jesus is.
- 1/2: By accepting that the Prologue to John is a Christmas story, we remember that all we have to do is bear witness to the light.

### **Regular Meetings:** Cabinet, Deacons, Moderator, Clergy Support

- Generally, energy went into worship prep, delivery, and making sure Christmas Eve was as available to everyone in whatever format they wanted. Cath was somewhat happy that the church wasn't

packed for safety's sake. She felt everyone who attended got something out of it, which was the goal. She expressed appreciation for everyone's help and support getting everything together.

- Jill: we all appreciated the different avenues of worship Cath provided for Christmas Eve. She did the online service with her family and it was good to do it together in front of the TV. She recognizes it's a lot of extra work to provide all these options.
- Cath: Yi Fan did an amazing job finding music.

### **Position and Terms for annual meeting**

- If people are signing up for partial terms, Ann wants to note that in the sheet.
- Finance: not sure if Bob understands it's a 3-year term. Bill and Rena have signed up for at least one more year with no sense of the future. They agreed to sign up for staggered terms recognizing that if something happens, it happens.
- Trustees: Susan can only speak for herself. She signed up for 2 more years based on her situation. She can't speak for others.
  - Ann: have we heard from Joel at all? Susan: no replies though kept included on the mails.
- Sanjay was comfortable leaving his term as written.

### **Trustees Report**

- Susan met with a guy about insulation last week. She will try to get someone else lined up as well. He inspected from basement to attic.
  - His recommendation is to start with the basement where there's a lot of heat loss from the sills on the perimeter. He recommends laying plastic over the dirt, laying down foam, and running it up the side walls. We'd have to clean out the construction debris left. It will probably cost around \$7k.
  - For exterior walls downstairs and upstairs, they would blow in insulation from outside, plug holes, and leave us to restore the finish. Estimate: \$20k.
  - The attic is fine – vermiculite insulation. They estimate a less than 1% chance of asbestos being there. They would have to test each piece of vermiculite so it's not worth it. Estimate: \$3k
  - They talked about possible energy reimbursement. If we had natural gas, we might get some payback.
  - This is the project for this year.
- Otherwise, it's just regular maintenance like repairing broken septic cover.
- Ann: The amount of money available for trustees in our plan is \$150k and it says they only need cabinet approval. She notes that if planned projects are over 10% of the budget, our bylaws say we should take it to annual meeting. There was general agreement.

Amy: who's the company? Quality Insulation in Nashua. Amy was satisfied because that's who her business uses.

### **New or Other Business:**

- None

The meeting was closed in prayer at 9:45 am by Rev Catherine.