

# BCC Cabinet Meeting Minutes

**Date:** 03/13/2022

**Submitted by:** Sanjay Cherian

## In Attendance:

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

The meeting started at 8:32 am with a prayer from Rev Cath. We had a quorum.

## Calendar Review

- March 18, 2022 – Take Home Meals, Girl Scout Cookie Sales
- March 20, 2022 – Discernment Meeting
- March 24, 2022 – Quality Insulation here to Install Basement Insulation
- May 14, 2022 – Scout Spaghetti Supper
- May 21, 2022 – Senior Luncheon In-person and take out available
- Cabinet meeting for Palm Sunday 4/10, does it still work?
  - Cath: we're not doing a lot of logistical stuff for Holy Week, like ordering palms, doing flowers, etc. so we're keeping it intact.
  - Amy: any reason why we're not having palms? Cath: we have to get order in ahead of time and there are volume requirements.
- Maundy Thursday – Mason was going to reconvene on Ash Wednesday to see if meeting in person again.
  - If not, we'll do a Maundy Thursday service on our own.
  - If they are, we'll do it together and have to decide where. Cath hasn't heard from Mason yet.
  - There will be a service somewhere, guessing around 7 pm.
  - Ann: will it have soup, etc.? Cath: if Mason is hosting, it depends on them. If it's just us, we can do it.
- Ann: Will there be a Good Friday vigil? Cath: Yes, but not currently sure of how.
- Easter Sunrise service? Cath: Yes. The current plan is for a sunrise service at Andres, 10 am worship at church. The preference is to do it outdoors so people with kids can come. Indoors vs outdoors is weather-dependent.
- Next THM – to be determined.

- Susan: there will be one more date to rebuild the side door frame and replace the door but it's not yet known. Stephen Harvey, the contractor, has ordered the door but they don't know when it will come in. It will be after Easter.

## **Review of Prior minutes**

- Bill moved to accept the minutes as corrected and sent out, Amy seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

## **BSA Bankruptcy**

- Ann: The process is ongoing. Did we get a packet from the UMC?
  - Cath: yes, we got everything we need. It's all scanned and on the shared drive.
  - Ann is maintaining the ongoing timeline.
- Ann hasn't heard from the Scouts yet. She thinks troop sponsorship through the DWC is temporary and has heard from Lynn that they'll need a new sponsor at some point if it's not us.

## **House of Worship emergency preparedness flyer**

- Cath: It's a daylong seminar on safety. If people are feeling curious about best practices and want to go, it's a resource we have access to. If she went, she'd leave feeling frightened and it may not be the best use of our resources.
- The flyer was sent to us and Pastor Damon down the street. It's available if someone wants to go.
- Ann: it will be 2 modules on one day, 2 on another.
- Cath: it's come up before so we will probably have another chance to attend a later session.
- Ann: The UCC Pension board has something similar recorded that we can watch.

## **Covid Worship Guidelines**

- Cath: our guidelines say we won't pass stuff to each other like offering plates. She was talking with the deacons to see if we need to reorder sealed communion packs. She feels the mechanical process of the pre-packaged elements doesn't feel very abundant but she can also see that eating bread from a shared plate might not feel safe.
  - Megan: Why not do both? Cath: yes, and we can have the bread in a little muffin wrapper so people don't have to touch them. While we now know Covid isn't spread easily on surfaces, there's still the proximity required to pass the elements.
  - Do we want to start relaxing this part of our guidelines? Bill: yes, because at restaurants, there's a lot of touching. Schools are reopening and making masks a matter of choice. It feels like we need to begin to get back to how we were before. Amy agrees and says we should use our existing stock of pods for people who aren't comfortable.
  - Ann: some churches are putting toothpicks in the bread.
  - John: we are taking steps to get back to "normal" and having the safer practices be optional for people who need it. People miss the old ways.
- Senior Luncheon: Amy says they tried to spread people out but they deliberately sat next to each other.
- Susan: agrees with John that we should phase in offering traditional communion and keep pods as an option for people who aren't comfortable.
- Cath: appreciates our sense of the majority opinion but is aware of people who are immunocompromised but can't come back to church because it's not safe for them. One of the things a church does is to look at the minority even when the majority feels a different way. She wants to confirm that we can make enough space for someone who doesn't feel comfortable with the majority approach that we can make an effort to welcome them.

- Megan: is curious for people who are immunocompromised, do they have a definite sense of what would make them feel comfortable coming back to church or are they totally out?
- Ann: singing without masks is definitely a bigger factor in keeping people away from church while they can tolerate singing with masks.
- John: the deacons are reaching out to people who are members (list provided by Candy) but not coming to find out what they're feeling. Amy: It's good to find out what their concerns are that we can address and how we can address them.
- Cath: if we're going to do offering plates, there might be a problem with person-to-person proximity. Bill: we can do plates on a long rod.
- Bill: what would it take to have an immunocompromised person to come on a regular basis? John: there are about 10-15 people the deacons are getting ready to talk to.
- Sanjay: we have to be careful not to make people feel like they're being unreasonable for their caution. Ann: for example, Jill isn't happy about having to send kids to school but has no choice there.
- Cath: she won't change anything today but she will work with the deacons on starting with communion plates and offering plates. We will dip a toe in the water, giving people time to ease into it.
- Amy: if someone has an issue with our practices, where do they go to discuss their discomfort? Cath: talk to her, Ann, or the Deacons.
- Ann: do we want to put hybrid language in the guidelines in the bulletin?
  - Cath: yes, put something that says we'll have an option for less constrained practices.
  - Bill: we need to revisit the whole thing.
- Sanjay: the worship invitation email needs to be explicit that the guidelines are changing. It should also be mentioned in a video or something everyone can see without having to attend a physical service. Candy: We can do it in an announcements video.

## **Live Music for service**

- Megan: shared her personal opinion that she likes the familiar hymns we sing and would like to transition away from videos. She was asked to invite Yifan to play piano at worship. She has just asked him to rejoin the band so she doesn't want to add a piano accompanist request on top of that.
- Megan: thinks we should pay someone to play music here. She thinks Gary Simmerman was burned out from having to play every week. We should have live music and pay someone if that's what it takes to have regularly weekly worship.
- Ann: we have a music committee that's still at work and need to respect their work.
  - Cath: Yifan, Jocelyn, & Charlene are the music committee but as far as she knows, Yifan is the only active participant. Jocelyn is always willing to play.
  - Ann: we don't want to overstep and make them feel they're being pushed out the door.
  - Cath: Jocelyn is worried about taking Covid home to her mom.
  - Finding people to play for a funeral is difficult.
- John: Ann told him there are 7 local churches looking for a musician. Ann: one in Manchester pays \$500/month for a bell choir leader, 1 rehearsal and some number of services but not all, i.e. a relatively low-pressure gig. It costs \$20k/year for a music director or organist. Where in the range should we be paying?
- Megan: thinks we should be funneling our money to things that increase our number of worshippers. She thinks live music would help. Personally, if she came in and saw videos for music, she wouldn't find it inspiring. She thinks we can fund both building improvements and live music.
- John: people who play music in church do it for love and the joy of service.
  - Candy: her parents were music leaders at church growing up. They never got paid but were offered money for a substitute gig and was surprised.
- Bill: calculated the cost of a musician as \$2,000 for the rest of the year at \$15/hr. It would be \$1,700 at a lower rate. He can't believe how much local churches are paying.

- Cath: as a non-musician, it takes her hours to pick music because it's not her thing. We need a music-aware person to do the music selection.
  - Megan: Yifan could still pick music if he doesn't want to play.
  - Cath: we have had a different person pick the music than the one who plays it.
- Amy: there were people who came for the music like her father-in-law. He loved the band as it was clearly audible to him.
- Sanjay: noted the existence of research that attaching compensation to work a person was doing for free out of love and service makes them not want to do the work anymore and they feel underpaid.
  - Cath: this is an important point as is the burnout Megan mentioned from having people do it every week.
  - We can have a pulpit supply accompanist to relieve the primary musician.
- Bill: maybe we can ask the current musicians/committee how they feel about these options and let them come up with the whole solution or recommendations. We can also ask what would make them feel safe.
  - Cath: should she reach out to the music committee?
  - John: will talk to Jill and see if they can get some answers.

### Deacons' Report

- John: needs to know if we're doing a coffee hour here after the Easter Sunday service and if so, who will do it. He and Ann will be away that weekend. Should we keep doing what we normally do or should we do something bigger? There will be some more people here.
  - Cath: brought it up because at other churches, people didn't stick around for coffee hour after Easter worship so they could get together with their families. This church was different. If we're trying to walk back towards what we remember, a big spread after Easter service was part of our unique practice. It doesn't happen by accident so it needs to be planned. Do we as a gathered body want the Deacons to solve the problem?
    - John: we may have a few more folks present. Cath: that was our expectation for Christmas Eve and it didn't pan out.
    - Megan: thinks it's a good idea but she can't do the work.
  - Cath: as a Cabinet, is it a good idea?
    - Bill: yes, but maybe a toned down one.
    - Amy: maybe a fruit tray and a cheese and cracker tray so we have an option.
  - Susan: what if every cabinet member brings something? That would be 9 items.
    - Amy: is fine with it but do we have people to assemble and put it out?
    - Susan: she and Russell will be there and can make coffee and put it out.
  - Consensus: the Cabinet is comfortable with this proposal.
- Lay leadership for services is in good shape through April.
- They are still working on some Holy Week items.

### Finance & Treasurer's Report

BCC YTD Financial Summary	Actual Income	Actual Expenses	Income vs Expenses + / -
February	\$15,030	\$17,194	(\$2,164)

- Bill: Cash reserves and thresholds were incorrect because he had put in the wrong numbers for Dedicated Funds. The actual Dedicated Funds number is \$210,333.54 so cash reserves are \$65,032.72. Thus, the review threshold (total budgeted expenses \* 50%) should be \$48,362.

## ONA Report

- No participants here to report.

## Outreach Report

- Amy and Cath met with Angie Dacey. It went very well. Angie is very into her job. Amy feels like we'll have a good relationship with her, staying in contact, sharing information and resources.
  - Ann: has she asked us to do anything specific?
    - Amy: it was more of a meet and greet. They have talked about resources and if we know people who can help. People who can't read have come into the food pantry, which is a problem she hadn't anticipated. We're letting her know to ask even if we can't help.
    - Cath: She did send a list that wasn't on the Facebook page so we've acted on the one specific ask. We put it in the bulletin and will keep it there until the Facebook page changes.
  - Amy: for our food collection, we coordinated with her needs.
  - Megan: they've been supplying pasta and rice for our THM because they have so much extra.
  - John: The deacons have a PIN fund. Couldn't some of it be used to help someone? Cath had brought it up to Angie. We stressed that we're not a government agency so we're less restricted. She can ask us for quirky requests like a prom dress.
  - Amy: we've done things like giving out a gas gift card and Rite Aid gift card.
  - Cath: we've let her know we may not always be able to help but we can get back to her quickly either way.
  - Amy: she's got a budget that she has to follow from the town.
- Outreach collected 600 toiletry items that were dropped off to Nashua Soup Kitchen. This was due to Publicity's efforts to get donations from beyond just church membership: from THM and a collection barrel outside. The woman who owns Hair By Monica wanted to donate haircare products.
- John: maybe we should have Angie come and talk at church sometime. Cath: we did tell her during the meeting that we'd be willing to build a whole service around what she does and her clients. Amy: we also invited her to come to Senior Luncheon and talk.
- They have been talking to Zoe from His Mansion. She's a Communications Specialist. She sent Amy some materials and videos to use. They will be talking by phone tomorrow morning.
- Senior Luncheon had 36 dine in and 20-ish take out, including at the transfer station. They collected many donations from the seniors. People didn't want to leave.

## Minister's Report

### March 2022 (2/7 through 3/6)

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.

- Averaging 26.75 hours/week, which puts me between 19 hours under to 44 hours over since Sept. 12. This time last year, I was averaging 25.7 hours/week.
- Pastoral counseling in person & on the phone.
- Meeting with Brookline's new welfare officer.
- Planning questions for Chs. 8-22 of Project Hail Mary.
- Drafting plan to include Outreach partners in worship services in Lent and beyond. Sending the plan to Amy for the team's review.
- Setting up for worship planning for May & June.
- Having an additional medical procedure on my new knee.

### Services:

- 2/13: Responding to God's lovingkindness (hesed in Hebrew) as people of means.
- 2/20: Holding on the Golden Rule using God's grace and forgiveness as a guide.
- 2/27: Jesus is transfigured on the mountain top and on the plain.
- 3/3: Deciding how we will wear our ashes when we go out in the world after Ash Wednesday.
- 3/6: Protecting the empty space inside us which is there for God, protecting it even from ourselves when we want to fill it.

### Regular Meetings: Cabinet, Deacons

We had an Ash Wednesday service with 6 people present. She was reflecting on that afterwards. We usually do it between 2 churches to increase attendance. That week, because Cath was going into surgery next day, she didn't mention it at the service the prior Sunday to publicize. It was a good service and she wishes more people could have enjoyed it. She's thinking that for special services, she will work harder to promote them and be clear why they're worth attending, e.g. how does Ash Wednesday set you up for lent? Why is Easter sunrise service different?

### Trustees Report

- Jerry Farwell said he can replace the septic cover as soon as the weather allows. He will send an invoice when the work is complete.
- The basement crawl space is ready for the insulation. The freezer is now in the nursery.
- The bottom of the side door has rotted out which is why the seal no longer adheres. It will cost \$1,600: \$800 up front to order a door and supplies and the rest is labor. Once the door is in, she will schedule installation. Susan has contracted with Harvey Custom Carpentry (Stephen Harvey, owner) to repair the side exterior door frame and replace the door. He has ordered the door but delivery will probably be in early May.
- Russell was able to seal the crack in the front door from the inside and will fill it from the outside once the weather warms up for a few days in a row. We used a paintable caulk so she can repaint the door later on.
- Basement insulation is still on for the 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Susan noticed there were paper towels around the inlet pipe of the most-used bathroom. Tim Austin came in to fix it. A strange fix had been previously applied that Tim couldn't recognize. He replaced the whole thing.
- Amy: thanked Russell for fixing the molding she ripped down.
- The Hights sanded and salted last night in case the guy wasn't able to get it today but he made it.

### Publicity:

- Last week's YouTube service got a lot of good views, better than the 2 or fewer Candy usually sees as view count.

### Open Board Positions

- Cindy hasn't made a decision and is still thinking.
- Susan talked to John N. about joining the Trustees but doesn't think that's the direction we're going. She doesn't know David well enough to approach him.

### New or Other Business:

- Bill: with everything going on in Ukraine, our sign doesn't say anything about it. Does our church want to somehow show support?
  - Ann: UCCs Global Ministries has a whole page dedicated for vetted links to help.

- Amy: Cath had asked her about it and she hasn't gotten to it yet.
- Megan: her school contact has found a lot of legitimate ways to help.
- Bill: John Weidman's wife came from Chernobyl. Can we collect for Ukraine?
- Amy: we may be able to do some research and find a specific organization worth helping.
- Megan: maybe we can do something with April's THM.

The meeting was closed in prayer at 9:48 am by Rev Cath.