

**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING  
ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
APRIL 27, 2016**

**ATTENDEES:** Russell Bloom, Jean Chirpas, Barb Duclos, Lindsay Fairman, Dave Flick, Virginia Flick, Lou Geschwindner, Kelly Grimes, Jen Gruendler, Jane Harris, Jeff Helffrich, Linda Heverly, Bob Johnson, Bonnier Johnson, Gene Johnson, Susan Johnson, Neal Lassinger, Amy Marshall, Phil Mohr, Ray Raker, Renae Schunk, Eric Shafer, Kevin Sikorski, Adam Smith, Kelly Uchneat, Tori Von Leer, Jim Winck, Susan Winck, John Young, and Joan Zimmer

**CALL TO ORDER:** J. Helffrich called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

**DEVOTION:** N. Lassinger led a devotion based on John Wesley's sermon "A Catholic Spirit" in which Wesley appealed for unity among Christians.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** The minutes for the February 24, 2016, meeting were approved. J. Helffrich announced that going forward, approved minutes will be posted on St. Paul's website following the meeting at which they are approved.

**PASTORS' REPORTS:**

**Pastor Eric:** E. Shafer reported the following:

1. Based on what was reported through the Small Group Connector, 128 adults participated in a small group during the past two weeks. In addition, more than 100 were involved in Children and Youth Sunday School.
2. Average worship attendance is 437. Based on what was reported, about 52 percent of our average worship attendance is benefiting from being nurtured in a small group.
3. It is difficult to calculate the number of people involved in mission outreach. Many people were involved with Out of the Cold this year. Approximately 50 people helped assemble UMCOR health kits and school kits on February 28, and about 20 people welcomed Pastor Dan Wilcox, our missionary in Alaska, on April 1. We also had 75 people take part in the Stop Hunger Now meal packaging event on April 23. St. Paul's raised \$5,800 for that event, which will provide 20,000 meals for the hungry.
4. We have a possible 12 young people scheduled to be confirmed on May 22.
5. Worship highlights during Lent included Schubert's Mass in G; receiving three new members into the congregation; celebrating Palm Sunday and Holy Thursday; and hosting the Community Good Friday service. Attendance on Easter Sunday was 981.
6. His last Sunday at St. Paul's will be June 19; his last day in the office will be June 23.

L. Fairman asked if the ratio of worship attendees to members at St. Paul's is typical of most churches.

E. Shafer replied that about a third of our members are active, which is comparable to other churches.

J. Gruendler asked how often the membership rolls are purged. V. Flick stated that this is done annually.

K. Uchneat asked if the proposed consultation will provide guidance on how to reach beyond the membership rolls. N. Lassinger responded that the consultants' recommendations will focus on only a few critical things that we can do to move St. Paul's in a new direction. This may or may not include such guidance, depending on the consultants' findings.

L. Geschwindner asked if the Conference provides any guidance on figuring out the number of members involved in mission outreach. E. Shafer answered that it does not.

**Pastor Neal:** N. Lassinger announced that he has been appointed to the McConnellstown/Mill Creek Charge in Huntingdon County. He met recently with Greg Milinovich and reported that they had a good meeting. He is currently reading "The Speed of Trust: The One Thing That Changes Everything" by Stephen Covey. He challenged us to work on building trust at St. Paul's.

**CAMPUS MINISTRY REPORT:** J. Gruendler reported the following:

1. "Be Fed ... Be Known ... Be Loved ... Welcome Home" is Wesley's new vision statement, created by the Wesley Leadership Team with the assistance of consultant Rev. Ron Bell.
2. Centre County has recognized Abba Java as a Green Business Partner.
3. A celebration was recently held for 32 students who are graduating this semester. They were given coffee mugs and John Wesley's book, "Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living."

**MINISTRY MOMENT:** R. Bloom spoke about his role as St. Paul's Director of Music. As such, it is his responsibility to care for St. Paul's "musical health." He has been involved in St. Paul's music ministry for 26 years, serving first as director of the children's choir and for the past 11 years as overall music director. He said that it is great joy to serve on the worship committee. All music staff, himself included, are part-time employees. The Youth Choir is currently on hiatus due to scheduling challenges. His vision for the future includes addressing accessibility issues so that mobility-impaired individuals can participate in choir; improving the acoustics in the sanctuary; and addressing amplification and lighting issues in the sanctuary.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

**Finance:** K. Uchneat and K. Sikorski reported the following:

1. We started 2016 with an operating cash reserve of \$876.
2. Giving for the first quarter of 2016 was about \$16,000 over budget (over \$20,000 higher than the first quarter of 2015).
3. Overall church expenses were reduced by \$12,000 (still \$10,000 over the quarter's budget).
4. We are not utilizing the expected \$15,000 shortfall budgeted for the first quarter.
5. The preschool opened a full room on February 29 that is comprised entirely of Pre-K Counts grant-funded students. The income for the new room, approximately \$15,000 per month (March through June) is not reflected in the March numbers.
6. The operating cash reserve is currently negative (-\$20,178.19) due to the church and preschool shortfalls. The preschool shortfall will be eliminated once the Pre-K Counts grant funds are received.
7. The current balance of the Trustees' major maintenance fund is \$178,000.

J. Zimmer asked how much money would be received from the Pre-K Counts grant. K. Sikorski stated that the total will be about \$62,000. J. Zimmer noted that there was already a \$41,000 deficit in the

preschool account at the beginning of 2016. S. Winck asked if preschool tuition was not covering expenses. K. Sikorski explained that enrollment was low last year. K. Uchneat noted that the state requires certain teacher/pupil ratios, and that adding one child can sometimes mean that an additional teacher needs to be hired (expenses increase more than income).

J. Zimmer, S. Winck, and others expressed concern/confusion about the status of the preschool deficit as presented in the balance sheet for the first quarter. J. Helffrich asked that questions about the balance sheet be emailed to K. Sikorski to give him time to investigate. J. Winck stated that the financial statements need to be emailed to Council earlier so that members have sufficient time to review and email questions before meetings.

J. Helffrich stated that St. Paul's "antiquated" financial software often makes it difficult for K. Sikorski to have a clear picture of the church's financial status. K. Duclos is currently developing a short list of church management software with the expectation that an up-to-date package will be purchased in the near future.

**Staff-Parish Relations:** A. Marshall reported the following:

1. SPRC is meeting on the second Tuesday of every month for the foreseeable future.
2. S. Linnes is now receiving a small stipend as director of the Wellspring Praise Band. He reports to R. Bloom.
3. A farewell celebration for N. Lassinger, E. Shafer, and their families will be held May 22.
4. Our new senior pastor starts July 1; our new associate pastor starts September 1.
5. An informational meeting about the Growing Effective Churches consultation process will be held on April 30.

**Stewardship:** B. Duclos reported that turnout and feedback was good at the recent town hall meeting. Planning for the fall appeal is on hold until our new senior pastor arrives. J. Frear is her co-chair.

**Nominations/Membership:** V. Flick reported that total membership stands at 1,388 as of April 27, 2016.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** J. Helffrich announced that future Council meetings will begin at 7 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:** J. Helffrich adjourned the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Harris, Church Council Secretary