

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: 12/31/24

The December Congregation Council Meeting was held on 12/18/24

Council Members Present: Pastor Bannister, Ashdon Bobbie, Alan Divver, CJ Hamilton, Bob Muller, Shannon O'Neill, Barbara Quinn, Bruce Roper, Carol Schlegel, Jenn Shaw, Tom Smith, Maryanne Sweeney, Ken Woods, and Louise Woods.

Absent: Kiran Bodamer, Melanie Boyer, Anna Sweeney,

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Muller at 6:58 p.m. The scripture was read by Ashdon Bobbie and the prayer was offered by Jenn Shaw.

PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL:

None

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

*It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes from December 2024 as presented with changes. The motion was made and seconded by Tom Smith / CJ Hamilton.

MOTION CARRIED

REPORTS:

President, Bob Muller –Attached

Pastor Bannister – Attached

Attendance – Attached

Finance Committee – Attached – Carol explained that there was an error in the budget and will be making an adjustment to include benefits and benevolence.

Carol would like to get cost of the benefits package from Portaco but it hasn't come in yet. After 12/23 when she has corrected benefits cost, she will revise the budget and submit the corrections. The deficit is expected to increase about \$18,000 for the benefits plus \$12,000 for benevolence.

The salary for the Finance Director's position will be taken out since it is not being taken by Carol.

Council agreed that we could wait until the annual meeting and put out a revised budget.

The new total deficit for the 2025 budget is expected to be over \$40,000

Currently, we have \$46,000 in savings and \$118,000 in Thrivent, rather than \$11,000 as passed in the meeting.

Carol suggested that next year we disseminate the proposed budget in December but have the actual vote at the Annual meeting.

Bob Muller would like the final 2025 budget by end of this year.

Soliciting the congregation to get new ideas was suggested, as was including pledging again. It was suggested that a pledge is a good reminder for people of their commitment. However, quarterly statements accomplish the same thing, which we will be doing.

Tom Smith asked what the projected savings from not producing envelopes is expected to be. Carol answered around \$1,200.

The concern was raised that if people don't have envelopes in hand, they may not give.

The group discussed this and acknowledged that there may be people that want envelopes. However, it was agreed to move forward with the current envelope plan.

Electronic giving is still only 47 members. Some still need to write a check.

Pastor Bo would like it to be simple and clear for everyone.

Carol questioned the advantage of electronic giving and consistency seemed to be at the top.

Other electronic ways of giving were discussed too – Venmo, Zel, etc.

Finance will decide in 2025 whether or not we need or want a full audit in 2026 or 2027. A full audit can be very helpful, but it is also very expensive.

Carol explained that we knew it would take numerous years to reduce the deficit. Expenses has been cut and she continues to look for opportunities to further reduce spending. Poster's licenses, copier, etc.

*It was moved and seconded to accept the Finance Committee's report as presented. The motion was made and seconded by Ken Woods / CJ Hamilton. MOTION CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS:

- Continuing Resolutions – regarding Scouts – Bob Muller explained that we make it difficult for the Scouts to use our building with ongoing paperwork. He would like a blanket use permit for them so that they just call office to check availability. Bob will figure out wording and submit it for January.
- A motion was made for Troop 81 B&G to allow use of our building by request without any additional paperwork on an ongoing basis. It was moved and seconded by Bob Muller / Ken Woods

Bob would also like to see the Scouts march in association with us in the Hatboro parade in an effort to let the community know that the Scouts are part of St John's since we charter the organization.

- Staff Job Descriptions - ongoing
- Offering Envelopes Update – see notes above in Finance
- Benevolence Budget – See Benevolence Disbursements under new business
- Budget – see notes in finance
- New Council Members – Tom Smith met with Mark Vallone. Janice Vallone is also interested.
- Property, sewer lines – Ken explained that Rumpf will take all day for the sewer. A crack was at the top of the pipe and it backed up and overflowed. Steve of Free Flow said that the cause of the backup was towel wipes. Ken had to do the same thing (clear out wipes) a few weeks earlier with the toilet in the women's bathroom off the Narthex. New signs will be going up in the bathrooms.
- Security checks for the building was brought up by Ken Woods. Shannon said that she could do it Tuesdays if she's given a check list. A good walk through takes about 20 minutes. Bo could do it one night also.

Shannon suggested we broadcast the need to the congregation. Ken explained that it has to be done late enough that everyone is out of the building.

Ken said he will take a day of the week to do it also. Ken will send out the checklist to Ashdon for distribution.

Others have expressed interest in joining the property committee. We need to say that Property will meet and invite them to come out.

NEW BUSINESS:

Benevolence Disbursements – Carol brought up that Council needs to decide what we want to budget for benevolence for 2025. Also, we need to decide how much to give to the synod for this year, and how much to give to the pastor discretionary fund. The current balance is \$7,249.40. Of that, \$1,677.86 is designated to the pastor discretionary fund. That leaves \$5,571.54 to decide how to distribute. So far in 2024, \$1,500 has been given to the synod.

A Motion was made to give the synod an additional \$5,500 (for a total of \$7,000 for the year). It was moved and seconded by Carol Schlegel / Ashdon Bobbie. Motion Carried.

There was no budget for benevolence in the 2024 budget.

Last year we gave \$12,000 to the synod.

We could give \$12,000 and add to this year's deficit. After a brief discussion, it was decided to give what we have, not what we don't.

Benevolence averages around \$800/month for giving of the money coming in. Many people say they want their benevolence to go to synod, so a separate category will be made to flag those donations. Carol will target \$12,000 for the 2025 budget for synod. (\$1,000/month)

It was felt that we should target money for the pastor's discretionary fund to be two funds, those in the church that need help and those from the community that need help. Pastor would like to have a team that writes that up to keep track of those individuals that receive help. \$1,500 for each of the two categories for the year. CJ will help Bo with veterans.

The balance of funds needed would come from general fund to cover the benevolence budget.

A Motion was made to set up the budget for benevolence and the pastor's discretionary funds as described above. It was moved and seconded by Shannon O'Neill / CJ Hamilton.

- New Server Update – The new server is installed now. It runs and is being tested and ready for cut-over.
- Annual Meeting – The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held at 11:30 on 2/16/25
- Ken Woods pointed out that the combination for the safe has not been updated in years and should to be changed. Bob is working on it and needs a list of who should have the combination.
- Shannon nominated Alan Divver for VP and he has accepted.

- It was suggested that we change the start time of Council meetings up to 6:00 starting with this coming's January meeting. All agreed.
- Pastor said someone is attending now because they saw us in the parade.
- Pastor will be taking off December 25 through Jan 5. Pastoral coverage will be provided and Shannon will be on call to facilitate coverage.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Community Outreach Ministry – No report
- Constitution and Bylaws – No report
- Fellowship – No report
- Hatboro Community Cupboard – See report. It was noted that back to back food drives have helped tremendously.
- Kids & Family Ministry – No report, they did not meet last week. Maryanne said that they had a good turn out and the youth group gift exchange is coming up and will be planning activities and communication for next year. Family nights.
- Memorials – No report
- Mutual Ministry – No report
- Property – See report – Bob asked about the late fee for PECO – will be going to online payment system. Office toilet, \$370 for office toilet. Lethel will be ending, Orkin will be starting instead. Ken – met with Rumpf who looked at crack in sewer line.
- Social Media – No report
- Stewardship – No report
- Women's Ministry – No report
- Worship & Music – See report – Tom – free will offerings received for Joseph and Mary was \$1,502. Decision was made that the donations would go to the needs of the church rather than specifically to the music program.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

CARES AND CONCERNS:

Pastor Bo and council members shared their cares and concerns.

NEXT MEETING: Date: January 15, 2025

Meeting Leader: Ashdon Bobbie

Scripture: Jenn Shaw

Prayer: Shannon O'Neill

Refreshments: Bruce Roper

*It was moved and seconded by Tom Smith /Ken Woods to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Roper