**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SWEET HOLLOW**

**95 OLD COUNTRY ROAD, MELVILLE, NY 11747**

**Annual Congregational Meeting**

**January 27, 2019**

**Moderator:** The Reverend Mary Margaret Flannagan

**Agenda**

**Opening Prayer**

**Call to Order**

**Appointment of Secretary**

*Clerk of Session, Lynn Burke*

**Communication**

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**Motion to dissolve the Pastoral Nominating Committee**

**Reading and approval of the minutes of the meeting**

**Closing Prayer**

**Adjourn**

**Pastoral Report**

 The previous year was a difficult one for Sweet Hollow. A terrible flu season swept through January and February, keeping many people away from worship and other church activities. Regular attendance remained low for several months afterwards. Spring snow storms felled trees on our building and grounds, necessitating immediate repairs and insurance claims. Then just before Easter two thieves burglarized the church, taking thousands of dollars of office equipment and damaging property. Each of these events took a toll on our morale and resources. It was a struggle to maintain our equilibrium.

Nevertheless, God is good. All the time. Through these months, and for the years preceding, we prayed and prayed for God’s guidance. What should we do? How shall we love, invest, and serve? Where should we go from here? Church members (particularly the Wednesday morning Prayer Circle and church officers) faithfully prayed over our financial and volunteer resources. We knew that God would respond in God’s good timing. As the prophet Joel wrote, “the Lord, your God, is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love… Who knows when God will turn and leave a blessing behind him?” (2:14)

 From the first days of September, we felt God’s abundant blessings rain down upon us. Having prayed for our children and young families for years, now we have a weekly Sunday School class with regular attendance. Having steadfastly prayed over our financial resources, now our 2019 pledges are significantly higher than in recent history. Having prayed about our church structure and church officers, now our Session is reduced to be more reflective of our active membership. Having sought clarity and transparency in our congregational decision making, now the church meets regularly for informal forums wherein everyone can share the current needs and business.

 God has responded to our prayers. Now we must practice faithful stewardship and care for all that God has given us. First, we must show up. Showing up is the most important part of being community, for being present allows the church to see itself as we are. Simply being together invites the sharing of news and love and Spirit. This is the gift of the Church. Come to weekly worship and other programs. Then join us in doing the work of the church: befriend new visitors, teach young children, care for one another (and our property), and serve our neighbors. We must continue to work toward the future that God plans for us, not just sustain our past with comfortable or tired habits. We must continue to pray – with thanksgiving and humility – for all these gifts, as well as the challenges that lie ahead of us.

 Knowing our ongoing financial and property maintenance challenges, Sweet Hollow will host The Presbyterian Foundation’s Project Regeneration on Long Island this year. They will analyze our resources and make recommendations for our future, along with a dozen other neighboring Presbyterian congregations. Church officers will lead the congregation’s reflection after each of the four project meetings.

 While this new year is no more settled or secure than last year, I believe that we will see God fast at work. Be on the lookout for what God is doing in our midst, what God is saying, and where God is calling. “Who knows when God will turn and leave a blessing behind him?” (2:14)

 See you in church!



Rev. Mary Margaret Flannagan

Clerk’s Statistical Report

**Membership as of December 31, 2017 119**

LOSSES:

Removal by certificate of transfer 3

Deaths 0

Other Session Removals 18

 -21

ADDITIONS:

Joined - confirmation class 0

Certificate of Transfer 0

Affirmation of Faith 1

Other Session Additions 0 +1

**Membership as of December 31, 2018 99**

BAPTISMS:

 Children 1

 Adults 0

 Total 1

**Treasurer’s Report**

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**Budget and Stewardship Committee**

To all that have pledged and donated this year, thank you for your continued generosity!

We wouldn’t be the “Little Church with the Big Heart” without you and your time, talents

and treasures supporting all the good work that we do!

During this year’s Stewardship campaign, we asked our members to reflect on the many

ways we can be generous. Your committee selected “Honor the Lord with all that you

have” as our theme. When we honor the Lord with all that we have, we have faith that he

will provide to us all that we truly need. When times are tough, we must dig deeper and

be more generous of our time, talents and treasures.

As of January 8, 2019, we have received a total of 38 pledges for a total of $88,895.00,

compared with 34 pledges for $76,115.00, received last year. Praise the Lord! We

received building use income of $80,260.25 compared with $62,592.05 last year. Praise

the Lord! Together we raised $8,716.87 via our fundraising events. Praise the Lord! We

received donations from over 50 families last year of over $90,000.00! Praise the Lord!

Please consider required minimum distributions (RMD), endowments and other estate

financial planning vehicles for Sweet Hollow.

We cannot begin to rest now, we must continue to be bold and spread the good news

about Jesus; engage your family and friends in discussion about the joy of membership at

Sweet Hollow. We are a small church with loyal members who have an opportunity to

make a big difference if we do it together. Each one of us matters greatly here.

Your Budget – Stewardship Committee,

Jim Sommermeyer (Chair), Lynn Burke, Jean Cavanagh, Ed Conroy, Tracy Dein, Bob Earthy, Laura Fallon, Reverend Meg Flannagan, and Tim Mason

 

**PCSH January 2019 - Financial Summary**

2018 Budget $194,315.00

2018 34 pledges for $76,115.00 (Pledge Donations $86,671.00)

2018 Total Income $190,055.00

Donations $100,018.00

Building Use $ 81,321.00

Fund Raising $ 8,716.00

2018 Total Expenses $207,842.00

2018 Shortfall $ 17,778.00 (Taken from Savings)

Fuel + $4,000.00

Snow Removal + $3,000.00

Per Capita + $2,700.00 (Member Shortfall)

Manse Maint. + $1,600.00 (Session approved)

Reimbursed Exp + $1,800.00

Major Maint. + $1,500.00 (Above Insurance Claim)

Worker’s Comp + $2,000.00

2018 Current Savings $ 82,661.69

2019 38 pledges for $88,895.00

2019 Projected Income $200,000.00

Donations $112,000.00

Building Use $ 80,000.00

Fund Raising $ 8,000.00

2019 Projected Budget $194,315.00

**Christian Education Committee**

The Christian Education Team is committed to teaching the Bible, not only in scripture, but by action.

*Nursery*

Nursery care is offered each week for children under the age of 4 years. A lesson consisting of a song or craft project is prepared each week for those attending. The Nursey is staffed by Sukey Walter and volunteer members of our congregation.

*Pre-Kindergarten-5th Grade*

Our method of teaching to children was to teach one scripture lesson over many weeks, rotating in each week an additional activity such as a game, cooking or craft project. Last year we started an At-Home Sunday School series. We had short lessons posted on our church website for the families to do each week. A lesson was taught on the third Sunday of each month at church when the children leave worship for the Sunday School class. This Fall, we began weekly lessons again since the number of children attending worship has increased. All lessons and crafts were prepared by Carol Keil whom we sincerely thank for her time and effort.

6th Grade – 8th Grade

There no formal lessons for this age group. They are encouraged to attend worship. They did participate in Youth Sunday where they served as ushers and liturgists.

Adult Bible Study

There was a Dinner and Discussion group led by Pastor Flannagan during the Spring, Summer and Fall held at the Sweet Hollow Diner. There were usually eight to ten adults at each gathering with a different topic to discuss each week. During Prayer Circle each week they participate in a bible study called Lectio Divina.

Fundraising and Events

The Christian Ed Team sponsored events including the Pancake Breakfast, Easter Egg Hunt, Strawberry and Ice Cream fellowship time, Welcome Home Barbeque and the Birthday Party for Jesus. A May Plant Sale fundraiser was held at Otto Keil Florists.

Thank You

For the many of you who volunteered to provide Nursey care or taught a Sunday School lesson, served as Room Shepherd and helped with the plant sale, it is so appreciated!

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Burke, Chairperson

**Fellowship and Outreach and Mission Committee**

During 2018, Sweet Hollow enjoyed a variety of enriching Fellowship and Outreach events, including our fundraisers, while casting a wider net into our greater community. We were most blessed to participate in a number of Mission activities, which as a small church, is truly a gift to be cherished and shared.

**Fellowship and Outreach**

* The **Book Discussion Group** met throughout 2018, sharing lively discussion after reading a selection of thought-provoking books. Thank you to Sukey Walter for leading this group.
* The **Church Brunch Bunch** met up through May. Many thanks to Bill and Sukey Walter for their leadership, enjoyable topics and dedication throughout the years.
* A **Thank-You Luncheon** was held for **Centro Missionero**, in appreciation for their gracious efforts in sanding and sealing our Sanctuary floor.
* On October 13, during Columbus Day weekend, Sweet Hollow held our **Fall Festival,** with a bounce house, face painting, sand art, two photo opportunity areas, baked goods and of course, pumpkins. A wonderful time was had by all, as church members chatted with visitors, assisted in selling pumpkins, staffed one of our activities or just soaked in the beauty of our church grounds. Thanks to all for a great community outreach experience.
* On World Communion Sunday, following an inspiring worship service, we shared a **Special Coffee Hour** with members of **Centro Missionero** and **St. Francis Community of Faith**.
* **Women For Women (W4W)**, which is open to all women age 18 or older, participated in an array of exciting small group activities. We were pleased to once again join together with members of Old First’s Women’s Group for a few events, and look forward to further nurturing our bond.

**Fundraising**

Many thanks to Mickey Rogers-our “Ad Hoc” Fundraiser, as well as members of the Fundraising Committee.Several great ideas were presented during Fundraising Committee meetings. The Committee looks forward to implementing some of these ideas in the future.

Our **Annual Pumpkin Patch** kicked off with the pumpkin unloading on September 29 and ran through October 31. Thanks to the generosity of spirit of our volunteers, **total sales this year were $4,799**. Many thanks to all those who assisted with the unloading, to Ray Moder for his help, to those who staffed one shift or many shifts, to Frank Sansone and Michelle Von Brook for co-leading and coordinating this fundraiser, and to Carol and Otto Keil for the pallets, flowers, hay bales and corn stalks. Additionally, thanks to all those members who prepared and donated delicious baked goods, specifically Jill Conroy, Carol Keil and Sukey Walter; we had our best year ever for baked goods sales!

Sweet Hollow held our first **Open Mic Concert Fundraiser** on Saturday,November 10. Special thanks to Lynn and Rich Burke for spearheading, coordinating and organizing this event. Thank you to the Fundraising Committee-chaired by Mickey Rogers-thanks to all the performers, and to our members who graciously volunteered their time and talents, by donating gift baskets and baked goods, and by assisting in the many facets of this event by working together to make this a wonderfully successful fundraiser-a total of **$2,200 was raised from this event**.

**Mission**

* On June 24, members of Sweet Hollow hosted **Project H.O.P.E.’s Sunday Supper** at St. Hugh of Lincoln Roman Catholic Church in Huntington Station, as well as providing a vast assortment of desserts, as we ministered to those in need. Many thanks to all who assisted.
* **Sharing Bags for Tri CYA** were put upin September for healthy snacks and school supplies. Thanks to everyone who donated.
* **Our Annual Clothing Drive to benefit the United Veterans Beacon House** was held from October through November 11, when they were blessed before being passed on to military families in need. Thank you to all who participated in this much-needed drive.
* **Adopt A Family** – This year, Madonna Heights expanded their outreach. We adopted 13 children, ranging in age from 2 months to 4 years. Many thanks to all those who graciously participated in brightening the lives of these children.
* **Family Service League –** Beginning on November 11, Sweet Hollow’s Sunday School has been making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the Family Service League on the second Sunday of each month. Forty sandwiches are prepared, and then lunch bags are assembled with bottled water, fruit and a salty snack. Thank you to all those who have donated either monetarily or specific items, or have assisted in making sandwiches for this ministry.
* **Project H.O.P.E. (Helping Other People Eat) and HiHi (Huntington Interfaith Homeless Initiative)** – Sweet Hollow received many generous donations from our church members for items for the **HiHi Storm Supply Box** which provides vital supplies for the men who HiHi attends to during the cold weather months. Your kindness is most gratefully appreciated.
* Our **“Box of Giving,”** located in the breezeway, received a thankfully steady stream of donations over 2018, which were brought to the Huntington Community Food Council. Thanks to all!

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Sansone (Chairperson), Barbara Martin, Mickey Rogers,

and the Fellowship and Outreach & Mission Committee Members

**House and Property Committee**

The House and Property Committee would like to extend a very warm thanks to all who participated in last year’s spring cleanup after a difficult winter. We will look to do a similar function this coming spring.

A similar hand of gratitude to *Centro Misionero* for their work on the Sanctuary floor, the gazebo, and the installation of a front sprinkler system. Material and labor was solely provided by *Centro Misionero’s* parishioners.

Special Thanks to Ed Conroy for his help in taking down the overgrown holly bushes by the Hall entrance.

Gratitude to Frank Sansone for his weekly lawn mowing. And continued gratitude to Jean Cavanagh, Carol Keil, Joe Moder, and others who volunteered in caring for our grounds.

We are all aware of things that need to be completed around our grounds and currently we are looking for estimates related to the driveway to the back, as well as the parking lot as a whole; the heating systems and what choices would best suit our needs; and continued discussions with regards to the breezeway as well as a multitude of other items that are continually brought up. As we move forward in 2019, it would be great to have more of our church family involved and in attendance to discuss their concerns as well as thoughts and insight to efficient solutions. There is a team effort required and you need a few or more people to make up that team. Please consider joining us.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Von Brook, Chairperson

**Congregational Nominating Committee**

**Nominees for Elder**

*3 Year Term*

Jim Sommermeyer

Bill Von Brook

*1 Year Term*

 Lynn Burke

**Nominees for Deacons**

*3 Year Term*

Jean Cavanagh

Niaja Mowatt

**Nominees for 2019 Church Officers Nominating Committee**

**Representing the Congregation-at-Large**

To Be Announced

Submitted by the 2018 Congregational Nominating Committee:

Lynn Burke (Session), Jill Conroy, Barbara Martin (Diaconate), Michelle Von Brook

**Personnel Committee**

The Personnel Committee meets and reviews with Sweet Hollow’s paid employees: Pastor Flannagan, since she came in June of 2015, Barbara Zimmerman, our Church Secretary, in her tenth year, Rachel Fogel, our Choir Director, also in her tenth year, and Tracy Dein, our Treasurer who has completed her second year.

 Sweet Hollow is blessed to have Pastor Meg, and to have wonderful and conscientious employees – Barbara, Rachel, and Tracy. On behalf of the congregation, we sincerely thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Sansone (Chairperson-), Lynn Burke, and Jim Sommermeyer

**Worship Committee**

The Worship Committee oversees all worship planning and review. Services this year followed the same pattern as recent years. Holy Week included a combined Maundy Thursday/Good Friday soup supper and prayer, Saturday Easter Vigil, and two services on Easter Sunday (sunrise and 10 am). Six different congregations shared our Easter Vigil; it was a fun and dynamic evening. Two worship services were held on Christmas Eve: 5 pm and 9 pm. While it would be nice to have one large service on holidays, increased attendance necessitates multiple services.

The Worship Committee also supplies our worship services. Traditional taper candles had been placed on the pulpit. Despite trying dripless and different brands, the wax made continual messes and occasionally dangerous debris. The Committee thus purchased liquid candles to fit in our brass candlestick holders (made by Bob Templeton). Bob kindly adjusted the candlestick holders. Now we have silent, clean flames on these beautiful candles each week. Thank you to Bob and Marc Young for helping with this project.

Please make worship attendance a priority for you and your family. This is the heart of our congregational life. We look forward to seeing you in church!