**CUMC/WESLEY FOUNDATION**

**CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES**

**September 24, 2020**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Members Present:** Brenda Allen, Adam Faeth, Jen Hibben, Mitch Hoyer, Jason Janssen, Jane Jacobson, Mary Lautzenhiser Bellon, David Orth, Jennifer Plagman-Galvin, Mary Wickham, Steve Williams

**Members Absent:** Gerry Kennedy

**Staff Present:** Lauren Loonsfoot

**Call to Order**

Chair Orth called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The council took turns sharing answers to the question, “How is it with your soul?”

**A motion was made (Hoyer) and seconded (Jacobson) to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2020 meeting. Motion passed.**

**Pre-Charge Conference Conversation**

Chair Orth said that our charge conference was scheduled for November 19, 2020. He said that Rev. Heecheon Jeon, the new District Superintendent for the Central Region, passed along the following questions for the church to answer prior to the charge conference.

Hoyer asked for more context behind the questions. Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said that there will be five charges that will be present at the Charge Conference this year, and there will be a service. Then each church will go through the business of the meeting with a designated elder since the district superintendent will not be at all of the charges. She said that they want every charge in the United Methodist Church to have a discussion about these questions and come up with a shared set of goals that they will measure themselves against.

**What are the core values of your mission and ministry in the context of the United Methodist Church in Iowa?**

Allen said that one value that is expressed in our Collegiate Wesley’s purpose statement is inclusiveness. Jacobson said another piece is our commitment to our student ministry. Plagman-Galvin said the church has an opportunity to provide a space and opportunity to explore issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion and how those can connect to our faith. Pastor Williams said that what really sets Collegiate Wesley apart from other churches is that it is living out its purpose. He said another example was raising $50,000 for the school lunch debts. Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said she also noticed Collegiate Wesley was a community that took very seriously their own learning. She said it is a community of people that wants to enlarge their thoughts and minds. She said she thought one of the core values should be learning or growing in self-awareness. Allen said the key points from the purpose statement were caring about others, growing in faith, and serving others.

**How does COVID-19 affect your ministry? What areas of ministry can be created or changed to be more relevant to a new generation (Post-COVID)?**

Chair Orth said that in the Leadership Institute session he listened to earlier that day, Rev. Adam Hamilton said he expects there to be people that never attend the Church of the Resurrection again in person. Allen said that she thought of her parent’s church, which has largely gone back to in-person gatherings and conducting meetings in person. She asked whether the use of technology affects who can participate since it requires a good internet connection. Allen said that Collegiate Wesley historically had a lot of participation in music, and that has been impacted by COVID-19.

Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon asked when the church does come back to in-person services, what will those services look like? What music will we have? Maybe COVID-19 moved the conversation up a little.

Janssen said that one opportunity that came out of this pandemic is that the church created a digital worship. Jacobson said that digital worship throws our traditional boundaries out the window. She said that Collegiate Wesley has always been focused on students, and they come and go. She asked, does this digital worship now mean they can continue to participate in the church after they move away? Hoyer said that are a lot of things that could supplement a digital worship such as the outdoor Morning Watch service. He said there were likely a lot of ways that we could grow through small groups.

Hoyer asked if the finances of the church were impacted by the pandemic. Janssen said that we are about 5-8% behind in giving compared to where we were last year, but expenses are also lower. He said that it still looks similar to previous years, but Finance Committee is watching it carefully.

Chair Orth said that one thing that is missing is just the informal and impromptu conversations that used to happen in the church building.

Pastor Williams said that Loonsfoot, Drake, Pastor Hibben, and Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon were providing wonderful examples of adaptive leadership in the digital worship through all of their creative ideas.

Wickham said that when you start something new, it is a good idea to get feedback. She suggested one example was an assessment tool called Plus/Delta where you might ask for two things you like about digital worship, and two things would like to see added.

**Why do you believe that your church would have a future in next generations to come? Or why not?**

Allen said she believed the church has a future in the next generations because the next generation is more sensitive to social justice issues, which has been a big part of Collegiate Wesley so far. Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said she thought the church had a strong future as the world becomes more interconnected. She said that Collegiate Wesley can provide islands of acceptance for people who are searching, or who are not finding inclusivity. She said there is a generosity of heart at Collegiate Wesley. She said that Collegiate Wesley is inquisitive and can handle theological meaning with the events growing in the living world.

Jacobson said her concern would be becoming too comfortable, not having the courage to accept change. She said that COVID is helping make some changes that the church needed. She said it was always a danger in an organization to get into a rhythm that is comfortable. She said the church needs to do something to prevent becoming too comfortable in its rhythms.

Pastor Hibben said one thing that has come up in organizations she has been a part of before is putting preferences over purpose. She said keeping the purpose statement front and center will help us as a community to make that purpose more and more real.

**COVID-19 Response Team Update**

Jacobson said the group put together some guidelines for in-person gatherings and started taking requests for room space. She said that they put some information about those guidelines and process in the weekly email this week. Chair Orth asked whether the group received any feedback so far. Pastor Hibben said there are a few people who have been vocal about wanting to return to in-person worship. She said that the congregation has overall been supportive of the safety measures the church has taken. Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said that the council should be prepared because there could be even more feelings of grief and loss when the church does reopen, because in-person worship will not look like it did before. Chair Orth said the Leadership Institute session had an informal poll during the session and about 52% of the churches present were not back to in-person worship. The Church of the Resurrection sponsors the Leadership Institute. They have about 25,000 members, with 6,000 attending worship services, and they have not resumed in-person worship.

**Property Needs Assessment Team Update**

Chair Orth said that they are putting together a general survey to go out to the congregation to gather feedback from those who are not part of a committee or cluster.

**Nominations Team Update**

Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said the team will meet on October 1st. Chair Orth said that Plagman-Galvin asked to step down from Administrative Council, and Ann Sandine agreed to fill the chair position.

**Church Council Meeting Day**

Chair Orth said that one of the ideas the Future Church team had was to move as many meetings as possible to Monday nights, so that the other nights of the week could be available for small groups. The council moved the meetings to the fourth Thursday of the month to accommodate Pastor Coon’s schedule. The council agreed to move the future meetings back to the fourth Monday of the month.

**Adjourn**

Pastor Hibben provided the closing prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Faeth, Secretary

Next meeting: October 26, 2020