

United Church of Christ Congregational Executive Board Meeting Minutes

October 13, 2024 (approved November 10, 2024)

Benjamin Crosby, serving as temporary Convener, called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM. Katie Bauer, Gail Carlson, Ben Crosby, and Rick Ehram were present along with Alice Ling, our “Interim” Pastor. Christi Thielman was absent.

The meeting opened with a conversation with Jae Jean Achord, Scott Fenn and Amy Lynn from the Wallace Christmas Fund. They reported that their use of the church basement has been working out well for the past year. Among other things, they offered to pay \$600 rent for the coming year to help offset utility costs. Ben agreed to draft a new Letter of Understanding for the coming year.

Following the conversation, Alice opened the meeting with prayer and we spent a few minutes checking in with one another.

The Board approved the agenda with one minor addition.

Housekeeping Issues

The minutes for the September 15, 2024 Executive Board meeting were approved without additions or corrections.

Alice offered a Pastor’s report. She reported that she has secured one tentative commitment for pulpit supply in November.

There was preliminary discussion about Advent/Christmas arrangements. The Board authorized her to order a few Advent devotionals for the season. They agreed to finalize plans at the November Board meeting.

Ben introduced the September financial report and observed that we have had a good month financially.

There was discussion about the condition of the two upright vacuum cleaners. The Board authorized the purchase of a Dyson portable vacuum at a cost of approximately \$500.

Ben offered a written report regarding the wedding hosted at the church on October 4-5, 2024. A spirited discussion ensued. After considerable conversation about the restrooms both upstairs and downstairs, Ben was authorized to secure signage to improve access to the building’s upstairs restrooms. There was also talk about raising our rental rates for weddings but no action was taken.

Brief mention was made about both mowing/snow removal and the November 24 Geoffrey Flolo concert.

Old Business

A draft letter to the congregation was distributed and approved in principle. The Board affirmed the “less is more” approach of the letter and also the plan to address the Bylaws changes at this meeting. Ben indicated that he would get it in the mail on or before November 3 and would entertain additional thoughts between now and the time it goes out.

Katie spoke about progress on the draft brochure. She agreed to send out a PDF of the brochure in its current state along with an invitation for further input. The Board agreed that we would print it in-house when its ready for publication.

The Board spoke favorably about the concept of creating temporary walls at the top of the stairs off the narthex and at the bottom of the stairs off the 4th Street entrance. They agreed to ponder the options until the November Board meeting.

Ben reported that the porting of the church telephone number is now complete. Voicemail messages are available via email (both transcribed and in MP3 format). Voicemails are currently going to Ben's email address but can be directed anywhere. There is no longer a physical church phone.

Katie agreed to cover music for the October 20 worship service.

New Business

The Board had lengthy discussion about the church insurance policy and the fact that we have no "safe church" policies in place. With our renewal date approaching, it has become clear that our lack of policies compromises the coverage available to us. The Board agreed to review some policy templates and meet on October 27 to work on policy development. Ben agreed to send the materials involved to the Board.

Ben distributed a draft 2025 budget for review at the next regular monthly meeting.

Ben agreed to contact the folks who have re-certified our fire extinguishers for service.

At the end of the meeting, the Board affirmed that meetings go better when discussions stay on track and they playfully deputized Gail to be the Board "enforcer".

The meeting was adjourned.

The next two meetings are scheduled for October 27, 2024 and November 10, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,
Benjamin Crosby