

First Congregational UCC

Board Minutes

March 12, 2023

1:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 1:36 p.m. In attendance were Chris Cain, Larry Burke, Peggy Grant, Maggie Thomas, Carol Austin-Janssen, Chris Nealis, and Rev. Gene Derryberry. The meeting opened by Chris Nealis with a devotion focused on Reconciliation.

Approval of Minutes from Feb 12, 2023 Board Retreat

The minutes were approved unanimously.

Pastoral Report

- Rev. Gene Derryberry provided the following report:

Following the Transition Team conversation regarding the “Core Values” of FCUCC I recommend that:

- We set a date (or series of dates) for the Executive Board, The Transition Team, the leaders of the Ministry Teams and committees, and the staff to meet and develop a “Ministry Plan” for 2023-24.
- The Executive Board set “Servant Leadership” as a theme for 2023.
- We consider the Moravian Star with its interconnecting beams of light crossing through a common point (FCUCC) as a symbol for 2023
- The Board plan a workshop on a “Behavioral Covenant” with the congregation.
- The Transition Team continue its emphasis on understanding the “identity” of the FCUCC congregation and design ways to engage the congregation: -
 - in understanding lay ministry/leadership,
 - connections with the Asheville community and the United Church of Christ,

At this time we understand that the Executive Director of the Southern Conference Dr. Edward Davis and Dr. Warren Casiday will be here on March 26 to lead worship and meet with the congregation. Are there questions that the Executive Board and its committees would like discussed/addressed?

- **Will the Board plan and fund a congregational meal?**

I strongly encourage the “By-Laws Revisions Group” to consider the ‘Pastor Parrish Relations Team’ proposal from Dr. David Ourisman.

The In-Between Church by Rev. Alice Mann (and related articles by her found online) may be a good resource for planning based on church size. FCUCC is a “Pastoral Size” church (approximately 100 active participants) that has transitioned in the recent past from “Program

Size” church. During the pandemic closure the congregation participation varied from 50 to 100, in other words from “Family Size” to “Pastoral Size”. This “living and planning between congregation sizes is very stressful on leaders and staff” (as you know). This book helps leaders to be aware of issues during this transition time.

FCUCC is in the Lenten Season, and we are looking forward to the Holy Week and Easter services.

The Ministry Team leaders and the Staff are now sharing their plans for the coming months in a separate document (compiled by Kathleen Stigmon). Leadership immediate plans and reports are generally shared in the church newsletter. I hope that we are shifting toward planning and away from reviewing the past.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Interim Pastor and “Coach” to your Transition Team.

Gene

Rev. Gene Derryberry

- Discussion ensued with the following:
 - With regard to the question of the Board providing a meal on March 26, 2023, the Board has no money in the budget. Chris Cain will talk to the Treasurer, Joanne Roudebush, to discuss and see if there are funds available elsewhere in the church budget.
 - It was suggested that we provide soup and sandwiches at this meal.
 - Larry Burke will talk to the kitchen renter, Pro Kitchen, to see if they would be willing to prepare this lunch.

Report on Ministries

- [See March2023_Ministry_StaffPlansandProposals.pdf]
- The Board approved the report unanimously.
- Laundry Love
 - Support for this ministry is waning even though demand is increasing.
 - It was suggested that we consider finding a partner for this ministry to help support both funding and efforts.
 - We also need a report from Andrew Hoots, reporting on demand and activity.

Approval of February Financial Report

March 12 meeting (2023) Finance Report

- Everyone received the February end of month reports via email this week. Please review and respond with any questions or comments.
- The air conditioner and heat pump have been installed and \$10,850 was paid from the Building Fund.

- There has been a \$600 donation by a choir member designated to help pay for the speaker system in the front of the sanctuary. That project should be done by the time of this meeting. Estimated cost \$800-1,000 to be paid from the Building Fund.
- I will be out of town March 6-13 and March 25-30. Coverage of plate giving on Sunday will be arranged. I currently have not found an additional member for the Finance Committee. Suggestions are welcome.

Joanne Roudebush, Treasurer

March 3, 2023

- After a brief discussion, the report was approved unanimously.
- [See attached February 2023 FCUCC Financials]

Personnel Committee Report

- Recommendations to Board:
 - 1. Delete 5.4 of Personnel Policy, which stated that members could not be hired. 4.3, which was approved by the Board in September 2022 states that members may be hired and describes the process.
 - 2. Change 8.0 of the Personnel Policy to address the policy for staff/congregant grievances as indicated in red font. Delete the remaining current language under 8.0.
 - 3. Refer "Parish Pastor Relations Team" concept to the Bylaws Revision Committee to determine the future description and potential bylaw revision.
 - 4. The Personnel Cmte recognized that Gene's contract ends on June 4th and agreed that the Board should make the decision about the extension and terms of the Interim Pastor's contract. The Personnel Cmte is available for consultation.
- These changes were approved unanimously.

Approval of January Building and Grounds Report

- Building & Grounds Report March 9, 2023
 - The chancel speakers were installed last week after Doug crawled under the chancel to string speaker wire and John Haynes installed the amplifier (which arrived weeks earlier than expected). The speakers were used during the Sunday service on March 5. They sound good and make hearing the service much easier for the choir and the minister. Doug is working on the floor at the northeast corner of the chancel to make it safer and to manage the sound system wiring more neatly. That work required the temporary removal of a heating unit, but that unit has since been returned to its original position as the work progresses.
 - Doug rehung the chimes at the northwest corner of the chancel. The anchors holding the chimes to the wall were weak but Doug fixed that. The Music Director and organist will work on connecting the wires to the individual chimes so they can be operated from the small keyboard by the organist.

- One of the concrete posts at the west end of the ramp outside the kitchen was smashed, apparently by someone driving into it. Doug and Larry Burke have been discussing how to replace it and hope to install the new post during the week of March 20. The general goal is to make the new post taller and more reflective, so drivers can see it more easily.
- Doug has been working on repairing the outside security cameras behind the education wing. Of the four cameras back there, three didn't work at all so Doug replaced all four, thinking it was only a matter of time until the fourth camera fails. He is in the process of stringing wire from the office to the cameras.
- A refrigerator in the kitchen has starting making bad noises, like a moving part that is about to fail. Doug is looking into it and will call for service if necessary.
- The Building & Grounds committee meeting for March was rescheduled from the 6th to the 20th because Noreen is out of town until next week, and Jim Beggs wants to meet with the committee and the 20th was the best day for everyone.
- Larry reported that the new speakers in the sanctuary are working well.
- The removal of the carpet in the sanctuary has not yet been resolved. The Committee continues to discuss it.
- The Board approved the report unanimously.

Approval of January Transition Team Report

- This report was discussed in the Executive Session

Thoughts on Deacons Mission and Duties Update from James Canty

- [See Deacons Mission and Duties March 2023]
- This is a “working document,” not a policy.
- It is evident that we need a “Security Team” for Sunday mornings and other church events. This has always been the responsibility of the Deacons. It was suggested that this discussion include the Security Team that was active prior to Covid (early 2020) It was suggested that we establish a separate planning team for this purpose. Chris agreed to be in touch with Eric Lyons to discuss further.

Discussion Agenda

- Chris Nealis commented on the issue of a Pastor/Parish Relations Committee:
 - “I requested this issue not be referred to the Bylaws Review Committee for two reasons,
 - 1) According to my understanding of what Bylaws should be, “a constitutional foundation” document, not part of the operational or policy directives of an organization, and with this, a Pastor/Parish committee or team would not fall under this definition, and should be a Policy & Procedures group; and
 - 2) Our church has a problematic history with previous Pastor/Parish Relations Committees and this was the specific reason the decision was made in 2012 to do away with this type of function, placing these responsibilities under the Personnel

Committee. Events and similar issues in 2022 reinforced this decision.

After some discussion and clarifying comments from Gene, it was agreed that I would reach out to John Whitener and David Ourisman to request a meeting with Gene where the four of us could discuss this further. I would also search for additional information from the UCC website.”

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- Buildings and Grounds – Should this be a standing committee rather than an appointed team?
- Continuing education for FCUCC? Chris Nealis suggested a book, “The In-Between Church,” to be read and discussed with the congregation.
- Another suggested book: “Do I Stay Christian” by Brian McClaren
- The Behavioral Covenant continues to be a tabled topic. Carol will come up with the next steps to discuss at the Board’s next meeting.
- Safe Church Policy – to be discussed at the next Board meeting.
- Next two Board meetings:
 - Sunday, April 16, 2023
 - Sunday, May 14, 2023

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Austin-Janssen

Attachments:

- February 2023 FCUCC Financials (See Financials button)
- Deacons Mission and Duties March 2023
- March2023_Ministry_StaffPlansandProposals.pdf

Addendum

First Congregational UCC Ministry Team - Staff Plans & Proposals

March 9, 2023

STAFF

Administrative Coordinator – Kathleen Stigmon
Music Director – Chuck Taft
Youth Ministry Coordinator – Andrew Hoots
Building & Grounds Manager – Doug Williams

MINISTRY TEAM LEADERS

Benevolence Team – Peggy Grant
Deacons – Jim Canty
Faith Formation – Kathleen Stigmon (acting)
Health Advisory Team – Kay Garner, Danna Park, Mary Hawkins
Hospitality Team – Dennis McLain
Laundry Love – Joanne Roudebush
Membership Team – Lorain Tuenge
Music – Chuck Taft
Racial Justice Team – Alice Martin-Adkins
Sacred Pause – Eric Lyons
Stir the Soul Café Ministries – Loraine Tuenge
Worship Team – Bev Reddick
Youth – Andrew Hoots

Ministry Team Report – 3/10/23

Staff

Admin

Kathleen Stigmon

One Great Hour of Sharing special mission offering takes place now through 3/26/23.

I will be on vacation during the week after Easter (4/11-4/18). Coverage for the office will be Linda Burke, Eric Lyons and Jim Canty. Info will be in newsletter.

Review of wedding guide, instructions, marketing and agreement being reviewed/updated for discussion with Building & Grounds.

Youth

Andrew Hoots

planning
youth:

The newly formed Children and Youth Council met on February 12th to begin for future months. Here are the major upcoming events for FCUCC children and youth:

April 9th (Easter)—FCUCC will host an Easter egg hunt for our youngest children. The egg hunt will take place during the morning worship service.

June 3rd—In the Fall, the youth participates in a CluedUpp Game in downtown Asheville following the Alice in Wonderland story. CluedUpp is an interactive game using an app that they students have to download, to run/walk around downtown and interacting with characters from the story. On June 3rd, our students will have another opportunity to play a CluedUpp Game in downtown following the story of Beauty and the Beast.

June 4th—I am planning a graduate recognition service to take place during worship. This will be the first time we have had graduates in the time that I have been serving as the youth minister at FCUCC. Right now, my plan is to allow each of our graduates a chance to speak during the service, and to then offer both graduates a small congratulatory gift from our congregation. Following the service, the congregation will have a potluck luncheon to celebrate our graduates. Parents of the graduates will put together a PowerPoint presentation of their graduate for me to present at the end of our gathering. In my previous churches, this has been an excellent and fun way for congregations to get to know the students better before the students head to college in the Fall.

Music Chuck Taft

In the coming months, the Choir will continue to learn and share a diverse array of Anthems (and offerings) as part of Worship. With the culmination of Lent and the Holy Week following, we are preparing music to include Handbells, Dance, Organ & Piano as well as guest instrumentalist. Eric and I continue shaping our musical offering for Good Friday to include music from Handel's MESSIAH, Spirituals, and other genre's befitting the day with guest artist joining to be part of the narrative. Planning is also underway to invite young and upcoming artist that gather from all over the country to be a part of the Brevard Music Festival. Eric will again reach out and coordinate with these fine singers to share as a part of our Worship over the summer months.

Building & Doug Williams Grounds

The following needs to be addressed by Building & Grounds:

1. Completion of choir area in the Sanctuary
2. Hood Suppression Test in Kitchen
3. Annual Backflow test for the City
4. Workdays to be scheduled to address Grounds -
Pollinator Garden
Garden beside handicap entrance sidewalk
5. Continued organization and cleaning up around the church.
6. Completing operation of security cameras.

Ministry Teams

Benevolence Team(Peggy Grant, Beaver Wyatt, Kathleen Busby, Margaret Perkins, Linda Burke)

Peggy Grant:

The Benevolence team met on 2/22/23. We discussed a theme for the year which is: "Being a Good Neighbor" as an extension from last year. We decided to make a donation of \$500 to Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness in the month of March. Mark Palinski from Sunrise will give a brief presentation during worship on March 19. We are also receiving donations (for Sunrise) of coffee and snacks from the congregation during the service. For April Benevolence will highlight Aura Home Women Vets. Founder Alyce Knaflich will give a brief presentation on April 23 during worship. Also during that Sunday service we are intending to offer volunteer opportunities for Aura Home to the congregation.

Deacons (Jim Canty, Sandy Clark, Nancy Kniffin, John Mercer, Margaret Perkins, Diane Reid,
Ann Marie Woffindin)

Jim Canty:

Our last meeting February 9th we met in person at the church to completed our work on the update to our policy, and website showing the same information.

Our next meeting March 9th will be on Zoom. I'll send out the completed policy for final approval with the group I've spoken with Rollin Russell about his experience on a Deacon Retreat, no date set at this time. I'll also talk with other ministers in our church on how to put together our retreat. We will discuss this in our meeting.

Faith Formation/Exploration (Eric Lyons, Loraine Tuenge)

Eric Lyons

Sacred Pause – Meets every 1st and 3rd Wednesdays, 2:00-3:15p, Fall through Spring. The group is participant-led, so topics may vary. Typically, we explore spiritual nurture through reflection and creative activities.

Devotional Writing – Our Lenten writing and art program continues through Easter Sunday, April 9th.

Gay Men's Group – Meets every 4th Sunday at 5:00-7:00 with these upcoming events:

Mar. 26 - guest speaker on transgender;

Apr. 23 - guest speaker on Native American "Two-Spirit" archetype

May 28 - cookout (off site)

Stir the Soul Café Ministries (Loraine Tuenge, Jane Stoffer)

Loraine Tuenge

Now that we are all on a good heathy plateau, we have been able to complete the rest of 2023 schedule:

We began 2023 with a Winter Meditation for at-home use. Presently a Lenten study on PAUSE & PRACTICE is in use. Additional at-home meditations will be offered for summer and fall.

Two continuing book studies reflecting on Indigenous spirituality and our relationship with creation are being offered in Wise Winter Women (Braiding Sweetgrass) and in Creative Ageing (Refugia Faith).

Planning for our Fall retreat with the women at First Christian Church will begin soon. Am looking forward to meeting together again for Second Christmas (Celtic custom) and our winter retreat next January.

A continuing part of STSCM is the overseeing of the Library and working with the archives when there is time. This duty is part of the Membership Team, but as there is only one on that team, we are helping out.

Sunday School classes (Submitted by Kathleen Stigmon)

The Faith Formation/Exploration classes 5-week series will run through Palm Sunday, April 2nd. The sessions are led by David Ourisman and explore the four gospels and the distinct portraits of Jesus that emerge from them. Links to David's slides are being provided.

Mar 5 Gospel of Mark

Mar 12 Luke - Acts

Mar 19 Gospel of Matthew

Mar 26 Gospel of John

Apr 2 Making Sense of the Diverse Gospels (and a bonus look at 2 apocryphal gospels).

Book Discussion-Ron Martin-Adkins is leading a 5 week book discussion on Huston Smith's "Why Religion Matters: The Fate of the Human Spirit in an Age of Disbelief through April 13th.

Health Advisory Team (HAT) (Kay Garner, Danna Park, Mary Hawkins)

Kay Garner:

After a successful showing of the documentary *The Ants & The Grasshopper*, we think there is some interest in pursuing a four-part Faith Formation class with the study guide provided by *Blessed Tomorrow*, a program of ecoAmerica.

We think another movie on the topic of human and climate health would be of interest to the congregation but we have no immediate plans.

Hospitality Team (Dennis McLain, David Turner, Lynn Lewis)

Dennis McLain:

We are providing beverages and dessert for the Transition Team congregational meeting regarding the recent FCUCC survey. We will be organizing an Easter breakfast at 9am on Easter Sunday. Order forms for the annual Easter flower purchases in memory of or in honor of a loved one will be included in the 3/19 bulletin and due by 4/2 (Palm Sunday). We plan to donate any flowers that are not claimed on Easter to bring to people who are home bound or in a nursing home.

Membership Team (Lorraine Tuenge)

Lorraine Tuenge:

Goals for the rest of this year:

- Receptions of New Members with classes to be scheduled for April/May, and Sept/Oct.
- Ministry Fair for September to educate and recruit.
- Workers for Archives – 2024 is 110th Anniversary –celebrate our benevolence and mission work?
- Plan for a Congregational Retreat or Mini-Retreat for late summer in 2023
- Continue working with Hospitality on Thanksgiving Dinner, Christmas Dinner
- Set up Alternative Christmas Show – it was suggested by several team leaders that this program be offered on Dec 3 and the Christmas Dinner on Dec. 17

Laundry Love (Joanne Roudebush, Linda Burke, Andrew Hoots)

Joanne Roudebush:

“...On February 26th, we served 31 clients and spent \$400 on ~100 loads of laundry. The congregation’s generous support is appreciated and needed each month. We also need regular volunteers to help at the laundry and to provide transportation.”

The above information published in the March 3rd newsletter has created more donations and conversations about volunteers. The new laundromat owner approached us expressing support for our ministry. He pledged \$100 per month to help with expenses. The leadership team is discussing how we can better schedule the service to avoid late endings to the day.

Music Ministry (Chuck Taft, Eric Fricke, Betty Dillashaw)

See Music Update in the Staff Section

Racial Justice Team (Alice Martin-Adkins, Bonnie Schell, Bev Reddick, Donna Miller, Horace Hunt, Sandy Clark, Penny Silverman, Dorri Sherrill and Peggy Grant)

Alice Martin-Adkins:

The Racial Justice Team led 4 Faith Formation classes in January and February and encouraged members of the congregation to take advantage of many community offerings during Black History Month. Though we will have more discussion at our March 9 meeting here are some of the ideas for the future:

Continuing to work on the Land Acknowledgement Statement - We will want to share that with the Board at some point in the near future.

Considering a visit to the Mars Hill Anderson Rosenwald School (with a visit to Beaver's family home place perhaps?)

Looking at possible future Faith Formation classes including more discussion with HAT about "The Ants and The Grasshopper"

Alice is proposing to teach a Saturday morning class after Easter on "My Grandmother's Hands" - a study on racialized trauma and mending our hearts and bodies.

We are considering a project with the Women's prison - to learn more about the fees incarcerated women must pay before release and how to help them.

Looking forward to an in-person meeting in April and a time to invite others to join us.

Work continues on a Land Acknowledgement Statement.

Worship Team (Bev Reddick, Dennis McLain, Sandy Clark, Chuck Taft)

Bev Reddick:

The worship team continues planning for the remainder of Lent.

The March 26th service and Congregational Gathering will be led by Executive Directors of the UCC Southern Conference. Dr. Davis, and the WNC Association, Rev. Casiday. The Processional for **Palm Sunday 4/2** will include the Bells and Dancers. On **Maundy Thursday (4/6) at 6 PM** there will be provided light supper of soup and bread followed by Communion around the tables. Members from the First Christian Church, who originally owned our building, will be joining us. On **Good Friday at noon** there will be a service of music planned by Chuck and Eric. The **Easter** Potluck Breakfast will be at 9AM and an Easter Egg Hunt will happen following the service. People are being invited to purchase flowers for the sanctuary and to bring flowers to put on a cross, which will be out front of the church.

There has been excellent Liturgists participation first quarter and the second quarter list has been sent to volunteers. The Dance Circle is reorganizing leadership responsibilities since Smitty Dotson Smith left. Planning underway for Palm Sunday 4/2 processional with all interested children, youth and adults.

Mission and Duties

DEACONS MINISTRY TEAM

First Congregational UCC, Asheville, NC

Deacons adopted this document on 03/09/2023. As circumstances, practices, and needs change, they may make changes at any time.

Mission

The English word *deacon* comes from a Greek word meaning “servant.” Deacons help the ministerial staff serve the physical and spiritual needs of the congregation.

Attributes Needed

An effective deacon should have the following attributes:

- Be a caring person who is sensitive to the needs of others.
- Have good communication skills.
- Observe appropriate boundaries and confidentiality in dealing with others.
- Have the heart of a servant.
- Be committed to the church’s ministry of meeting the needs of individuals in the congregation.

Team Organization

1. The number of deacons will vary from year to year, but it is desirable to have at least eight (8) members of the team so that no one deacon will be overworked.
2. Members of the team should manifest the necessary attributes and, as much as possible, reflect the demographics of the congregation.
3. Individuals may volunteer to serve as deacons or be invited by current deacons, Pastor, or staff members. New deacons will be added by the consensus of current deacons and pastor.
4. Deacons commit to serve at least a one-year term beginning in January. If they are willing, they may serve additional terms.
5. At the January meeting each year, the team will select a Deacon Chair by consensus. The Chair will serve a one-year term. If willing and if asked by the rest of the team, the Chair may serve additional terms.

Duties

1. Deacons are expected to attend and participate in monthly Deacons meetings and the annual Deacons retreat if scheduled.
2. Each deacon will take responsibility for a “flock” or group of individuals from the congregation.

Each deacon will:

- Regularly check in with each flock member either in person at church, by telephone, by email, and/or by U.S. mail.
 - Identify when flock members or their immediate family are seriously ill, have been hospitalized, have died, or are experiencing some other physical or spiritual crisis. Depending on the circumstances and on the flock member’s desires concerning confidentiality, the deacon may notify the Pastor, Deacon's chair, and/or others in the congregation who may be able to help.
 - Respond to the needs of flock members in crisis. The deacons’ responses might include, for example, prayer, telephone calls, cards and messages, personal visits (to the flock member’s home or hospital), provision of meals, and /or rides to medical appointments.
 - Confirm the flock members’ contact information and submit any changes to the Deacon Chair and to the Administrative Coordinator.
 - When asked, notify flock members of church closures and other important announcements.
3. Each deacon will be asked to serve as greeter on particular Sundays throughout the year. When serving as greeter, the deacon will:
 - Arrive at the church by 9:45 a.m.
 - The operation of the front (Red) door, the push bar will be either pushed in (door is open) or if push bar is out (door is locked). To keep the push bar pushed in (door open) use the hex or allen key attached to the door.
 - Place a number of service bulletins on a chair inside the front door so that early arrivals will be able to take bulletins while you are away from the door.
 - Turn on the lights in the following locations:
 - at the top of the stairs from the gallery
 - in the narthex to the right of the front door
 - on the right front wall of the chancel, behind the choir
 - at the back of the pulpit

- Carry the baptismal font from the back of the sanctuary to the sacristy behind the chancel. Empty the water from the font, refill it with a small amount of freshwater, and return the font to the back of the sanctuary.
 - Verify offering plates are at the lectern so the pastor can hand them to those who take up the offering.
 - Quickly check the pews, removing stray items and putting out-of-place pew pads and hymnals where they belong.
 - For the rest of the time until the service begins, stand in the narthex and hand out service bulletins and greet members and visitors as they arrive. If the supply of bulletins runs low, ask couples to share a bulletin.
 - When the service begins, close the double doors between the narthex and sanctuary.
 - During the first hymn (when latecomers are no longer arriving and before children leave the sanctuary for “chiming in,”), lock the front doors for security, then go upstairs to the balcony and count the total number of people present, including staff and choir members and infants.
 - Take up the offering:
 - Before the service, ask three other people to help take up the offering – one in the center aisle with the deacon and one in each of the two side aisles.
 - When the pastor walks to the front of the chancel with the offering plates, walk up the center aisle with one other person, while two others walk up the side aisles.
 - After the offering has been collected and the deacon is in the back of the sanctuary, stack the offering plates and place all the offerings in the top plate. The three other people assisting with the offering can return to their seats.
 - When the pastor comes back to the front of the chancel to receive the offering, carry the stacked plates and consolidated offerings to the front of the sanctuary handing to the pastor.
 - During the benediction, open the double doors between the sanctuary and narthex.
 - Stand with the pastor in the narthex and speak to congregants as they leave.
 - Using the hex or allen key, lock the front door of the church by expanding the push bar.. (People will still be able to exit using the push bar, but will not be able to reenter.)
 - During friendship time try to connect with members and visitors.
 - Send the total attendance count by e-mail to the church’s administrative coordinator.
4. In special circumstances, Deacons may help facilitate group events that relate to the pastoral care of congregants. For example, Deacons have helped with receptions following the memorial services of church members.