

South Church in Andover, United Church of Christ

Minutes of the 298th Annual Meeting of South Church in Andover

February 4, 2009

(Postponed from January 28 due to snow)

Hymn Sing

Tamara Rozek and Dan Ryan led those present in singing hymns as the group gathered for the Annual Meeting. As they arrived, participants were given a copy of the “Annual Financial Reports for the 2008 298th Annual Meeting” which included an agenda for the meeting.

Call to Order

Bill Schroeder, Moderator, called the meeting to order at 7:30PM; a quorum was present. Tom Harvey, senior deacon, gave the opening prayer. Lisa Stedman, Interim Senior Pastor, gave a scripture reading from Psalm 81. Members of 50 or more years were recognized. Annual meeting members sent greetings to current and former members.

Highlights of 2008:

Missions and Service

David Strong, representing the Board of World Service, described the process by which mission funding allocations are made, including both local mission support and support of wider global missions. He also reviewed the “hands-on” mission activities which were done by many in the church during 2008. He expressed thanks to the congregation for their contribution of both time and talent and referred meeting attendees to the detailed missions report printed in the financial report booklet for further information.

Interim Process

Jane Ingram summarized the work of the Interim Ministry Team formed in January, 2008 for the purpose of discerning the identity of South Church at this time of transition. Using a timeline exercise, church members were asked to review the rich history of South Church and place their personal memories and milestones into that history. On March 30, 2008, the timeline was used as a tool at an all-church luncheon to identify common themes and distill these themes into a set of core values. The resulting set of core values have served as a critical component of our church’s evolution and have provided important input to the current search process.

Search for Senior Pastor

Becky Cutts described the ongoing search process for a new senior minister. The work of the interim team provided a good lead-in to the all-church survey conducted by the committee. This survey provided information from the congregation as to what our priorities are, what we would like to see strengthened, and what attributes we are looking for in a new pastor. Results of the survey highlighted the love for South Church that our members have and the appreciation for our fellowship, excellent music and youth programs, varied worship experiences, adult education, warmth and welcome. Survey

respondents indicated a desire for a pastor who would help us deepen our personal religion, be compassionate, help us with our use of time, talent and money in stewardship, promote church membership growth, and be a mission and service advocate.

The search committee has so far looked at 43 profiles in detail and is interviewing candidates. There are some very good candidates and the committee looks forward to bringing more good news as our search moves into the final stages.

Calling Rev. Jonathan Drury

During the summer of 2008, a Staffing Subcommittee was chosen to consider our staffing challenges after the retirement of Sherry Tupper from the staff and the shortening of Kate Kallis' hours. The committee met during the summer and, during this time, got together with and talked to the entire staff. As a result of the subcommittee's deliberations, in August the subcommittee came to the church council with the recommendation to call Jonathan Drury as Associate Pastor for Youth and Church Life. The recommendation was accepted unanimously by the council. A special congregational meeting on September 21, 2008, brought the recommendation to the wider church and it was accepted unanimously with a standing ovation.

Other Highlights and Thanks

Annual meeting attendees expressed their thanks for: the folks who shop and cook for Bread and Roses; Tamara for the wonderful music; Elijah Drury for being born and for Ted organizing the mission trip in Jonathan's absence; Lisa Stedman for her love and guidance through this interim period; Terry Ebner as she continues to provide a wonderful CE program and gather a wonderful staff of teachers to help in this effort; Beth Kiker and Mike Brink for all the planning of the recent mission trip to New Orleans; Sharon Coon for organizing the Granny Rockers in the nursery; Linda Zimmerman and Deb White for their work on Godspell last year for us and for the wider community; Dave Stanwood for work above and beyond what could be expected and for his new care of the cemetery; and Bill Schroeder for his wonderful guidance as church moderator.

Staff Appreciation

Lisa expressed her appreciation of an amazing staff. This was a year of significant staff changes – Suzanne Bonelli was hired to provide nursery care; Dave Stanwood took on additional work; Sherry Tupper retired; Kate Kallis took a two month leave and returned to reduced hours; Jonathan took on a new position as Associate Pastor; Mike Hawkins announced that he would be leaving his staff position as financial secretary; and Morgan Kiker increased his responsibilities as church treasurer. Lisa warmly thanked each member of the staff individually for their dedication and faithfulness.

2008 Financial Report

Betsy Davis, Board of Trustees co-Chair, presented the 2008 financial report, the details of which can be found in the Annual Financial Reports for 2008, which each annual meeting attendee received. Our annual giving decreased slightly this year (about 0.5 percent less than 2007), even with the supplemental giving campaign in February 2008.

2009 Stewardship Campaign

Fran Fink, Stewardship co-Chair, reported that this had been a challenging year for stewardship. We initially estimated a 7% increase in our needs for 2009 as compared to 2008. Just before the campaign began the national economy went very sour, and we realized that the need for our missions would increase. The 2009 stewardship campaign was launched in October with pledges to be turned in during November. However, by the end of December, it was obvious that we had a serious shortfall. Since then, we have brought in an additional \$40,000. Fran expressed thanks to the stewardship committee, staff and officers for their help as well as thanks to all who pledged.

2009 Budget Proposal

Betsy Davis in her presentation on the 2009 budget proposal stated that, at the time of this meeting (February 4, 2009), the trustees estimate a 1.6% decrease in total annual giving, relative to 2008. With a program budget cut of 10 percent, and other cost savings measures identified to date, the estimated operating expenses are up 1.2%. Employment costs are estimated to be up by 5%. At this time there is a revenue/expense mismatch of approximately \$13,000 to resolve. In other words, we need to identify additional revenue or expense reductions totaling \$13,000 to balance the budget.

Betsy also sounded a note of concern for 2010, and beyond. In 2010 debt service will increase again by about \$26,000, when amortization begins for the trust fund building loan. She said: The trustees have come to believe that our operating expense levels (75 percent of which is employment cost) can not be sustained by the current level of member support. This is a structural problem. We cannot afford to continue operating this way.

The Trustees then offered the following motion:

Resolved to accept the Annual Budget as presented in the Annual Report including the following mechanisms:

(1) additional 2009 pledges received through Saturday February 14, 2009 will be added to total estimated annual giving, becoming the Budgeted Annual Giving for 2009, and to the allocation to the General Fund, and

(2) thereafter, any shortfall or excess annual giving relative to Budgeted Annual Giving will be allocated equally between the Missions and Building Reserve Fund.

After discussion, questions and clarifications, the motion was passed with a strong majority in favor.

In the discussion following the motion, Lisa Stedman recommended that we take further action to address our budget problems so we won't be facing this again next year. She also noted that, as a percentage of our total budget, we are now giving about 1/2 of what we have previously given to missions. However, Jonathan Drury pointed out that we are

doing better on our missions than the budget figures show. Much of our mission work is not reflected in the budget.

Other Business

There was no other business to be discussed. However, Bill Schroeder took the opportunity to thank all the financial folks for all the work that they did on the 2009 campaign and budget.

Closing Prayer

Lisa Stedman gave the closing prayer.

Video Celebration

To close the meeting, Tom Jones showed a music video of the church at worship, at work and at play with pictures from many of the activities of 2008. It concluded with photos of the “Saints” (members) who have died in the past year.

Benediction

Jonathan Drury offered a benediction. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Anne Clough, Clerk