

**Minutes of the Council, South Church in Andover  
March 31, 2008**

**Present:**

Bill Schroeder	Moderator
Lisa Stedman	Staff
Kate Kallis	Staff
Terry Ebner	Staff
Sherry Tupper	Staff
Mike Hawkins	Staff
Linda Hacker	Staff
Morgan Kiker	Treasurer
Tom Larsen	Deacons
Lynne McDonald	Deacons
Kath Levine	Deacons
Sue Christopherson	Deacons
Arlene Hawkins	Deacons
Lisa Guy	Trustees
Betsy Davis	Trustees
Susan Henke	Christian Education
Fran Fink	Stewardship
Bonnie Zeigler	Nominating
Ron Dann	Music
Laurie Sorota	Youth
Jan Holden	Fellowship
Vicki Hoyt	Board of World Service
Jennifer Hoenig	Board of Women's Ministries
Steve Longo	Andover Association
Steve Fink	Member at Large
Anne Clough	Clerk

**Devotions**

Terry Ebner led devotions, reading a poem, "Monet Refuses the Operation," from Anne Lamott's new book "Plan B: Further Thoughts on Faith," that reminds us that we need to continue to pray that we may have "eyes to see and ears to hear" God's good news.

**Approval and Review of Minutes**

The February 25, 2008 Council Meeting and the March 16, 2008 Special Meeting minutes were sent to members before the meeting for review and were approved by unanimous vote.

**Discussion of Membership Growth**

Bill Schroeder and Sherry Tupper, Director of Outreach, led a discussion on membership growth, focusing on what additional things we can do to welcome newcomers into the church. Members of the Deacon's membership subcommittee attended the meeting to participate in this discussion. Sherry began by referring to the story in Luke 14 where the servant is commanded by his master to bring those outside into the house so that the house may be filled.

Sherry noted that we are generally known as a friendly church but there are things that we could do better: encourage new folks to sign the attendance register, use name tags, introduce ourselves to people who we do not know, be sensitive to the fact that this church may be a completely different experience from church experiences that a visitor might have had.

Some things we do not do so well: We have to be very intentional about our desire to welcome people to the church. At present, new attendees often do not get welcomed. Should there be a “no business during coffee hour” rule? We also need to be present at the front door to catch names of newcomers. Perhaps we should also have greeters at the side doors.

New people come to the nursery and sometimes find that it is locked and nobody is there to welcome them. There is a need to reconsider having a paid person there every week for consistency and to be sure that the nursery is open by 10:15.

Someone or some group needs to be responsible for newspaper articles and other outreach opportunities. Perhaps we should develop a brochure for sharing and/or mailing out. A “Bring a Friend” Sunday was another idea.

Forming an ad hoc Membership Growth Committee was suggested and several people (Kathi Levine, Jan Holden, Steve Longo, Bill Schroeder and Wayne Gendron) expressed immediate interest in being on such a committee. Paul Nickerson was suggested as a good UCC staff person to use as a resource person. The group should not be formed through the nominating committee process but be an intentional group of those who are really interested in being involved in this effort. The ad hoc committee can be very focused and circumscribed. Perhaps an invitation to join such a group could appear in Five Minutes.

Kathi Levine also suggested forming a Young Adults Group for those just out of college and/or new to the workforce. The question was raised as to how we get this age group to visit the church in the first place.

### **Sherry Tupper Retirement**

Sherry Tupper announced by means of a letter to Bill Schroeder that she would be retiring as Director of Outreach effective July 1, 2008. Council members expressed their heartfelt thanks for Sherry’s eighteen years of service and wished her the best as she, in the words of her letter, “continues her ministry with us in new ways and new seasons.”

### **Financial Report**

Mike Hawkins and Morgan Kiker reported that our March funds were slightly ahead of projections and better than the 3% spread of February. \$10,400 has been raised so far in our Easter offering. A 2008 Annual Giving Update sheet described our progress in reaching our goal of being able to fund our missions at the same level as last year. \$30,000 has been raised so far in the supplemental campaign which puts us closer to our target but still short of where we want to be.

### **Supplemental Stewardship Campaign**

Fran Fink reported that the stewardship committee will be doing another round of phone calls, focusing on those who have not yet made a supplemental pledge. 250 giving units have pledged so far; 300 have not responded. Help is needed to make the phone calls in a timely manner. Hooks Johnston has volunteered to contact significant donors for additional pledges. There will be general updates in Five Minutes and/or a separate mailing.

It was pointed out that we need to make a clarifying statement about the budget and the budgeting process in general and the 2008 Annual Giving Update sheet was discussed as a vehicle for doing this.

### **Staff Reports**

#### **Lisa Stedman:**

Lisa talked about the excitement at the interim team luncheon after church on Sunday and said that there will be follow-up opportunities for congregational vision and input in the future. She

expressed thanks to the Interim Team and also to Terry, Jonathan, Martin McGrath, Allison Williams and the young people who led the program downstairs with the children.

Future Sunday plans: This Sunday, there will be a jazz band and New Orleans mission trip reflections during worship, and a potluck and slide show in the evening. The following Sunday the pastoral search committee will be commissioned during worship.

50 folks (42 young people, 11 adults, 3 young adults) will be leaving on April 18<sup>th</sup> for a mission trip to John's Island in South Carolina

Lisa also once again expressed her thanks to Sherry Tupper for her faithful service to South Church.

Lisa will be on a study leave on Thursday through Saturday of this week focusing on topics related to racism.

### **Terry Ebner:**

Attendees to the Phillip Newell retreat now number 70 and the cap has been raised to 80. A new BookNooks group is beginning and will discuss "One Foot in Eden" by Phillip Newell.

### **Linda Hacker:**

Linda reminded council members that the next day was April 1<sup>st</sup> which means that the semi-annual meeting is just two months away on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Linda will need program reports by May 14<sup>th</sup>. All staff members, boards and committees other than the financial team will need to write reports for this meeting.

### **Andover Association**

Steve Longo talked about the response to the attack on Dr. Jeremiah Wright for comments that he had made from the pulpit and said that there were copies of Jim Antal's email, written in response, on the piano in Fellowship Hall.

The annual meeting of the Andover Association will be held on Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, in Tewksbury. The schedule is: 8-8:30 breakfast, 8:30-9:00 business meeting, and 9:30-11:00 main program. The program will be on growth and membership. If any council members are interested in attending, let Linda Hacker know.

### **Trustees**

The trustees are looking to expand the use of our church during the week. A new hot water heater has just been installed in the parsonage.

### **Board of Women's Ministries**

Jen Hoenig reported that the Easter egg collection was a huge success. South Church will be the inaugural group for the Birthday in a Box program at Hancock Courts and will provide an April birthday party there on April 10<sup>th</sup>. The board is also continuing to look for "rocking grannies" to help in the nursery. There are 24 volunteers so far!

### **Christian Education**

Easter School was held the Wednesday before Easter with cupcake baking, crafts, a passion play and an Easter egg hunt.

A non-traditional Sunday School class is being planned for second to fifth graders for those who are not attending regular Sunday School classes or who need an alternative to traditional classes. These will be held for a three-week trial period after which results will be analyzed.

### **Youth**

\$1000 was netted at Godspell performances for upcoming expenses. Chaperones have been chosen and are getting ready for the upcoming mission trip to John's Island in April.

### **Music**

The Schubert Mass in G will be performed by the choir with soloists and orchestra as a special music offering on Mother's Day, May 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Deacons**

The Deacons held a Spiritual Enrichment for Families event last Wednesday to raise awareness of the challenges of parenting and the problems facing our youth today. There were 70 attendees including confirmands and parents. Tom Harvey and Sue Christopherson acted as moderators. There was much open dialog from both parents and youth. There will be more such programs in the future with various topics and opportunities for outreach. In May, Peter Anderson, Andover High School principal, will be coming to speak on the topic "The Overscheduled Teenager" and others in the wider community will also be invited to attend. An additional forum is being planned at a future date for parents of younger children.

### **Board of World Service**

Andy Gustafson is scheduled to speak to the board on the topic of Our Church's Wider Mission. First quarterly payments have been sent out to mission partners. The board continues to wrestle with how it can most effectively continue to update the entire congregation on missions.

### **Closing**

Tom Larsen led the group in a closing prayer

NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, April 29, 2008 at 7:30 PM. *Note that the next meeting date was changed (again) because of the Newell Retreat and the Andover Town Meeting.*

Respectfully submitted

Anne Clough, Clerk