

**Minutes of the Council, South Church in Andover
November 26, 2007**

Present:

Bill Schroeder	Moderator
Lisa Stedman	Staff
Kate Kallis	Staff
Mike Hawkins	Staff
Linda Hacker	Staff
Morgan Kiker	Treasurer
Tom Larson	Deacons
Lisa Guy	Trustees
Susan Henke	Christian Education
Page Bouchard	Stewardship
Gloria Davis	Music
Janice Holden	Fellowship
Jennifer Hoenig	Board of Women's Ministries
Eric Stubenhaus	Nominating
Bonnie Zeigler	Nominating
Jane Ingram	Youth
Janet Clarke	MACUCC and Andover Association Rep
Anne Clough	Clerk

Devotions

Bill Schroeder led devotions, which focused on “an unusual Christmas story” as written in the gospel of John - written as a “witness to the light” so that we might believe.

Approval and Review of Minutes

The October 22, 2007 Council Meeting minutes were sent to members before the meeting for review and were approved with one correction by unanimous vote.

Stewardship Campaign Status

Page Bouchard reported that we have received 195 pledges so far (as compared to 300 at this time last year). Amount pledged so far is \$410,000. This same group of donors pledged \$405,000 last year. Therefore our target of a 7% increase has not been realized in returns so far.

235 units have not responded as yet. \$610,000 is the total amount pledged last year, based on 300 pledging units.

Follow-up will be critical especially in a year where all units have not been visited during the stewardship campaign. The Stewardship Committee will send out a follow-up letter – this Friday is the target. After waiting two weeks for people to respond, there will be a follow-up by phone for those who have not yet responded. The suggestion was made that providing the ability to email pledges might be helpful. This information will be added to the letter.

We still have a fair amount of work and follow-up to do. Twenty families are in transition – defined as new families, those who have not pledged previously, and those who are not pledging this year. A couple of substantial pledging units will not be pledging this year.

History has shown that we are usually not totally done with the campaign till early February. We will try to beat that date this year.

Council applauded the work of the Stewardship Committee in general and Page Bouchard in particular.

Treasurer's Report and Year-End Forecast

Mike Hawkins reported that we had a \$20,000 surge in giving in November, resulting in a reduction in our shortfall with respect to amounts pledged to 1%. However, our expense side of the ledger is higher than expected for a number of reasons, including increased energy costs and mechanical problems with our boiler. We have a \$13,000 deficit as a result. So, we should be putting that \$13,000 into next year's budget to offset the borrowing that is being done to cover expense.

Tables showing our 2006 actual figures, our 2007 budget and a shortfall scenario, and two scenarios for a 2008 budget were provided to council members. The increased budget for 2008 covers items such as increased energy cost and salaries. We are in the final stages of borrowing \$500,000 from our trust funds and paying that amount to the bank. We will repay trust funds at a lower interest rate than the bank rate with amortization deferred for up to two years.

The tables show that we have not been replenishing our building reserve. Borrowing from both mission funds and the trust fund on a 50/50 basis has totally depleted the reserve account. Therefore a floor has been set for \$10,000 for the reserve funds so that this will not happen again.

The parsonage is now up for rental. If it is rented, that will bring some revenue.

Staff Reports

Linda Hacker reported that it had been a busy week with many mailings including one to Edgewood residents, a guidebook on the Lenten booklet and Five Minutes.

Kate Kallis spoke of the energy of all the church members and helpers at the Kiker's home on the night that Thanksgiving turkey dinners were being delivered for Neighbors in Need.

Board of World Service plans to have a table available at coffee hour so that we can send notes to those in the military. Gifts That Matter, along with Heifer Project gift ideas, will also be offered at coffee hour during the Advent season. The Green Team will piggyback on this effort with gifts that focus on the environment, such as water bottles and energy-saving light bulbs.

There will be Christmas caroling on December 9th with three separate groups going out to carol – followed by a dinner afterwards at church. The Blue Christmas service will be held on December 16th in the chapel.

Lisa reported on the community service at Temple Emanuel the night before Thanksgiving, where she preached. She said it was a good service and she especially appreciated that 15 South Church folks were present. We are entering the season of Advent with lots of waiting and anticipation. This Sunday, we will have our first inter-generational Advent service. On December 9th, Jonathan preaches. Lisa will preach on December 16th. There will be three services on December 24th. The 5:00 service will not be a pageant this year but will have a lot of opportunities for participation. No rehearsals will be necessary.

The Interim Ministry Team list (members: Al Joyall, Page Bouchard, Gary Van Doren, Anne Clough, Jane Ingram, Linda Mesler, and Andrew Harris) was presented to council for their consent and approval. This group will work on the tasks of congregational self-study and will work most intensively in the January to June timeframe. The motion to accept the proposed team was passed unanimously.

Mike Hawkins reported that John Booth would be completing his three-year contract for work in the cemetery area and grounds. During this time, he has only charged us for his out-of-pocket costs. It was agreed that John's efforts in the cemetery, both maintenance and restoration work, have been outstanding, and we should acknowledge him in some special way.

We are trying to see if we can extend Dave Stanwood's hours on a seasonal basis to cover this work - either to oversee someone else doing the work or do the work himself. Dave Meldrum has agreed to work with Dave for the upcoming year. Hiring a contractor to do the work would otherwise cost us in the \$30,000 – \$40,000 range.

Trustees

Lisa Guy reported that the necessary work on the parsonage is pretty much done. She also reported that the request to the zoning board to break up the property on the Central and School Street corner into housing lots has been denied. South Church, with the help of Rob Thomas, wrote a letter to the board opposing the move. We hope that this will be the end of the matter but the petitioners can come back to the zoning board with another plan.

Deacons

Putting together a Lenten book is the major activity that is facing the Deacons. The theme this year is "How God Creates Opportunity" and material for the book is due on January 2nd. Dave Sleight will fund outside printing of the booklet this year, as a gift of appreciation.

Music

The Music Committee will be sponsoring our Christmas caroling event along with the Fellowship Committee. There is a desire to increase caroling beyond the Christmas and One Day of Service occurrences.

Carol Georgine West and Linda O'Donnell are substituting for Tamara while she is away in Australia.

The bells are rehearsing in the choir room during the winter, to avoid heating the sanctuary. They are moved back into the sanctuary for use in Sunday services and that is working well.

The Musical Showcase went well.

Lisa noted that a Worship Planning Forum, with representatives from the Music Committee, Deacons, and Christian Education Committee, was scheduled for Tuesday night to plan services between epiphany and post-Easter

Christian Education

Susan Henke reported that Children's Services were held on November 25th and October 28th. Annelise Mesler has been taking care of planning and carrying out these services.

The 3rd Grade Bible Breakfast filled Fellowship Hall. Every table was used and it was necessary to borrow chairs from elsewhere in the church.

Upcoming events include Advent wreath making this Sunday - and the Los Amigos and mitten trees will go up this Sunday as well. On Thursday, December 6th, there will be baking of Advent cookies for delivery during caroling. Los Posados is scheduled for December 12th from 5:00 to 7:00 and includes a potluck dinner. The CE Board has also been involved in planning the 5:00 Christmas Eve service.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee had their second meeting tonight. They have sent enquiries out to all boards and committees to find spaces that need to be filled. There is a need for more members on the Board of World Service, the Youth Board and in the kitchen.

The board is looking ahead to next year – particularly with respect to the kind of skills needed. They will soon be ready for a database information drop from Mike Hawkins.

Youth Board

Some upcoming dates for youth activities: Members of youth groups will be attending a matinee performance of *A Christmas Story* in Portsmouth, NH, at the Seacoast Repertory Theater on December 16th. This year the youth will host a dessert/coffee house concept on the Saturday before Valentine's Day. April 18th is the departure day of the youth mission trip. This is also Jolie's due date. Therefore, the Youth Board is planning the trip as if Jonathan will not be able to go. However, Jonathan is planning to attend if possible. Lisa Stedman will be going. Ted Harris is in charge of advanced planning for chaperones.

Topic for the future: Getting in place an email tree for middle- and high-school groups.

Mass Conference Update

Janet Clarke reported on changes and downsizing in the conference. The annual meeting date for the Mass Conference has been changed to October and will be held in Worcester. A number of workshops will be part of the proceedings. The new area minister is in place and will be available to work with our search committee.

Fellowship Committee

The Fellowship Committee will be supporting the Music Committee with Christmas caroling and will provide some caroling at the church for those who are physically limited and cannot go caroling with the groups on that night.

The Advent stable will be constructed on Saturday.

Fellowship will coordinate the dinner during the Los Posados celebration.

Board of World Service

The Board of World Service is involved in their 2008 budgeting process. As part of this process, the board is contacting our missions and receiving reports.

Missioners to New Orleans on February 16-23 are: Beth and Morgan Kiker, Jan and Mike Brink, Sue Sleight and Kate Kallis.

Closing

Tom Larsen led the group in a closing prayer.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, December 18, 2007 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Anne Clough, Clerk