

## **Plymouth Church of Shaker Heights**

### **Church Council Meeting**

#### **Minutes of the December 16, 2009 meeting**

#### **Present:**

Christine Bretz, Chris Karr, Beth Jarr, Gloria Sturgill, Nikki Niehoff, Julia Welsh, Phil Coverdale, Lois Annich, Mary Bright, Paul Qua, Steve Hill, Sharon Mendelsohn, Rachel Perry, Debbie White, Pam Markt, Norma Shorer, , Cindy Brakey, Bebe Chiaritto, Gillian Graham, Bill Green, Jeff Pollock, David Welsh, Carol Skoglund, Shawnthea Monroe, Michael Kimmel, Adam Hange, Pam Beck, Heidi Makela

#### **Opening Prayer – Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe 7:02pm**

#### **Administrative & Financial Matters**

- Welcome of 2010 new Council Members attending
  - Robb welcomes new council members by asking everyone to stand and be recognized.
- Review and approve the November 18th, 2009 meeting minutes
  - Christine was left out of the attendees on the minutes.
  - Carol notes the following from the section about the Declaration of Interest Form section under new business.
    - Jeff Pollock's name was misspelled
    - First bullet to read “partner in addition to spouse” instead of partner instead of spouse.
    - Second bullet point should read “Declaration of Interest Policy”
  - Pam motioned to accept the minutes with noted revisions, Heidi seconds that motion, and the motion is carried unanimously.
- Report on current financials – Christine Bretz / Rachel Perry
  - Reports that pledge fulfillment is at 94% as of 12-15-2009. Unpledged contributions are significantly lower than last year. Sunday loose offerings are higher than last year.
  - In order to meet overall revenue projections for 2009, an additional \$2,000 in building use revenue (Headstart rent) are needed and \$27,000 in pledge fulfillment is needed.
  - Departments have spent 74% of 2009 budgets, and are projected to finish at about 90%
  - Utilities are lower than last year, and compensation is higher. Overall expenses are at 84% of budget.
  - Capital Campaign is at about 88% fulfillment for 2009, and about \$17,000 outstanding.

#### **Department & Standing Committee Updates**

- Pam Markt for Building & Grounds - Attended the green initiative presentation.
- Debbie White for Caring has nothing new to report.
- Sharon Mendelsohn for Evangelism & Growth – They’ve been very busy, and haven't met recently. The DVD launch went very well, and she encourages everyone to take a copy to pass around. Brian Smith has posted them to YouTube. Adam has linked them to his Facebook page.
  - Christmas ads printed, and placed in several areas newspaper. The Sun Press should be running a story about the Sugar Plum Workshop tomorrow.
- Bill Green for Stewardship reports that they are planning for next year. They have also been trying to wrap up this year's campaign as contributions continue to come in.
- Beth Karr reports for Partnership & Service. Nothing new to report. The minutes were submitted, but were not received.
- Adam for Children & Youth. The Sugar Plum Workshop was a great success with 80 children that made 700 crafts!! Good publicity helped.
  - The missions trip is already planned for June to Colorado. June 20-26th.
  - The Krumbine room is coming along nicely. \$9,000 spent so far on light. February 7th debut.

- Christine asked if anyone came forward to take over Sugar Plum for next year. Adam says lots came forward to help, but none volunteered to take over.
- Pam Beck for Witnessing. This Sunday is the last of the Middle East Peace sessions. Attendees have been very interested in what we, as Christians can do. Pam passed out a handout with dates of upcoming events through May 2010.

## Old Business

- Declaration of Interest Form – Carol Skoglund sent around a Declaration of Interest Statement (Policy). Carol gave a brief history of the reasons behind the need for this policy (protecting the church from conflicts of interest..). Jeff Pollock helped write the policy, and was in attendance this evening. Carol wanted to take time to address any questions or concerns about the policy. Carol read through each section to ensure that everyone understands what is meant.
  - Steve Hill asked how a Council member, a new one in his case, knows what vendors or contracts are being considered. The answer given is that this is a "to the best of your knowledge" situation, and may not be a hard and fast rule.
  - Chris mentioned that P&S should begin to disclose more clearly the benefactors of their community giving. This was also to help address Steve Hill's question about transparency.
  - Motion to accept the form as the second part of the policy put forward by Christine Bretz and seconded by Gloria Sturghill. The motion was carried unanimously. Robb thanks all involved in the process.
- Council Transition process presented by Paul Qua. The Nominating Committee received questions of potential nominees about what each job entails. The Committee, with Rachel Gardner and Rachel Perry, has created a book for Dept. Chairs that is full of job descriptions in addition to a list of the people serving as chairs for the last five years. Another inclusion is a current set of goals for each department. An additional thought was to have a mid-year review of the job descriptions and how each Dept. is doing for the year to ensure that goals for the Dept. are accomplished.
  - Notebooks presented to those in attendance. The rest will be passed out in the coming weeks at church.
  - An all member survey will be initiated. It's been several years since the last one was done, but it will be used to help highlight those that
  - Sharon asks if chairs should be submitting revisions to these documents. Shawnthea responded that yes, you can if there is a need, but it's not required. The Constitutional review process should address most needed updates.
  - Paul encourages incoming chairs to meet with their predecessors as soon as possible to get an accurate idea of where things are currently.
- Constitution review committee - Robb Forward mentions, briefly, that the committee will begin to be formed. They are taking names. Heather Kimmel was volunteered (with her permission) by her husband, Mike. Those that served before will not serve be asked again.

## New Business

- Budget presentation – Carol Skoglund passed around budget revisions and income statement. Both are labeled as drafts. Several points to highlight
  - Transfer portion of 2009 surplus to 2010 income. The remaining surplus to go to the Rainy day Fund. The amounts are \$27,373 and \$14,640 respectively.
  - Finance committee reviewed the following:
    - Staff compensation - In consultation with Personal committee, they recommend maintaining current levels
      - No need for Cost of Living increase
      - Shawnthea has indicated the staff is not expecting a pay increase

- Finance committee recommends that a pool of \$3,000 be set aside for end of year staff bonuses as long as budgets allow.
- Stewardship request for \$5,000 - Recommended that it be allocated out of the rainy day fund, but surplus would be transferred back at the end of the year.
- Additional funding requests - \$600 allocated to an "audio ministry". \$600 represents about half of the estimated expenses required to mail audio recordings to shut-ins. Shawnthea believes that additional funds should be raised throughout the year. She feels that a number of recipients may be willing to donate to the cause.
- Finance recognizes the merit of other funding requests by E&G, Worship, and a couple of others. They recommend that the requests be revisited later in the year when it is clearer how the year is progressing.
- Finance looked ahead to 2011. Rachel feels an income decrease of about \$32,000 is expected. The rainy day fund will be about \$64,000 at the end of 2010. That is above the normal \$24,000 allocated to rainy day.
  - Projects a progressive fall in the foundation contribution to income to a level of about \$160,000. Down from almost \$250,000 in 2008. Just something to watch and plan for in the future.
- Christine clarifies that the Foundation reduction is from a \$1,000,000 disbursement in addition to market conditions, and not market conditions as a whole.
  - Chris feels that we have an opportunity to step up our efforts in the coming year.
  - Paul points out that this is a not an easy task
  - Chris points out that we're spending more than we're taking in, and that plays
  - Shawnthea expresses her confidence in how the church typically performs (prudently)
- Pam Beck asked about the idea of a mid-year review. Specifically, she would like to know when that review would take place, so that she can make plans for programs in the fall.
- Carol makes motion that Budget summary be approved as handed out. Beth seconds the motion, and it is unanimously approved.
  - Shawnthea again recognizes those that worked hard on these budget matters.

## Lead Staff Reports

- Robb for Jim - Jim could not be here due to family issues. Plymouth hosted Thanksgiving event.
- Worked hard with the choir on Bach's Christmas Oratory, and praises the choir for their hard work. He has been working hard Christmas Eve Service, and looks forward to it. Gratitude expressed to all for their support of him and his ministry.
- Rachel reminds Dept. chairs to check their mailboxes regularly as the end of the year approaches, so that finance matters are settled.
  - Projected pledges to be \$623,000 from 203 families. The pledges keep coming in. 23 are new pledges for this year..
  - Reminds that pledges can be paid automatically via the website, or a form that Rachel has. Must be redone each year.
  - Thanks Pam and several others that attended Sustainability Plan. Nine month process, chaired by Karen Nordstrom, Because of the plan, they have set some "big, hairy, audacious goals" about waste reduction, energy efficiency, potential community garden, etc. More to come.
  - Heating problems continue. Sky continues to work long hours trying to get the system functioning normally.
- Lois reports that she has finished the bereavement seminars. The group agreed that six sessions was not enough, and they are looking at maybe eight next time. She is grateful to Council for supporting it. Lois is performing the Blue Christmas Service this year (Monday, the 21st). She continues pastoral care. Sunday is Poinsettia distribution day.

- Adam reports that he has been trying to find a baby Jesus for the pageant. Lifts up Heather for her hard work. Youth programs are going very well, and he is getting to know the youth a lot better. The group is growing, and people are inviting friends. Confirmation is coming in January. The more light service is also coming. Children and Youth worship February 7th.
  - Ordination process continues with an assessment in January.
- Shawnthea reports that Advent has been keeping her busy, and wishes that the increased attendance could be continued.
  - She is working on an adult confirmation class. The class will meet on Sundays at the same time as the youth. Twelve sessions. Could be something that people could drop in and out of, but recommends that people attend all sessions.
  - She will be participating in an Ecumenical Institute conference based upon Clint Eastwood western movies.
  - New members classes coming up in January. January 20th, 24th, and 31st (welcoming new members). Fifteen people expressed interest!
  - Continuing to have new members fill out surveys, so that Council members know about resources they can contact.
  - Leadership retreat is continuing to be planned for after April 15<sup>th</sup>. Lots of new and exciting things have been happening, and there is an expressed need to help church leadership plan for the future. Lots of community issues to address by the church as well, and church leadership needs to help look at what are gifts, challenges and history, and how do we chart a way forward.
  - Rachel and Shawnthea have met with a consultant to help us. Sort of a step towards a strategic planning process.
    - She notes that this needs to be beyond goal setting.
    - Also notes that this is just a heads up.
    - Chris wondered if we should wait to finalize the constitution until after this "strategic planning process" has been completed. Shawnthea feels that is not necessary.
    - Pam Beck, for Worship, welcomes this process, as does Beth Karr for P&S.

### **Next Meetings**

- January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010 – 7PM Will seat the new Council
- February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010- 730 PM

### **For the Good of the Order**

Respectfully submitted,  
 Michael Kimmel  
 Clerk of Council