

KVCC Church Council Meeting Minutes

October 26, 2021

Present: Pastor John Sampson, Karen Glass, Elizabeth Davidson Derr, Linda Bogardus, Debby Rice, Annie Scavo, Charlotte Lichtenberg, Barbara Merle-Smith, Dan Mason, Lorraine Duvall, Dre Roebuck, Jimm Collin, Naj Wikoff, Pam Gothner, and Deborah Mitchell.

Absent: Linda LaBarge, Liz Jaques, Tom Both, Henrietta Jordan, Chris Blaicher

Elizabeth opened the meeting at 5:02 PM.

Opening Prayer: Pastor John led the group in prayer.

Approval of Last Month's Meeting: Linda B. made a motion to approve the last month's meeting minutes, and Pam seconded the motion. A discussion followed, and the motion was passed.

Pastor's Report – October 26, 2021

Worship and Spiritual Development

- Choir resumed preparing recorded music for Sunday worship on September 12.
- Blessing of Animals service offered on October 3.
- Susie Allen will be leading worship on December 12.
- Winter solstice vespers service to be offered on December 21.
- Naj Wikoff will be leading worship on December 26.
- Weekly meetings with Dave Craig regarding worship on the Zoom platform. Chris Blaicher is training to be Dave's back-up.
- The Centering Prayer Group meets mornings @ 7 AM. The weekly book discussion group on The Cloud of Unknowing is ongoing.
- Friday morning prayer group meets in the VSR, sharing prayers, concerns and joys of the community.

Confirmed Memorial Services and Weddings

- No special services currently scheduled.

Pastoral Support

- Provide ongoing pastoral support to the church community via Zoom, telephone, in-person meetings, and email.

Book Discussion Group – Tuesday Nights

- Continued reading The Third Reconstruction by The Rev. Dr. William Barber.

Community Support

- Working with members of the congregation on identifying neighbors in need, and supporting them through financial grants.
- Dre Roebuck hosting TGIF social gathering at the church fire pit every other Friday.
- Hosted KCS bake sale after worship on October 17. Funds raised to support upcoming student trip to Europe.

Essex Association

- Black River – St. Lawrence Association (BRSL)
 - Members of the Essex Association have had preliminary discussions with the BRSL Association about merging. The discussions have been positive, and are moving forward.

Training

- Sexual Harassment Prevention Training - Lynn to provide documentation that he received the training through KCS in September.

Sabbatical

- Will be on sabbatical September 2022 – mid-January 2023
- Attending Michaelmas Term at Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK

Out of Office

- Starting the week of October 24, I will move to my non-summer days off - Mondays and Saturdays
- I also will be taking the following days off:
 - October 29
 - November 5, 12, 19, 23, 24 and 26
 - December 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 17, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31

Other Items

- Annual meeting held on October 10. All items passed through unanimous vote.
- Will be taking on some of Liz's responsibilities while she is out of the office 11/1 – 11/19 for medical reasons.
- Actively involved in the Creation Justice Task Force, including the Advocacy Committee
- Attend Spiritual Direction sessions for the development of my own spirit.
- Agreed to serve another 3-year term on the UC NY Board of Directors

Treasurer's Report: Prior to the meeting, Jimm provided the Council with the following documents: Income Statement Budget, Weekly Giving Summary, TD Ameritrade Statement, Weekly Giving Summary, and Balance Sheet. Annie made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report. Elizabeth seconded the motion. A discussion followed, and the motion was carried.

Committee Reports:

Buildings & Grounds Report: Buildings: There was no new information provided.

Grounds: Eleven volunteers met on Thursday, October 14, to weed the gardens and rake the church lawn. The leaves were mulched, added to the pollinator garden bed, and topped with compost from the bins behind the church. On Friday, October 22, five of us layered more leaves and mulch from the Lake Placid transfer station in the pollinator garden. It is now prepared for Spring planting. There is still a small amount of weeding and cutting to be done on the driveway side of the manse.

Worship Committee: The Worship Committee met on Oct 8, 2021. Several weeks ago, John sent a questionnaire to the church members who use Zoom exclusively. He wanted feedback about their experience and if the hybrid service met their needs. After reviewing the results, the takeaway was a strong interest in the hybrid and affirmed what we have been doing. There has been feedback that the prayer section is going on

too long. But John feels that the prayers offered are what is happening in people's lives, and they need to tell the story in their own words. He does wish that more people would feel comfortable sharing. Hearing can be a problem, especially with those online with Zoom. John will remind them to speak directly into the microphone. John has met with the Re-opening task Force to discuss how Christmas will look this year, most notably Christmas Eve. Last year the service was on Zoom; this year we will have a hybrid service. How would we feel with an overflow crowd—even masked. Full Zoom would be best, but people have a real need craving to be together physically. Music was the big concern, especially on Christmas Eve and the closing singing of Silent Night. It is felt that people will feel a loss if we cannot sing. John has spoken with Rob and Lynn. They are adamant that, for now, the choir will continue to be recorded. There were many ideas presented in the discussion. But it came down to having only one simple in-church/hybrid Christmas Eve service tailored to include the singing of Carols outside as part of the worship service at the end. People will simply go out of the church, social distance themselves, and sing. The church will provide the song sheets and advertise to the community who might like to join us. The decision on having tickets to limit the crowds was tabled until the next Worship Committee meeting on November 5. The full Worship Committee minutes will be posted under DOCs on the church website.

Mission and Social Action Committee: The Mission and Social Action Committee is working with the Creation Justice Church Task Force to help plan the next steps in their transition from a Task Force to implementation.

Flower Committee: Charlotte reported the arrangements on the altar have been fantastic, showing creative variety. October gardens are still showing flowers just prior to a hard frost. Memorial flowers have been shared and other natural items used. Great job by all volunteers!

Creation Justice Church Task Force: October 9, 2021 at the KVCC Annual Meeting, the Congregation approved the Covenant for becoming a Creation Justice Church:

Keene Valley Congregational Church affirms that the global environmental crisis is the most pressing spiritual challenge of human history. This moment calls us to understand our mission statement's charge to, "strive lovingly to serve others with justice and compassion," to broadly include both the human and non-human Creation. As such, we declare our congregation to be a Creation Justice Church. We commit ourselves to thoughtfully engage in acts of compassion to heal the world, mitigate the effects of the environmental crisis, and advocate for justice on behalf of all Creation.

October 22 an application was sent to the UCC Environmental Justice Program to become a UCC designated Creation Justice Church.

At the October 24 CJC Task Force Meeting, Dan Mason proposed that the original proposal to place solar panels on the roof of the church be modified to include no cutting of the trees around the garage. All members of the Task Force approved the following resolution to be sent to the Council for their consideration:

The Creation Justice Church Task Force recommends that the KVCC Church Council considers the proposal to install Solar PV on the KVCC garage roof without removing any trees.

Pam Gothner attended the October 26th meeting to answer questions and provide clarification, if needed. Pam made a motion for the Council to consider installing Solar PV on the KVCC garage roof without removing any trees. Naj seconded the motion. A discussion occurred, and Dan Mason provided more up-to-date information for the Council. A vote was cast. There were nine yeas, with one nay vote. The motion was passed. Pam made a motion to the Council that a second vote is not needed from the congregation. Naj

seconded the motion. A discussion was made, and the motion was passed. John recommended the CJC make this announcement to the congregation and John will make it to the community.

Re-Opening Task Force Report

- Group continues to monitor updates to health guidance, and the state of the pandemic.
 - Full hybrid worship offered beginning July 4.
 - Group will be moving to a meeting schedule of every other week.
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Sabbatical Task Force Report: There is no new information to report on from this Committee.

2021 Annual Meeting: The Council debriefed around the Annual Meeting to include the new format of having the church service and Annual Meeting occur simultaneously. We discussed the pros and cons of this structure. John will be on sabbatical next year so more of the responsibility of the Annual Meeting will lay with the Council.

Council Retreat: The Council recommended we have the Council Retreat for a half day retreat on either Sunday afternoon 11/14 or 11/21, or 12/5. Council members volunteered to help plan and coordinate this event.

Other Business: Deborah made a motion to hold the November and December KVCC Council meetings on Tuesday December 7 at 5 PM. Linda seconded the motion. A discussion was made and the motion was passed.

Elizabeth made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:57 PM.

Next council meeting is Tuesday, **December 7, 2021** (fourth Tuesday of the month) at 5:00 PM in person at KVCC with a Zoom component.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Mitchell, Clerk