

KVCC Church Council Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2023

Present: Debby Rice, Pastor John Sampson, Dre Roebuck, Anne Runyon Hurd, Nancy McArthur, Shawn Lamarche, Fritz Sabbow, Charlotte Lichtenburg, Howard Husslein, Pam Gothner, and Deborah Mitchell.

Debbie opened the meeting at 5:00 PM. This meeting was held at KVCC.

Opening Prayer: After a moment of silence, Pastor John led the group in reading our shared intention.

Determination of Quorum: We had a quorum at today's meeting.

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

Annette Merle-Smith Bequest Update: John informed the Council that a small group has met with a focus on asking congregants how they think the bequest could be used to support our mission and vision at KVCC. Once people are interviewed, the next step would be to summarize those comments and present them to the Council.

By-Laws Review: Debby would like to form a small group to review and update the Church's by-laws. Pastor John, Pam, and Nancy volunteered to help out with this project. An offer for others to join in will go out in this week's Church newsletter.

WelcomeCorps Opportunity:

Laurin McArthur, Debbie Rice, Elizabeth Davidson, Patience Whitman, Nancy McArthur, Dan Mason, Shawn LaMarche, John Sampson

September 2023

Big picture: The sisters are here, residing at 15 Ivan Brown Way. They are Racheal (32) and Naome(19) Mukangamo. They can both converse in English on a social basis, and they are huggers. They find this place amazing.

Outreach: Before the arrival, Laurin spoke to a meeting of Adirondack Friends of Refugees and Immigrants. The meeting was covered by the Lake Placid newspaper. Saint John's in Essex is seriously looking into the Welcome Corps process.

Arrival: Elizabeth led a late-night expedition to Albany for a 12:30 am pickup. Laurin, Monique, Noël Carmichael, Dan, and Debby went with Elizabeth. Nancy prepared a hot meal to eat when they got to Keene Valley.

Welcome Dinner: Linda Bogardus, Robert, and John prepared an amazing meal for the sisters and all who have been working on the project. Please, please, please do not be offended if you were not asked. The invite list was intentionally small.

Housing and provisioning: They love it! They had heard about refugees coming into poorly provisioned places, and they say that we thought of everything. Dan figured out a solution that helps them use their smart phone to interact with

friends and family over Wifi. Their PO Box address is 521, KV. Large kudos for Sarah for going above and beyond to help us. Their laptop arrives Saturday. This will be a learning adventure. They have a library card.

Language: Debby Rice is leading a wonderful team of volunteers to assess their English needs, starting today (Thursday 9/21).

Health: Patience arranged for physical check-ups at the AMC, No surprises. Nancy scheduled a dental check-up with Dr. Balestrini.

Benefits: Patience and Debby initiated the process for Medicaid, Snap, and others. They have an account at Valley Grocery.

Social: Many of you have dropped by and visited. Thank you. If you go, be prepared to stay for a while. If they disappear to make tea, this is part of their welcoming you into their home. Some of you have brought gifts. Thank you. Noel's family from Tanzania visited. They have been all around Keene and Keene Valley, and went to tea time on Tuesday. They have been shopping in KV, LP and Plattsburgh. They picked apples at Rulfs. They are anxious to join the gym, and are going bowling Friday night and possibly paddling Saturday morning. They need to be encouraged to walk around town. Kathy Wiegand has been very helpful with social language.

Money: The sufficiency of money depends on employment over the intermediate term. Donations are welcome! Noel and Nancy will work on budgeting, but the sisters desire to join the gym is a good learning tool.

Documentation: Documentation has proven to be the area of glitches. They did not arrive with the must-have docs, but we were able to print them off the web. We are trying to get docs with their addresses on them, to then get IDs. Hopefully, social security will come quickly. Naome's name is Naomi! We cannot fix that, but we can change the way we spell it. Her birthday is also wrong. Some of you may have this historical experience. This is how MacArthur became McArthur. Their change of address has been filed with immigration.

Jobs: They have a very part-time job at the library. Their refugee status allows them to work prior to obtaining a social security card. They are very anxious to work.

The past week has been wonderful.

Laurin McArthur

Keene Food Pantry: Deborah updated the Council on the transfer of the Keene Food Pantry from Vinny McClelland to KVCC effective early October. Pastor John, Nancy and Deborah will be meeting with Vinny on 10/6/23 to finalize those details and officially turn over the responsibility of the Food Pantry to KVCC. Deborah suggested we change the name of the program to the Keene Food Mission as there is no longer a food pantry, but a voucher program with the Valley Grocery and reimbursements to participants who shop at other locations, such as Aldis.

Nominating Committee: John would like to head up the Nominating Committee rather than have the Council continue with this responsibility. Pam made a motion to empower John with the formation of the Nominating Committee. Anne seconded the motion. The Council discussed the matter, a vote was cast, and the motion passed.

Personnel Task Force Update: Because there has been no one to volunteer to head up a Personnel Task Force, Debby took the initiative to begin to write up guidelines for our staff.

PASTOR'S REPORT – SEPTEMBER 26, 2023

Worship and Spiritual Development

- The summer music program completed on Sunday, September 3. Thanks to Bill Serjack, Nancy Emrich, Liz Jaques, Lynn Dewalt and Rob Hastings for another season of great music.
- Leading weekly worship at the Neighborhood House. Members of the Neighborhood House have been attending Sunday morning worship at KVCC.
- Friday morning prayer group meets weekly in the VSR, sharing prayers, concerns, and joys of the community.
- The Centering Prayer Group (CPG) meets mornings @ 7 AM via Zoom.
- Have been experimenting with paperless Sunday morning worship. Good feedback has been received both pro and con. Will discuss further at the upcoming Worship Committee meeting.
- Planning group currently meeting to organize a celebration of the Fall Equinox on Friday, September 22 @ 5:15 PM.
- Worship Committee meeting scheduled for Friday, September 29.
- See below for scheduled vacation time, including who the guest worship leaders will be.
- Invited Kelly Metzger of Adirondack North Country Gender Alliance to give a mission moment on Sunday, October 29.

Web Site

- Jimm Collin has agreed to help create the website.
- Met with Jimm to review content requirements.
- Jimm is reaching out to website builders to get a sense of their work and pricing.
- Jimm is taking pictures of church life to use as content on the website.

Confirmed Memorial Services and Weddings

- None at this time.

Pastoral Support

- Weekly office hours scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 – 3 PM. Other times by request.
- Provide ongoing pastoral support to the church community via Zoom, telephone, in-person meetings, and email.

Book Discussion Group – Tuesday Nights

- The group is considering coming back together, and what book will be read.

Manse Discernment Committee

- Member of group considering future usage of the manse and extended property.

WelcomeCorps Committee

- Part of the group that hosted the welcome dinner for Naomi and Rachael on Friday, September 15.

Community Support

- Working with members of the congregation on identifying neighbors in need, and supporting them through pastoral support and financial grants.
- Member of Keene Diversity Advisory Committee. Meet monthly with the group.

New York Conference

- Currently serving a 3-year term on the UCC NY Board of Directors.
- Will attend board meeting on September 23.
- Will be attending a Board retreat November 9 – 11.

North Country Association

- First meeting of the new North Country Association scheduled for Saturday, September 30.
- Have agreed to be a member of the new Association's Committee on Ministry.

Training/Education

- No training currently scheduled.

Scheduled Vacation

- October 11 – 23, returning on October 24. Rev. Laurin McArthur will lead worship on October 22. Worship leader for 10/15 TBD.
- November 14 – 27, returning on November 28. Rev Dawn Karlson will lead worship on 11/19. Worship leader for 11/26 TBD.

Other Items

- Prepare content for weekly emails to church community.
- The group discerning how to apply the Annette Merle-Smith bequest has begun regular meetings. Interviews with the wider community will begin shortly.
- KVCC scheduled to attend Plattsburgh Pride on Saturday, September 30.
- Planning to host Halloween trick-or-treat at the church on Tuesday, October 31.
- Volunteered to be point person for collecting items for the 2024 White Elephant. Collection will begin in January.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee Report

Treasurer's Report - August

Key Financial Indicators:

| Account | YTD 8/31/23 | Vs YTD 8/31/23 | % Change |
|------------------|-------------|----------------|----------|
| Endowment Draw | 50,100 | 2,682 | 6% |
| Pledges & Plate | 73,570 | 4,499 | 6% |
| Total Income | 145,646 | 22,082 | 18% |
| Bldgs & Grounds | 18,602 | 5447 | 41% |
| M&SA | 1,942 | 2,232 | n/a |
| Employee Expense | 100,304 | -6,495 | -6% |
| Total Expenses | 153,537 | 4,641 | 3% |
| Net Income | (7,891) | 17,441 | -69% |

Endowment: Reverend Frederica Mitchell Legacy Fund as of 8/31/2023

| Item | 8/15//2023 | YTD Change |
|----------------|--------------|------------|
| Total Value | \$1,414,1400 | +\$72,841 |
| % invested ESG | 60% | |

Accounts at Champlain National Bank a/o 8/17/2023

| Account | Balance | Notes |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Main Account | \$110,720 | |
| Pastors Discretionary Fund | 11,219 | Bazaar vote at Cong Mtg |
| Petty Cash | 2,110 | |
| JPN Event Account | 1,176 | Surplus after pmt WHome |
| Newcomers Account | 4,800 | Donated by Committee |

Overall financial performance is acceptable with continued focus on expense management.

Worship Committee

Next meeting: **Friday, September 29, 10 AM - 12 PM.**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86732960745?pwd=UEdQsXRtamVhWld6TG9mSjd1OEZpdz09>

Meeting ID: 867 3296 0745

Passcode: 987408

The discussion topics for the meeting will include:

- Check in about worship - Sundays, and other services
- Worship with bulletins vs. without
- Advent and Christmas worship - esp. Advent 4/Christmas Eve

- Representation on the 2024 Church Council

- Other topics?

Mission & Social Action

No new information was provided at the time of the Council meeting.

Flower Committee

The October - January schedule is now posted on the bulletin board near the kitchen. This schedule continues with the listing of member names rotating through the five Sundays of October. The arrangements our group provides for the altar/table will continue to sometimes include fresh flowers. We will also use local garden flowers when available this fall. Members are encouraged to be creative at other times. The use of house plants, or most anything found in our natural environment is acceptable. The members of this group work together to cover the schedule. **We do welcome new volunteers.** Ask Alana, Charlotte, Ingrid, or Susie if you have any questions about what this task involves.

Grounds Report

Maintenance of the lawn and garden beds has continued with weekly mowing by East Branch Organics and occasional weeding. Erin Doolittle put in new plants at the end of Susie's bed in front of the manse. Plants in the pollinator garden and other beds will need to be cut down this fall to discourage seeds from self-sowing. A fall workday will be scheduled within the next month for raking and clipping. There will also be a day to plant daffodils and crocus bulbs. If anyone knows of people who do not attend church, but like to garden, please let Pam know.

Buildings Report

First, let me say that I hope I can live up to the expectations folks might have of me in this position. I know already that there are many folks who are willing and even anxious to help make this transition as seamless as possible.

I should begin by stating that my professional training has been in electrical maintenance in the U.S. Naval Air Schooling as well as Wisconsin Apprenticeship for which I carried a Journeyman's card for over thirty years. My background was in car washes, an aluminum foundry, and finally a large Magazine and Catalog Printing Company. There I managed the Electrical department and was also responsible for energy saving efforts and the facility electrical distribution. After discharge from the Navy in 1972, my wife, Jo, managed to find us an apartment to rent, and a part-time repair person position for twenty-five buildings with 125 apartments. Fast forward through home ownership and repairs, set construction for innumerable musical theater endeavors (thanks to Amy Nelson), and a post-retirement relocation from Wisconsin to Westport, NY. That's my background.

Fortunately for me, Dan Mason was eager to give me the introduction tour through the Church building, the Manse and garage, and even the basement. We discussed a few items that could use some attention, including loose boards on stairs and the ramp. I did take some time to fasten the loose ones I found, but appreciate any others that people find going forward.

Being rather new to the Congregation and most certainly the position, I appreciate the patience in learning the ins and outs of the properties. I did receive a copy of the Energy Audit that was done in the past, but noted that the date was from 2007, and was not necessarily as current as we might like. That said, I am entertaining the possibility of redoing the Audit to take advantage of the knowledge and experience that providers in those fields have gained in the past seventeen years. This will be discussed in the Committee.

On my to-do list is replacing a light socket in the garage, replacing the toilet seat in the small restroom, and looking into the peeling, rusting wrought iron work around the Church. Some painting is in order, but the season for doing this is rapidly ending for this year.

I have not checked the suggestion box that Pastor John placed in the VSR, but will do so as soon as we return to NY.

Respectfully,

Howard Husslein

Manse Discernment Group

Background: In prior meetings the following scope was determined regarding the Church PROPERTY (land, beyond the building/manse)

- A **new survey** is needed of the approximately 1.38 acres to determine current borders, right of ways, utilities, etc. (Nancy volunteered to get this done for this group.)
- Need a KVCC Church Property development plan
- **No changes will be made without Council and Church involvement and support.**

Meeting with Surveyor on September 12: Nancy McArthur organized a Meeting to review the draft results of the plot plan with the surveyor.

Participants: Finance committee and manse committee representatives (Nancy McArthur), Elizabeth Davidson, Larry Shipp, Dan Mason, Susy Doolittle, Debby Rice)

The meeting focused on reviewing the draft plan and understanding the drawings in more detail. Follow up information needed on neighboring septic/pit locations. (Debby)

The surveyor will provide a final report. He recommends that we hold off on submitting the drawings to the planning board right now until we have a firm plan in place.

(Thank you to Nancy for working with this surveyor on this very important step in the process.)

Next Steps: *Where could we go to meet the needs of our community?*

A list of Ideas for possible uses of our property have been initiated. (see prior minutes for complete list). The timing seems to be right for thinking about this question given the needs of our community.

Submitted by: Debby Rice

Dump: John is asking for help with taking leftover items from the Bazaar to the dump. Fritz volunteered to help.

Dates:

Pride Event: KVCC congregants will participate in the Pride Event in Plattsburgh, on Saturday, 9/30/23.

Halloween: John is seeking donations of time and materials for Halloween. So far, Amanda, Linda, Coco, and Erica have offered to help out with this fun, festive evening.

Turkeys: The Council discussed supporting Families First in Essex County for their Thanksgiving Drive. Last year, KVCC were major contributors to their drive which provided turkeys to approximately 100 families in Essex County.

Winter Solstice: The Worship Committee meets later this week and will provide the congregation with the schedule for services for the Christmas holiday.

Other Business: None

The Council will meet again on Tuesday, **October 24, 2023** (fourth Tuesday of the month) at 5:00 PM in person at KVCC with a Zoom option.

Deborah made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Mitchell, Clerk