

KVCC CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 26, 2022

Present: Pastor John Sampson, Debby Rice, Anne Runyon Hurd, Linda Bogardus, Nancy McArthur, Charlotte Lichtenberg, Susie Allen, Barbara Merle-Smith, Liz Jaques, Fritz Sabbow, Dre Roebuck, Derek Prill, Pam Gothner, Naj Wikoff, Jimm Collin, Paul Osenbaugh, Henrietta Jordan, Dan Mason, Chris Blaicher, and Deborah Mitchell. **Absent:** Lorraine Duvall and Erica Swift

Debby Rice opened the meeting at 5:02 PM (Zoom Meeting) and began the meeting by reading our Church's Open and Affirming statement.

Opening Prayer: Pastor John led the group in prayer, inviting God's spirit to join us and give us inspiration.

Reading of the Creation Justice Church Statement: Debby read the CJC Statement to help keep us focused on our mission and the Church's commitments.

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

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

PASTOR'S REPORT – APRIL 26, 2022

Worship and Spiritual Development

- 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 (CPG) meets mornings @ 7 AM.
- The CPG weekly book discussion group has taken a break from *The Cloud of Unknowing* for a couple of weeks. The group is focusing on online videos and Zoo meetings with meditation teachers from other traditions as a way to deepen and broaden our practice.
- Friday morning prayer group meets in the VSR, sharing prayers, concerns, and joys of the community.
- Upcoming special worship:
 - April 22 - Earth Day service
 - May 1 – Arbor Day inspired worship informed by Celtic Christianity
 - May 5 - The Friday morning prayer group will sponsor a prayer meeting on Thursday, May 5 in observance of National Prayer Day.
 - May 15 – A Meditation focused worship service will be offered in preparation for World Meditation Day
 - May 20 - The CPG will be offering opportunities for our community to participate in World Meditation Day
 - May 22 - Soffiyah Elijah will be the guest preacher
 - June 5 – Pentecost
 - June 21 – Summer Equinox Vespers Celebration
 - July 17 – Preach at All Souls; David Figliuzzi, an M.Div. student from Yale will be guest preaching.
 - July 31 - Celtic inspired worship informed by the Faith and Issues readings
 - September 4 – Last Sunday worship before starting sabbatical

- Working with Nancy Emrich, Bill Serjak, and Liz Jaques to create the Summer Music program. Eight of fourteen slots confirmed.

Confirmed Memorial Services and Weddings

- April 23 – Graveside funeral for Richard Coe Austin.
- May 22 – Lewis wedding. Will be co-officiating with Soffiyah Elijah. Location TBD.
- June 18 – Robinson wedding. John will not be officiating.

Pastoral Support

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

Book Discussion Group – Tuesday Nights

- The group will begin reading *Living Buddha, Living Christ* by Thich Nhat Hanh on May 3.

Community Support

- Working with members of the congregation on identifying neighbors in need, and supporting them through financial grants.

Essex Association

- Annual meeting scheduled for Sunday, May 22.
- Black River – St. Lawrence Association (BRSL)
 - Members of the Essex Association continue to have 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
- Sabbatical information session offered after worship on 5/13
- Requested that Council and Sabbatical Planning Committee identify all needs by March 31. Met with Larry S. to review the PDF process. Also requested to kick-off the 2023 Nomination process. No other request made at this time.

Out of Office

- No time out of office planned at this time.

Other Items

- Attend Spiritual Direction sessions for the development of my own spirit
- Became member of the Steering Committee of the Keene Diversity Advisory Committee (KDAC)
- Keene Pride will not be held this year. There will be a Pride gathering in Saranac Lake on June 26.
- Participating in monthly meetings of the Plattsburgh Climate Squad, a group comprised of members of houses of worship in Plattsburgh looking to become climate advocates in the North Country.
- Currently serving a 3-year term on the UCC NY Board of Directors.
- On 3/23 began participating in a UCC NY Board of Directors book group reading *dear white peacemakers: Dismantling Racism with Grit and Grace*, by Osheta Moore.
- The Fifty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the New York Conference of the United Church of Christ will convene at the Silver Bay Retreat Center, Silver Bay, NY, beginning at 2:00 PM on Friday, June 10, 2020, and will be in session until after the Closing Service of Worship on Sunday, June 12, 2022. Churches in the Essex Association will be called on to support the meeting.
- Member of the group planning the NY Conference Annual Meeting.
- A new couple would like to join the church. Pastor John would like to open the membership to those attending in person as well as those attending on line. The Council agreed with Pastor John's recommendation.

BAZAAR 2022 REPORT:

Dre led the discussion about the Bazaar. The Bazaar planning group has met twice over the last 2 months. At this time, it looks like the quilt sale, white elephant, jewelry sale, lawn games, Creation Justice information booth, and a musical performance on Friday evening are a GO! Food, baked goods, and community partner involvement including children's activities are up in the air at this time.

We still need a co-lead for baked and prepared goods, a lead for lunch/dinner food service, and I could use a right-hand person in overseeing the big picture. The group has discussed alternative food plans in the event we cannot get someone to lead this piece such as:

- Recruiting a couple of food vendors and charging a fee to them to sell food at the event.

- Another idea is to only do lunch on Saturday, and baked goods and coffee on Friday evening to make the load lighter on a new food team.

- Selling pizza by the slice.

Nancy McArthur and Peg Wilson - Quilts

Barbra Merle-Smith - Jewelry

Merle Tanis - Baked goods (needs a co-lead as she won't be in town to solicit prepared goods before the event)

Liz Jaques & Susy Dolittle - White Elephant sale

Linda LaBarge - Food (Needs a Lead/Co Lead). Deborah Mitchell volunteered to co-lead with Linda. Liz Jaques volunteered to help with food shopping.

Lorraine Duvall & Pam Gothner - Creation Justice Booth and Music Save the Date coming soon.

TREASURER'S/ FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Nancy provided the Council with a recent copy of the Profit and Loss Statement for review and the following reports.

Opportunities to Support Our Ministry

Throughout the last two years, KVCC provided for its community during the lockdown and the resulting social isolation. The church adapted its programs and worship to connect us and was able to do this through the talent of the staff and the resources of the church. Keeping KVCC strong brought us through the crisis and allows us to move forward as an even stronger force for spiritual nurture.

If you have an IRA and are required to take Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) before April 1, please consider giving directly to KVCC using a Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD). These **direct gifts** maybe deducted from your adjusted gross income and reduce your tax bill. Your Required Minimum Distribution normally adds to your tax bill and may even bump you to a different bracket. Should you plan to make a QCD, remember that it must come to the church directly from the IRA. Check with your tax professional to ensure this strategy works for you and contact the church office to notify us of the gift.

We hope you will also consider joining the parishioners and community members who have included KVCC in their wills, trusts or beneficiary designations. Planned gifts are a wonderful way to plan for the ongoing support of the causes you care for most.

For more information, contact Larry Shipps or Nancy McArthur. Thank you for all you have done and for considering these requests.

MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

March 14, 2022

Attending: Nancy McArthur, Elizabeth Derr, Larry Shipps, Fritz Sabbow

The meeting opened with a review of the comparative income statements for the period ending March 31, 2022. Overall, the church's financial performance was stronger than for the same period of 2021; highlights of this discussion included:

- The \$15,000 donation to support the church's technology program and its importance in the church's mission.
- The donations for Hygiene Kits were also cited as demonstrating the importance of hands on mission projects to our congregation.
- Increases in energy costs, particularly propane for the church, are substantially ahead of the prior year's expenditures and justify a stronger approach to conservation through building improvements.

Reviewing the balance sheet, Fritz Sabbow reviewed his work with our bookkeeper on reserves and reconciliations. Aged items in our CNB account and the payroll liability account yield \$3,800 in credit balances which may be used for other purposes. He is currently evaluating our petty cash account as to its purpose.

Regarding Stewardship, Larry Shipps announced that Debby Rice will become Stewardship Chair. The group discussed Little Green Light, a donor management application, which will enable us to better account for donations and donor relationships. Sabbow offered to use his tech soup account to gain a discount on the purchase.

The committee felt that the designation of the endowment as The Reverend Frederica Mitchell Legacy Fund should be celebrated and used to promote giving and legacy gifts. Boston Private will be notified of the change in the name of the fund.

The group noted some support and discussion for restoring the organ in the church. Shipps suggested that a congregational survey assess the appetite for an organ given the uncertain level of support and insufficient available funding.

Following this motion, the group adjourned.

Stewardship: Debby Rice is taking over Stewardship from Larry Shipps. The finance committee purchased a donor software package (little green light) for Debby to learn and use. Stewardship is part of the finance committee, not a separate group. Progress will be reported through that group.

CJC REPORT TO THE KVCC COUNCIL FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 26TH

Solar Project

We hope that all council members have read Dan Mason's overview of the solar project that was emailed to the council on March 28, 2022. If you have lost that email, let Pam know to send it to you again.

pgothner@gmail.com

Toward the end of his note Dan wrote the following:

WHAT IS NEXT - council decision required

1. Should the project be deemed to go forward, we will need to raise the additional funds (\$10,000) and the council will need to commit to this effort and designate a point person to raise the funds. In the interim, we will need to cancel the project with the vendor as they can only guarantee the quote for 30 days
2. If there is no plan to raise additional funds, my recommendation is to cancel the project. I will contact the vendor and the treasurer will need to ask the two solar donors what they want to do with their donations.

At the meeting we will call for a vote on the solar project. The Council voted unanimously to cancel the solar project and are sending their deep felt thanks to Dan Mason for his work on this.

Other activities:

Youth outreach: Lazarus Blacksmith – with us last Sunday to discuss his perspective of living in the age of climate crisis....

General outreach: Earth Day event (delayed) sponsored by Plattsburgh ecumenical “Climate Squad” group: Saturday, April 30th at Point au Roche State Park. Katharine will represent KVCC with information about CJC process and distribute copies of her book.

John is organizing a KVCC team for Keene Clean Day, May 21st.

Planting: Viburnum bushes will be planted in back in celebration of Arbor Day; pollinator garden planting beginning of June. Hope to have help from KCS kids.

Celebration: alongside August Bazaar -- Music, information, displays.

Greening: ongoing work following up with suggestions in energy audit; greening of cleaning products.

BUILDINGS REPORT

Derek said there were no significant changes from the last report. Derek fielded questions from the Council around current projects. Derek is hoping for volunteers for upcoming painting projects. The CJC would like to partner with Derek around upcoming building projects. Dan volunteered to partner with Derek around energy efficient projects.

GROUNDS REPORT

In celebration of Arbor Day the Ground Committee will be planting three Nannyberry Viburnum (Viburnum lentago) along the pathway behind the church during the week of April 24 - April 31. We will be planning a grounds work day after May 15. The pollinator garden planting will start at the beginning of June.

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

The Worship Committee has not met since the last Council Meeting.

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION REPORT

KVCC has now hosted two successful disaster hygiene kit assembly workshops, thanks to Barbara Merle-Smith’s stellar leadership. What was especially noteworthy about these events was the degree to which they engaged members of the wider community.

Katharine Preston, Pastor John, and I have been working on what we hope will be an interesting and thoughtful presentation Earth Day presentation on Sunday, April 24th. Katharine has been communicating with Mary Warner at Keene Central School about engaging with the Keene Green Team, but Covid interfered with that effort.

Pastor John will speak at John Brown Day on May 14th. KVCC will again be a sponsor of Pride Day on June 18th.

Little Peaks, one of our grant recipients, is closing on its purchase of property in Keene and will soon start construction of a much-needed full-day childcare center for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. This will be a game-changer for families in our communities.

Henri Jordan

FLOWER COMMITTEE

April has been the month of change for our group of volunteers. Now that we have in-person worship services, we added flower arrangements starting with Easter. We again used the Glens Falls nursery, Garden Time Inc., for our special Easter service. Discounts were given on all lilies and plants. The system included taking home some of the plants after the Easter service. A donation was suggested back to the flower fund of KVVC for the privilege of taking a plant home.

Subsequent Sundays may have flowers. Soon flowers from local gardens will more readily be available. Again, other options are being encouraged to lessen the use of flowers.

Volunteers are still needed as members of our group may need some time off for different reasons. Extra volunteers make substitutions easier. Thank you to our faithful volunteers for their work to date in 2022!

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, 2021.
- Group meeting every week.
- Full choir resumed in-person singing on Palm Sunday.

SABBATICAL COMMITTEE REPORT

APRIL 21, 2022

- This committee will have met 3 times since the last Council meeting.
- Linda Bogardus has joined the committee as a representative of the Worship Committee. Bernie had been a representative from Worship, but felt that he might hold us back.
- We are planning for ample congregation feedback during the Sabbatical. Each week we will have cards available for people to give immediate feedback on their thoughts about the worship leader and the service in general – this will enable us to do a quick assessment and fix if something isn't working. As a second measure, we will host 2 sessions – one before Advent and another just before John returns – asking some more general questions as to what people did and did not like about the New Voices/New Perspective worship series. We will include some thoughtful questions that might help us proceed into the future. We will need to figure a way to have this feedback available for zoomers.
- Jenifer Deming has agreed to do Worship services at the Neighborhood House if that opportunity opens up again.
- We would like the date for the Annual Meeting to be October 9th. That would also be the Sunday we will ask members of the Congregation who wish to do so, to share a 3 to 5-minute summary of what forms the core of their spiritual life. Keep an eye out in the Community News for this call to share. The Council agreed to have our Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 9th.
- Respectfully submitted, Karen, Debby, Elizabeth, Naj, Barbara, Linda

ORGAN

Dre invited Chris to the Council meeting to provide the Council of an overview of the factors involved in purchase of an organ for the Church. Chris went over the two organ options and what their features include. Chris said we have \$14,000 in the organ fund. He advise from the Council on how to proceed with raising the remainder of the funds. Funding for the organ would come from outside the normal operating budget. It has not been determined whether there is consensus around purchasing an organ. There are many factors to consider. Chris reminded the Council of a previous agreement that if half of the funds for the organ were pledged, then fundraising would be opened to the whole congregation. We addressed the need of having enough organists available to play the organ. The Council also spoke about broadening our discussions around what we would like to our music program to be like rather than focusing solely on the organ purchase. We agreed the next step would be to generate a form of communication (i.e. notice in our newsletter and/or letter to the congregation). Fritz and Chris will create a draft to the Council soliciting thoughts and ideas for our music program. Ann volunteered as well to be involved.

MANSE DISCERNMENT REPORT

Debby said this group has met twice since our last Council meeting. The group discussed how bet to use the building. In the short term, a deep clean of the apartment will occur in the upcoming months. In the long term, part of the building will be rented but details around the lease are undetermined at this time. Henri added that she is not receiving the Manse meeting emails. Debby is making sure the correct email address is used.

Other Business:

A Personnel Group is forming. Currently includes the Moderator (Debby), Vice Moderator (Dre), and Treasurer (Nancy). Raises were provided effective 4/1/22.

The Council discussed improving our KVCC website, and Jimm offered to help out with this.

Next council meeting is Tuesday, **May 24, 2022** (fourth Tuesday of the month) at 5:00 PM in person at the Keene Valley Library.

Deborah made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Mitchell, Clerk