

Church Council Minutes October 25, 2011

At 7:05 Dick Adams opened the meeting with the **Spiritual Grounding and Prayer**. He used a prayer written by a lay member of the Ocean Park, ME church where Ken White, the composer of "Go In Peace" and former member of SUMC, now attends.

The **Minutes of May 17, 2011** were moved to be accepted by Ed Dudley and seconded by Deb Beckius. They were unanimously accepted.

Dick Adams wondered who set up a **Facebook page** for Simsbury UMC. Since no one seemed to know, it was decided to ask who set it up in the announcements as a way to acknowledge and advertise this new means of promoting our church.

The **Stained Glass Window Fund** was presented by Amy Bobinski. She noted that of the \$95,000 needed to complete the south transept, 55 families had pledged a total of \$46,725 and the trustees has committed \$42,000 to this project. We also have an unspecified stained glass window account with at least \$10,000. This includes the proceeds from the window ornaments and other donations. Our grand total is over \$98,725 so Lyn Hovey can begin making the large window in the south transept. Lyn had already designed the south transept window years ago. It was to be completed in memory of Alice Irene Welden and the two Walker sisters who were all very active in the music program of the church, were God's servants in many other ways, and made significant donations to the stained glass window fund. Roger Preston gave a testimonial on why Irene Welden should still be memorialized. After passing around his design of the south transept, Ed Dudley moved to accept the design of Lyn Hovey and have the window dedicated to these three women and possibly adding a more general dedication for all the other unnamed donors and servants of God. This will be discussed by the committee. Hal Johnson seconded this motion and it was approved.

The **Lay Leadership Report** was given by Amy Bobinski. She will be stepping down as the chair as of Dec. 31, 2011 and would like to have a full complement of staffing done prior to leaving. She wants all the committees to give her their needs for staffing as soon as possible. She would also like to put a description of each committee's roles and responsibilities on our website. Therefore, she would like each committee to write their own description for her to use. Carol Bressor stated that she recently found an old list of committees with descriptions and is planning to send it to Amy. It was pointed out that the Book of Discipline might be a good place for committees to start as they write their descriptions, but Pastor Woody cautioned that those descriptions are quite generic and our committees may have expanded their areas of service to meet our church community's needs. Committees should get these descriptions to Amy as soon as possible so she can post them on the website.

The **Church School Report** was highlighted by Deb Beckius. She is pleased with attendance this year as it is more consistent than last year. The lowest attendance was the day of the Simsbury Fly-In. She pointed out that there are 29 confirmands many of which were on the Sunday School roles last year. She likes the new format of asking volunteers to serve 2 rotations instead of just one. There seems to be more volunteers involved this year as well. The children are filling mason jars in their classrooms with money to support the Simsbury "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" program. Her one concern is that they are unable to use one classroom due to flooding in the basement in August and September. Repairs must be done in order to use the room again. Rudy Maurer was asked if Trustees was looking at the problem. He stated that they had not addressed the problem yet because they had to finish fixing the roof which was causing some of the leaking problems. Since the basement is now dry, they can look into the problem. It was asked if there were insurance issues to be considered. Trustees will look into that. Rudy felt that the repair may be too small to make an insurance claim as it may be less than the deductible. It was also asked if this was work that our VIM team could do. Trustees will assess and decide the course of action needed.

Highlights from the **New York Annual Conference** were presented by Dick Adams. First, he recommended that when the Lay Leadership Team asks for volunteers to go to NYAC, we should make every attempt to go as we would all be greatly enriched. The preaching was superb and the way the different groups handled their differences was respectful. He showed a video clip of a portion of Ken Keiffer's report which highlighted why there needs to be a change in pastoral appointments. The need for guaranteed appointments for life is no longer present. In fact because of this policy, many fine pastors are only working part-time because there is no place for a full appointment available to them. He feels there are some pastors serving who are no longer highly qualified and should be replaced by these better qualified pastors. The General Conference will be meeting in 2012 where this topic will be voted on. We, as United Methodists, should expect excellence from our pastors and no longer support guaranteed appointments.

The **Lay Speaker Report** was given by Ed Dudley. There are 6 Lay Speakers at SUMC, 2 of which are Certified Lay Speakers. SUMC lay speakers offer a worship service at McLean's on the 4th Sunday of every month. A schedule for the year was set up at a recent meeting. Each lay speaker will lead 2 worship services this year. There will be a training session in Woodbury, CT that 5 of the speakers will be attending. Lay Speakers are being offered an opportunity to preach during the year, if they feel so inspired, at 1 of the Sunday morning services. This will be in addition to covering the pulpit when our pastors are unavailable.

The **Member Care** report was highlighted by Pastor Peter. They have established about a dozen "Circles of Caring." The committee is ready to make more circles, but they need more shepherds for them.

The **Finance Report** was given by Hal Johnson. The good news is the predicted deficit will be significantly less than originally thought due in part to committees keeping their expenditures down. The projected budget for 2012 is based on a 4% increase in pledges. If this doesn't happen, they will have to adjust the budget accordingly. A question was posed regarding having Sunday School children receive envelopes to encourage their giving/tithing. Deb Beckius felt that the staff encourages giving through different mission projects such as the mason jars for "Neighbors Helping Neighbors." She believed envelopes had been discontinued as they brought in little revenue. It was asked when the last rent increase was imposed on Plowshares. It was determined that they are paying \$9,000 a year. It was pointed out that while this is well below the market value, it is a ministry and so they should not have to pay market rate. It was unclear when their last rent increase was imposed so the Finance committee will look at the possibility and feasibility of raising their rent. Randy Cole realized recently that he still has an operating account along with a flow through account. He wasn't aware he had an operating budget so the Finance committee will need to clarify whether two accounts are needed or whether they might be renamed to clarify their use.

The **Stewardship Interim Report** was offered by Jim Swearingen. He outlined the timeline of the stewardship drive. Stewardship Moments are being given at all 3 services the last 4 Sundays in October. "Pledge Wanted" posters have been put up. Pledge cards were mailed and are due back in the office by October 30th. Follow-up letters will be sent out Oct. 31st to those who haven't responded. Then a phone call will be made in mid November to members who haven't responded but have in the past. After the campaign closes, they will determine if they can maintain the 4% budget increase that Finance has requested.

Pastor Peter presented the progress on the **Data Base**. There were 85 - 90 responses. The interests of the respondents has been recorded and information has been sent to appropriate committee chairs. Spiritual gifts, talents, and past experiences will also be added to the data base. This will provide valuable information to the Lay Leadership committee.

The **Little Lambs and Ivy Birth to Three progress report** was given by Joanne Maurer. First of all, she thanked all the volunteers who did a great deal of painting of rooms to accommodate more birth to three children in the LLI program. Michelle Ebert's husband volunteered an afternoon making a half wall for them as well. The change has been a huge success. The preschool's reputation is excellent as they have received lots of kudos from the community. They have 3 special needs preschoolers who have support within the public education sector. The support team is very pleased with Little Lambs and Ivy's preschool program . They have

enrolments expected through May. The philosophy and goals have been maintained since the preschool's founding providing a safe environment for working families' children, providing work for members of the church community, and providing an atmosphere of Christian love and a generous spirit.

The **25th Anniversary Celebration of the Carillon and Organ** will be May 20, 2012. Dick Adams noted that Karen Matheson is chairing this celebration. Yves is writing new music for this event. The Forman family will be present along with other distinguished guests. Cassandra pointed out that Vincente with other volunteers is refurbishing the steel girders that support the carillon. Because the temperatures are dropping, he could use some extra help to get this done in a timely fashion.

Rudy Maurer gave a summary of the projects of the **Trustees**. They have just completed a major repair of the roof. At first they had planned to do only some of the repair now, but there was serious damage in the chapel so it was felt that with all the work being done with the stained glass windows in the chapel, we could not allow the possibility of a leaky roof damaging them. The kitchen is nearly complete. After some delays with their repair, the tables that will be in the center of the kitchen should be arriving soon. Trustees has been supporting the Stained Glass Window installation. The Plank Hill exit changes are nearly completed. There are some adjustments needed to the lower level exits. The bathrooms outside Wesley Hall are needing an upgrade especially since they are a high traffic area of the church, and we want to continue to make our church a welcoming place. The annex needs a boiler replacement. Trustees hopes to replace it with a natural gas furnace as it will run more efficiently and be more economical than the oil furnace we are currently using. They are looking to improve the distribution of the heat throughout the building. The roof of the parsonage needs repair as well. Ed Dudley wondered how the endowment was doing with all the recent expenditures and the stock market's instability. Rudy stated that the endowment is between \$8,000 and \$9,000 which is considerably less than it was. The trustees recognizes that the endowment has shrunk, but felt that keeping up our investment in the building was more important than losing some of the endowment.

A request from the **Hospitality Committee** was voiced by Jon Webber for Marilyn. She needed volunteers to sign up to host the coffee hour so the sign-up sheet was passed around the Church Council.

The **New Member Committee** report was given by Jon Webber. While the committee has lost 2 members, Lucy Morris and Jay Fearington, it has gained Tom Leite and Mike Ausere. He was pleased to see new members join at all three services and that many were young folks with families. He attributed it to the great programs offered at SUMC like the music and Sunday School. Pastor Woody said that many of the new members stated that this church is very

friendly and welcoming. Twenty-six new members have joined SUMC this year. Jon pointed out that Pastor Peter has been helpful to the committee. He also mentioned that the Communications Committee has done well in keeping our church in the news. Dick Adams pointed out that Mike Motyl has restarted sending letters out to new home buyers.

Randy Cole highlighted his **Youth Program** report. First of all, he is pleased that the UM Army and the VIM were able to purchase a trailer to haul materials to the different mission sites. Jan Bennett suggested that a logo would be great to add to the trailer. It was agreed, but the logistics will need to be ironed out. He is glad that Jay and Melissa Fearington's have agreed to lead the Junior MYF along with Barry Kline's assistance. This fall the youth participated in the nationwide "Big Day of Serving." There were 600 youth in Danbury doing various jobs. The 24 participants of adults and youths from SUMC worked on cleaning up a housing authority location in Danbury. The summer of 2012, SUMC Youth will be participating in an Appalachian Service Project instead of UM Army. It was felt it would diversify the experience of the youth as they could be part of the youth groups doing summer missions for 5 years. It was also noted that Sara Burrous will be a Youth Ambassador going to Ghana in February 2012. Randy also felt that having the 29 member confirmation class prior to youth group helped increase the youth group's attendance. The MYF has 12 - 13 members. They are younger than last year, mostly freshmen and sophomores, but very enthusiastic.

The **VIM** report was highlighted by Cassandra Broadus-Garcia. She noted that the committee donated \$500 to purchase flood relief supplies (i.e. shovel, push brooms, etc.) for the Catskills. They were delivered Labor Day weekend. Three teams from SUMC have gone to the Catskills to help rebuild churches and parsonages. There is someone in our parish who has had her home flooded twice and paid large sums of money to pay for the muck out and deconstruction. Cassandra would like to offer the VIM services to sheetrock, mud, and paint her basement. If she approves, the VIM team will be contacted to do the work. Since Bishop Park has asked for NYAC churches to assist in rebuilding Catskill churches and parsonages, Cassandra came up with a plan to create C3s (Catskill Construction Coupons) to be sold to individuals wishing to buy a set of studs, a bucket of nails, etc. These would be used to help the churches and parsonages because UMCOR funds cannot be used for these buildings. Cassandra made a motion for SUMC to make, market, and sell these coupons as a pilot for NYAC. Jon Gice seconded the motion. The idea was warmly received. It passed unanimously.

Dick Adams reported that the **Outreach Committee** is working on greater visibility of the outreach committee's programs.

Dick Adams reviewed a **Retail Benefit** program for on-line shoppers. This program was outlined in an email. One person wondered if there would be a problem because of our non-profit status. Pastor Peter did not want to dilute the responsibility of the parish to do their share in

sacrificial giving. Jim Swearingen wondered if it was an ethical company which Dick assured the council that he had checked them out already. A vote for starting the program was taken. Five were for starting the program, 1 was against starting the program, and there were 15 abstentions. It was decided that if Dick could get 10 people to pilot the program, Church Council would allow the 10 folks to try it out and then report back to the Council.

Charge Conference will be Tuesday, January 31, 2012 at 7:00 PM. Since Ken Keifer will not be able to be present, another pastor will be covering this Charge Conference.

Pastor Peter reported that there will be a Grief Support Group offered on Saturday afternoons for 6 weeks. Details coming soon. He noted that there are 2 new Bible studies being offered at this time. He also stated that his hip replacement surgery has been postponed until November 16th.

Pastor Woody was thankful to be appointed as pastor of SUMC for another year. He highlighted that there are lots of great things going on. The Laity Sunday service went very well under Joyce Tullock's leadership. Sunday, Oct. 30th and Nov. 6th will be dedications of the 2 stained glass windows that have been installed recently. There will guests here on Nov. 6th for the Snow/Seabury window dedication. He is pleased that there are several Eucharistic Ministers who are willing to bring communion to shut-ins each month. Those who receive this service feel greatly blessed. Pastor Woody is glad to have 29 youth participating in the Confirmation Class. He is grateful to 29 members that have agreed to mentor these youth. It was a challenge to find 29 mentors that were not parents of the youths. There will be a luncheon on November 13th to benefit the Confirmation Class Retreat. Missy Iler is in the process of setting up a mission trip to Ghana in late Sept. 2012 to build a health care facility. They are looking for 8 - 10 people who would like to be a part of this project. At NYAC information had been given regarding a survey that had been done of the 33,000 UMC in the United States. Five thousand of those churches were designated as vital--scoring high points in all areas of the church survey. It was determined that there were 16 commonalities among these churches. Ken Keiffer would like us, as the Church Council, to look at these traits and see what SUMC can do to improve these traits here. It was suggested to discuss them with each committee so that we would have a broader range of ideas. We should look at this as an opportunity to grow.

Pastor Woody closed the meeting with a circle prayer at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Motyl, recording secretary