

**Christ Congregational Church UCC
Executive Council
Minutes of June 6, 2016**

Present: Gwen Garrison (Moderator); Tim Carrigan (Past-Moderator); John Malone (Moderator-Elect); Rev. Matt Braddock (Senior Minister); Dean Ripple (Treasurer); Kristen Brown (Christian Education); Lissa Costa (Church Life); Betsy Thomas (Deacons); Trish Esposito (Outreach and Engagement); Anne Weissenborn (Social Witness); Larry Duff (Trustees); Judy Cox (At-Large); Priscilla Peterson (At-Large); John Wack (At-Large); Greg Muncill (Financial Secretary); Susan Gray (Deacons); Jackie Walters (past Church Clerk); Sarah Ingram (Church Clerk). *(does not indicate which board chairs are outgoing or continuing – next meeting will have complete set of 2016-17 board chairs)*

Rev. Matt Braddock and Moderator Gwen Garrison provided celebratory refreshments. Gwen gathered the group for reflection. Gwen led an opening prayer. Gwen asked each attendee to introduce themselves.

Call to Order and Review of Agenda

Moderator Gwen Garrison called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm. The Agenda was approved (Lissa Costa moved for approval; Kristen Brown seconded; motion carried).

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the May 2d meeting: Jackie Walters called for any changes (none); John Wack moved for approval; Priscilla Peterson seconded; motion carried.

Minutes of the June 2d Special Session: Jackie Walters called for any changes (only John Gipson's prior correction of pledge totals). Betsy Thomas moved for approval of the minutes, as corrected; Lissa Costa seconded; motion carried.

Updates on Ongoing Business

- 1) **Safe Conduct.** Gwen said there is a document draft circulating. The working group decided to break apart the policies and procedures into two documents, with strong consensus on the policy statement but continuing discussion on procedures. Gwen stated that various boards are providing comments. She said the topic is a matter for the Trustees to approve because it involves risk management and liability issues. If the Trustees approve the package at their next meeting it would be disseminated widely, with Olen Stephens as point person for comments.

Discussion: Jackie Walters asked how we should reconcile the Risk & Liability role of the Trustees with CCC being a covenantal church: What role for the congregation? Is this more of an imposition than a behavioral covenant? Jackie cited that traditionally big issues are brought to the congregation and failing to do so would not help heal past wounds on this specific topic. John Wack hoped that the policy and procedures reflect what other UCC churches have tried, which would help with the congregation's acceptance. Matt explained that the package is long because it is a collection of what the Insurance Board needed to see and of all the existing CCC procedures that had not yet been incorporated into updated official policy statements. Matt agreed with Jackie about the covenant issue and suggested creating a two-page communications summary of how the package was created, the key elements of the behavioral covenant, and the next steps (approvals, comments, town hall, etc.). John Malone outlined that some people would want to

just understand the behavioral covenant (and when they might need to do more), some would need special training (like the *SafeChurch*® program for church school teachers) and some would need to make commitments for specific off-site events (like beach weekend). General discussion and agreement. Matt stated that if CCC experiences an issue the Insurance Board would ask: do you have a formal policy and did you follow it. He said that CCC needs an official ratified policy (which can be updated and re-ratified on a schedule, e.g., NLT 3 years) even if procedures and communications papers are provisional during a test period this summer. Jackie and Anne Weissenborn commented that the congregation needs the covenantal discussion that CCC has values and standards and those govern mutual behaviors.

Next Steps: Matt to work on a brief Summary paper; Trustees to vote at 6/20 meeting on the policy, on a provisional procedures document (including provisional covenantal materials) and on the draft communications Summary. It is anticipated that the whole package will go out to the congregation during the summer requesting comments and promising a fall congregational town hall. Matt requested that the Moderator place the town hall on the fall calendar as soon as possible.

- 2) **Church Management Software Status** – Gwen reported that she and Alison Petersen chose to look at 15 platforms with 22 functionalities, and added 7-8 questions that relate to CCC's particular covenants. Email and group management issues have proven key. Dean Ripple has said that new platform does not need to integrate with financial software. Next steps: power-user group to work with the two leading companies to test CCC activities on each platform before the end of June. Anticipate signing a contract in July and beginning implementation in August, starting with the church school.
- 3) **Feedback on 2016 Annual Meeting** – Jackie said it was a great annual meeting and thanked Tim Carrigan. She commended the Trustees for engaging the congregation throughout the Spring with town halls and information, listening to people about the difficult choices, and proposing reasonable compromises where possible. Result was a smooth approval of the proposed budget. Trish Esposito stated that many people had to miss the Annual meeting and wish to know the outcomes. Matt suggested that this week's e-blast include annual meeting highlights and a reminder about Dr. Nae Pearson's retirement reception. Tim will draft and deliver text to Susan by Thursday morning. Also, will need to send out new roster once have new board chairs. Lessons learned should be sent to Gwen for the 2017 annual meeting (e.g., reminders to players about handouts and speakers, key information in handouts as people cannot read the screen).
- 4) **Implications of Budget Decisions** – Jackie (also representing Ann Keeler, in absentia) believed that, with the budget passed, CCC needs to acknowledge the loss of the current Christian Education minister, the Rev. Audrey Price, thank her for her service, and name the goal of one day again being able to fund this critical role. There was general agreement and a discussion about appropriate ways to recognize and thank Audrey. Gwen, Judy Cox, Tim and Matt will discuss.
- 5) **Special Fundraising** – Gwen: creating more streamlined process so requests go to Moderator-elect, with special rule to support Board of Social Witness. Anne mentioned a request from an outside organization; will connect with John Malone and Gwen.
- 6) **Affirmation of Trish Esposito to replace Holly Brooks on PPRC** A pastoral parish relations committee supports each called minister and one member is named by Executive Council. John Wack moved for affirmation; Betsy Thomas seconded, motion carried. (PPRC: Merlene Bagley (chair), Trish, Tom Ault, Elaine Kim, G.K. Meier)

Call with Bill McKinney, Center for Progressive Renewal

Bill McKinney summarized report (methodology, community demographics, governance, staffing, finance, membership development, church life, new narrative). Gwen called for clarifying questions, probing questions and next steps.

Clarifying Questions

John Wack asked how many people are needed if CCC follows the recommended 5-bubbles governance chart. Bill: think of 10-12 people as the norm but adjust to the issue. Key: each circle has to work across boundaries but “keep personnel reporting directly” to the coordinating council. Jackie asked about “\$4M in reserves” on page 12. Bill corrected it to “assets”. Dean stated that when number includes CCC building and land that is about right; retreat house property not as valuable. Jackie asked whether Bill believes that work plans for the staff are key to govern 2-way expectations. Bill: yes, important. Larry Duff asked how the cited Seattle church cut committee seats from 150 to 70. Bill: many seats were already empty and many people became free to work on church priorities like membership growth.

Other Topics

John Malone asked what topic was hardest to describe in the report. Bill: probably that some members expressed discontent with the theological style of some staff; CCC needs to think about its openness to theological diversity especially if CCC wants to attract “religious refugees” and diverse additional membership. (Some discussion about what Bill observed.) Tim asked how we should build bridges between subgroups in the congregation (newer and longstanding; single and family; etc.). Bill: many voiced a hunger for more fellowship and fun, informal events (e.g., game night, invite seniors group to Sunday evening youth group). John Malone asked how we reach out to diverse community while we have our own differences. Bill: everything you do as a church is an opportunity to connect with your community. CCC should mix members and non-members in more activities, from religious refugees circle (CCC is living in a sea of alienated Christians so why have a group only for those inside), to youth group projects, to mission trips. Don’t have to knock on doors (not in CCC character) but ask selves how to get connected with those outside and then nurture into membership. Mentioned meeting with Reemberto Rodriguez, Director, Silver Spring Regional Area, Montgomery County MD, who is very tied to everything going on in community around CCC. Dean noted that when CCC experienced a crisis last year, with strong opinions on all sides and tough decisions down the middle, many felt in the dark, so would smaller governance leave more people feeling “outside. Bill: Big issue is communication. With smaller governance and more energy invested in communicating early and often, CCC can better avoid problems and heal those that do occur. Communications Officer overwhelmed with 17 boards; streamlined information from 5 boards is much more manageable for regular clear communications. He noted that he heard frustration where he expected to hear anger about last year. Now need to shift the narrative to face the future and start to peel off victories, celebrate them, and communicate the new narrative.

Next Steps. Lissa asked where CCC should focus first. Bill: governance. Matt asked about next steps and Seattle church example. Bill: need an all-church gathering. Leadership could do a half-day retreat to decide on a tentative action plan for the congregational meeting. Cameron Trimble of CPR helped the Seattle church through this phase. The Seattle church adopted a COO position and tasked him with redoing staff while new task groups focused on member recruitment and new member nurturing. By July CCC should have an action plan, and structured time frames. The Seattle church reported to congregation every week on activities and status and held monthly town halls. [Call ended.]

Post-call comments. Lissa urged CCC to develop plan of action quickly and communicate with congregation. Ann commented that the report makes too much of relationship with UCC national synod. Matt noted that CCC has a closer relationship than most UCC churches and CCC's constitutional financial commitment is much more generous than larger churches. Discussion of how some join CCC because of "UCC brand", of asking for more support for CCC, and Trish gave an example of national synod UCC sending others to consult CCC on how to start an Open & Affirming covenant in their church.

New Business and Projects

1) CPR Next Steps

Gwen: The planning group for bringing in CPR was John, Judy, Larry, Sue Dollins, Gwen, and Matt. The same group will meet to plan out next steps. Assume that CCC will use the leadership retreat in the fall to jump-start the plan.

Matt: the CPR contract has three phases: (i) assessment and a report (completed); (ii) formulation of top 3-4 goals and work with the congregation; and (iii) a year of support coaching for the task teams working on the top priorities.

2) 2016-17 Task Groups

Gwen requested that everyone let her know what short term task forces are needed for other church business. She gave the example of a task force to develop a data and records retention policy, especially in light of the upcoming launch of a new management software platform.

Dean shared that his request during the annual meeting for a volunteer to fill the long-vacant Auditor position (noted in the CPR report) is bearing fruit. He will circle back to Gwen with a name so the correct process can be followed.

3) Calendaring EC Meeting and Fall Retreat

The next meeting will be June 27, 2016, 7:30-8:30 pm. Boards need to meet and select new chairs so chairs can assemble on 6/27 for introductions and calendaring task. [Note: Matt will be absent due to existing adjunct faculty commitment to teach seminar at Wesley Theological Seminary.]

4) New Board and Committee Work (calendaring for Sept 2016 through January 2017)

Next meeting will focus on calendaring through January 2017.

Prayer and Adjournment

Rev. Matt Braddock led the group in closing prayer. A motion was made, seconded and carried. Moderator Gwen Garrison adjourned the meeting at 9:34 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by
Sarah H. Ingram, church clerk*