

**Christ Congregational Church
Executive Council
October 3, 2016**

Present: Gwen Garrison (Moderator); John Malone (Moderator Elect); Matthew Braddock (Senior Minister); Patty First (O&E); Kristen Brown (CE); Larry Duff (Trustees); Matt Dinkel (At-Large); Dean Ripple (Treasurer); Susan Gray (Deacons); Melissa Costa (Church Life); Tom Doggett (Stewardship); Anne Weissenborn (Social Witness/Auditor); John Wack (At Large); Sarah Ingram (Clerk).

Gathering, Opening Thought, Introductions and Prayer: Gwen Garrison, Moderator, gathered the Executive Council, shared an opening thought and led the group in prayer.

Call to Order and Review of Agenda: Gwen called the Executive Council (EC) to order at 7:38 pm. The Agenda was approved (motion by John Wack; second by Patty First, motion passed).

Approval of September 12, 2016 Minutes: The minutes were approved (motion by Tom Doggett, second by John Wack; motion passed).

Recap of the Executive Council Retreat

Gwen led the group in a review of the Saturday Executive Council off-site retreat. The group agreed that the key points made by Steve Sterner (Center for Progressive Renewal) included:

- Focus of the church is shifting and requires new governance.
 - o World has changed; churches have changed; CCC has changed from 50 years ago
- People want to devote their lives to something that will make a difference.
- Equipping Disciples instead of [enrolling?]members
- Take the church out, not wait for people to come in
- Money follows passion

The group discussed various possibilities for a new governance model for Christ Congregational Church (CCC) consistent with the goal of freeing up mission, energy and passion by getting governance bureaucracy out of the way. Building on the Saturday discussions, the group considered a model with a single formal council, coordinators for areas of activity (“communities of interest”), and a free flow of innovation and participation beyond. (See Attachment 1, attached.)

Coordinating Council (CC) focuses on things that ‘must be done.’

- Administration, property, finance, personnel, strategy
- Members nominated and approved by congregation and only formal entity

Coordinators interface with CC and each one covers a “community of interest”.

- Maybe includes a small steering group that does not do the work but helps to release energy of the volunteers, interfaces with CC, and holds the numerous activities to appropriate levels of accountability to the congregation
- Consider whether Coordinator is nominated and approved by congregation and whether sits on the CC or only interfaces with the CC

Volunteers freed to follow their interests and passions to

- start or participate in an activity
- engage for the amount of effort, time, schedule that works for them without restrictions on terms (minimums and maximums), meetings, rules about doing multiple roles, etc.

The EC group then discussed a test topic for how the new vision might work for an important practical part of the church life cycle: financial giving to support the core and innovative activities of the church.

There was consensus that the annual pledge drive model no longer works for CCC and that dedicated people spend a lot of time and energy on a dwindling payback. The group discussed the possible future use of an approach adopted by some other churches where the annual budget is financed in ways other than an annual pledge drive, with month-to-month stability in budget execution, and a path to transition culturally. Under the possible alternative model, the Coordinating Council would own the finance topic but would empower teams of people who are inspired by a more relational/passion-based process that integrates all kinds of giving over a 12 month cycle in a holistic manner (planned gifts, targeted gifts, core budget giving, special initiatives, etc.). During the brain-storming discussion, some EC members noted comparisons to university-based giving programs or efforts by other types of non-profits. Some wondered, if this approach were adopted down the road, how the EC would education itself and the congregation and support the shift to a continual communication model rather than an annual pledge model. The group discussed the need for a small group to dig into the current fundraising quandary and consider whether CCC should pursue the new model, or aspects of it, and how to transition. It was noted that the Stewardship Board would normally start planning in October so if some transition needs to be done by the beginning of the next fiscal year, work should begin as soon as feasible.

There was a consensus, based on external data from the CPR consultants and on the experience of other churches making governance transitions (Pilgrim-Seattle, Amherst, etc.), that CCC needs to make some changes. Comments included that traditional fundraising drives miss many people (members and nonmembers) who could be inspired by the ability to support their passion, by increased transparency about fiscal health, and by greater clarity/feedback concerning how their giving is being used and making an impact. Many agreed that if people had a chance to engage on a one-year task force, instead of in a three-year board position, there would be a lot more interest in volunteering. The group agreed that some of the analysis will need to include how to change the current unified budget model in a way that supports the core elements (make sure the “necessary invisible stuff” gets funded) and opens up activities,

passions, energy, and giving, to new programs, activities and initiatives. CCC would still sets an annual budget approved by the congregation, including some ability to be nimble in the face of change or innovation, but the giving side is where the real paradigm shift occurs: from giving to preserve an existing structure to giving to support a model of passion and innovation around values shared by the congregation.

Challenge of culture – the culture of governance that CCC has today needs to shift – have to keep CC out of the details or will bog down in the old culture and be the same. For example, have CC set up a business team and keep them doing the stuff but bring the issues up appropriately.

- Trust small groups
- Tolerate small mistakes
- Have good accountability mechanism without bringing the details up – only the key issues come up but they do come up (how we handled the 2016 budget setting process vs handling problems emerging at the retreat house)
- Know that we are rich in people, faith and passion

Gwen then took a survey of EC members on whether CCC should make a dramatic governance shift and whether CCC would be able to do so. Members consistently agreed that big change is needed, that the emerging governance model is the right one, and that with the right homework and congregational engagement, CCC could successfully change and experience positive results. Comments focused on implementation details, congregational education and engagement and sticking to an aggressive schedule. Comments included: identifying pieces to do early and test model and celebrate quick wins; need to be clear that there are far bigger risks in doing nothing than in making these changes; engage the congregation over and over until they are tired of talking (reference to 2016 budget forums); people need to understand how the stuff they care about (old core or new) would get done and start seeing it happen; the EC needs to identify risks, plan their mitigation, and help the congregation “land safely”; need to keep the core purpose, goals and values of the church visibly front and center throughout the process.

Implementation Team and Communication

Gwen committed to issuing the next “From the Moderator” by the end of the week.

Gwen stated that someone has volunteered to be the new Communications Officer because they are so excited about this current effort. More on that later.

Gwen proposed that, as this effort is the most important topic for the Executive Council this year, the Executive Council essentially become the Implementation Team. She proposed that most agenda items could move to the consent agenda format and the meetings focus on implementation. She asked that members stay alert to emails with action items and homework as work will be moving quickly to support the process. The Executive Council members agreed with the proposal.

Gwen reminded the group that there are CCC Town Halls on October 16th and November 13th and a congregational meeting at the end of January 2017. She asked the group what

should be accomplished during the October 16th Town Hall. Comments included that the congregation should be engaged in exploring key questions, much like the September Town Hall, even if a crisp future-state presentation is not available until later. Several people noted that they are getting questions about seeing a specific proposal and that asking for input is a healthy way to shift people from anxiety to feeling heard and constructively informing the process.

It was noted that changes inconsistent with the current constitution would be enabled by suspending certain articles through a congregationally approved amendment. Official notice, including the proposed amendment, would need to be given 60 days before a congregational vote; for example, notice by late November for a vote at the January meeting.

Calendaring Updates and New Business Agenda; Items from Boards and Committees: John Wack and John Malone each raised whether they could initiate fellowship gatherings of church members but outside church property or would need approvals under the current governance model. It was agreed that their fellowship ideas are consistent with the values of CCC and should go forward. Any use of church space would need coordination due to competing demands.

Adjournment and Prayer: The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 and Pastor Matt led the group in closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah Ingram, Church Clerk.

