

## Parish Board Meeting FRS – November 15, 2023

Jim Supple called the meeting to order at 6:10pm.

**Present:** Rev. Rebecca Bryan, Rob Authier, **Tina Benik, Jim Supple, Kathy Desilets, Renée Wolf Foster, Annie Maurer, Laurie Evans-Daly, Tom Himmel, Vern Ellis, Minnie Flanagan, Bob Higgins, Liss Larsen,** Barbara Garnis, Ed Budelmann, Peter Morbeck, Forrest Speck, Stephen-Wolf Foster. *Note: names in **bold** are voting members.*

**Absent:** Caitlin Creps, Lori Clark

**Rev. Rebecca Welcome/Reading:** Rev. Rebecca welcomed the board with a blessing/message highlighting how we work for peace in hard times focusing on the balance between fear and pain and our ability to extend love to all.

**Presentation on Development of a Grant Team/National Fund for Sacred Spaces Grant** (written proposal attached): Ed Budelmann, Peter Morbeck, Forrest Speck

Forrest, Ed, and Peter are members of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Team who are working on finding new funding methods. They have been looking at the potential to apply for a grant from the National Fund for Sacred Spaces, a group that extends matching grants to support churches which have community involvement, historical significance, and preservation needs exceeding normal budget capacity. The program also provides considerable technical assistance to participating congregations. The team also believes strongly that the church needs to develop a coordinated grant-seeking process that will allow for application to various outside funding sources. This would take the pressure off having to raise all needed funds from the congregation.

Forrest indicated that we have continuing challenges in raising funds to maintain the church building, with the most pressing issue being the roof. We have been doing patchwork repairs with increasing frequency (four times over the past year, with increasing costs). The roof needs to be replaced and bids are being sought. Thus far, estimates have ranged from \$50,000 to \$200,000. A third bid may clarify why there is such a discrepancy. Ideally, we should do this immediately, but it is unclear if we are able to complete the replacement before winter.

We have generally taken a piecemeal approach to funding our building needs and other projects. We need to have a more reliable method, including long-term planning, to fund these needs.

Ed discussed his exploration of the Sacred Spaces grant. He emphasized that the grantor has resources to provide technical assistance throughout the grant preparation cycle including help with a capital campaign. Since 2016, this grantor has supported 113 congregations representing 25 faiths. We would be the second oldest congregation to seek help and have been encouraged by the grantor to apply. The cycle for applying for 2024 grants requires a letter of intent to apply, due by February 29, 2024. If we are chosen to make a full application, it will be due in October. There will be a conference call on the letter of intent on January 9, 2024. After significant discussion, the following motion was made:

### **Action: Sacred Spaces application and fundraising**

**Motion:** Kathy Desilets moved that the board encourage and support the current work underway to explore a grant from the National Fund for Sacred spaces and other efforts to diversify funding to ensure the ongoing well-being of the church. Jim Supple seconded the motion, and it was passed without opposition.

### **Parish Board Request:** Stephen-Wolf Foster

Stephen-Wolf requested that board members consider acting as greeters or ushers at Sunday services. He described the roles of ushers and greeters. Ushers provided specific assistance—escort people to seats if needed, distribute Order of Service including large print version, etc. Greeters essentially work to make attendees, including new members, feel welcomed and comfortable. An email list is used to recruit people for these roles and Stephen-Wolf distributes a list in advance of the service. All who have these roles are asked to arrive at 10am to be fully prepared. This request was well received, and Stephen-Wolf will add the Board members to his recruitment list.

### **Minister's Update:**

- Rev. Rebecca reported that she has informed the group working on refugee housing (TRP) that she needs to pull back.
- In preparation for the Mirzayees' move to their new space, painting has been done and work is going forward with other changes, such as preparations to adapt space to put in a large stove. Some outside funding and donated goods and services are assisting. Movers have been hired to move the larger furniture, etc. The family should be in the new space before the end of the month.
- In honor of Liz Kretsch's death, her husband, Ken Kretsch, wishes to donate in her honor and possibly to set up a memorial fund in her name to be spent over a period of 10 years.

### **Action: Donation in honor of Liz Kretsch**

**Motion:** Bob Higgins moved to accept the gift that Ken Kretsch wishes to make to the church in honor of his wife with the funds to be used at the minister's discretion for the purposes that Mr. Kretsch desires. The motion was seconded by Minnie Flanagan and passed without objection.

- Rev. Rebecca has joined a group of 10 UU ministers which has been extremely helpful. She learned that a very small proportion of congregations nationally pay the full amount requested in UUA dues.
- Rob Authier will be back after the first of the year. The staff is doing well with his absence.
- Bart has two surgeries coming up.

### **Finance Update:** Renée Wolf Foster and Jim Supple (written report attached)

In Rob Authier's absence, Jim Supple prepared this month's financial report which the board reviewed. Both the Board and the Finance Committee liked the new format for its presentation of the big picture of finances and its focus on which items require board/committee attention at

this point. While there is no cause for serious concern action needed now, we are entering the winter season, which is generally an expensive time and as noted below, we need to plan for action on the roof.

**Facilities Update:** Rev. Rebecca and Jim Supple

A big concern is the need to deal with the roof. We are seeing leakage again and if this continues with patchwork repairs, we could have a serious problem with the ceiling. As noted above, estimates for roof replacement are coming in, but do not yet provide a clear picture of cost. Both the Facilities Team and the Green Team favor replacement if possible. Once this is clarified, we will need to determine how we will cover the cost. Various possibilities are being considered.

**Stewardship Update:** Vern Ellis

- Auction: The event went well. Glitches re: acceptance of payments are being resolved. The event raised over \$23,000.
- Cookie walk is up next. Additional help is needed.
- Daily Muse available for sale soon.
- Sacred Places Grant: Vern Ellis has fundraising software which could be useful.

**Action: Consent Agenda – Minutes of October Board Meeting**

**Motion:** Tom Himmel moved to accept the minutes of the October Board Meeting with a correction regarding the five spokes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Initiative. Renée Wolf Foster seconded, and the motion passed without objection.

**Closing Words:** Reverend Rebecca offered a blessing reminding the board to remember the value of the work we do and wishing us light as we enter the holiday season.

**Action: Adjournment**

**Motion:** Kathy Desilets moved to adjourn, Jim seconded the motion, and it passed without objection. The meeting adjourned and the chalice extinguished at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Desilets, Clerk

## **Proposal to The Parish Board**

6 November 2023

We are members of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century Team. Our work is particularly focused on the development of alternate sources of funds from external grants and such, to allow the Church to reduce its historic fundraising dependence on Church membership. We would like to see the Church establish a permanent group specifically attentive to developing external income.

At this point, we are proposing that the Parish Board authorize us to launch the pursuit of a particular grant source that appears to address exactly our current needs. The agency distributing the funds is the National Fund for Sacred Spaces.

The criteria the Fund applies to its grant includes several aspects that apply perfectly to our needs and conditions. These include:

- An historic building that has had a religious purpose from its beginning
- Having immediate structural preservation needs
- A community-minded and engaged congregation
- Needs must exceed the normal financial resources of the congregation
- A healthy and vital church congregation and leadership

The grant structure provides \$100,000 with a 1:1 match (\$100,000 requires a \$100,000 match); for amounts over that, the required match is 2:1. (\$250,000 requires a \$500,000 match. This is the upper limit for any individual grant application.)

The process is lengthy. A letter of intent is filed in the January – February timeframe. After approval of the LOI, the Church may be invited to submit a full application, due in July. Final acceptance decision will come in October.

Almost as valuable as the fund is the assistance we will receive from staff of the fund in further honing our application, such as:

- Group training
- Pro-bono technical assistance
- Up to \$10,000 for conditions assessments or architectural design services
- Capital campaign consulting services
- Creation of marketing materials, including video

It would also provide further help in establishing Church practices for the establishment of fund and grant development program within the Church. Their help can start immediately, even before acceptance in the program. In fact, they have been urging us to apply for several months, ever since we first inquired about the program.

While this grant could be wonderfully helpful for the Church, the larger need is the creation of a Grants Development Team. There are many potential sources for funds that the Church has not been considering seriously. There are granting institutions, charitable programs, and industry

pressures to engage in community assistance. We believe there is a great potential for continuing external financial help. We also recognize that the work to exploit these sources will require a great deal of effort and knowledge. We hope the Board will endorse both this immediate proposal and a more long-term program. We would like very much to have the opportunity to speak directly about it.

Ed Budelmann

Peter Morbeck

Forrest Speck

**FRS Parish Board Financial Report  
As of October 31, 2023**

**Fiscal Year to Date Highlights**

**Income** is unfavorable to plan by (-\$35,314.77) on Income of \$289,024.33 vs. a plan of \$324,339.10.

**Expenses** are favorable to plan by \$25,837.70, on Expenses of \$244,117.23 vs. a plan of \$269,956.93.

As a result, FRS is currently running a smaller operating surplus than anticipated Fiscal-Year-to-Date (FYTD). +\$44,907.10 on a plan of \$54,382.17 or (-\$9,475.07) below target.

**Income Details**

The largest contributors to this shortfall are as follows.

4300 - Fundraising Income	\$ 15,413.15
4135 - Steeple Rental	\$ 10,200.00
4550 - Income from Endowment	<u>\$ 9,998.50</u>
	\$ 35,611.650

- Portions of our current shortfall are expected to be made up over the course for the remaining eight months of this fiscal year. The proceeds from the **Auction Income (4301)** income of \$10,000 from the **Bailey Fund (4508)** and **DISH Steeple (4151)** coming online shortly will improve our Income categories.
- We will be receiving a payment of approximately \$12,000 from DISH as a reimbursement for prior consulting expenses. Upon receipt it is management’s intention to book this Income as DISH Steeple and take the planned fifty percent expense allocation to Capital Reserve.
- There are no notable areas that are materially favorable to the FYTD Income projections. However, it is worth noting that the October MTD **Pledged Income (4101)** was nearly twice plan. This was a direct result of outreach done by staff to provide pledge statements as of September 30. This generated a significant volume of “catch up” pledge payments.

**Once we have details regarding the Auction Income and the DISH income commences, we will be in a better place to assess our Income projection. No remedial action is recommended currently.**

**Expense Details**

The largest contributors to Expense favorability are as follows.

7200 - Salaries	\$12,116.07
7500 - Outside Services: Temp Help	\$3,454.22
8220 - Utilities	\$3,947.95
8500 - MISC	16,350.50
Total	\$ 35,868.74

- **Salaries (7200)** variance is due to the timing of our payroll cycles.
- **Outside Services and Utilities (7500 & 8220)** variances are due to seasonality. Both categories are likely to rise due to more church services and colder weather.
- **MISC (8500)** variance is predominantly do to three factors: not taking a **Capital Reserve (8583)** (\$4,600), undistributed **Collections for a Cause (8590.1)**, (\$2,651.13), and **Dues and Subscriptions (8505)** (\$7,522.70). None of these areas of current favorability are expected to continue, nor contribute to a continued surplus.
- One category of Expenses is running materially higher than FYTD budget: **Supplies, Communication, and Materials (8100)**. Some of this can be attributed to front loading of purchases for the church year, however certain line items such as **Telephone and Communications, (8130)** and **Equipment Rental & Maintenance (8160)** are running consistently higher than plan.
- Additionally, **Facilities Expense (8200)**, while essentially at plan FYTD, is approaching our normally volatile winter season when expenses have been higher in the past. Additionally, the unplanned expenses related to our trees have yet to be realized. These areas warrant ongoing attention and represent a potentially material challenge to our expense budget position.

**Expenses in aggregate are currently favorable to plan; much of this is timing and seasonality. A few line items will be analyzed to determine if we have inherent challenges. Moderate expense management is recommended for the Supplies, Communication, & Materials and the Facilities Expense categories. Unplanned Facilities expenses are likely to be a recurring challenge until such time as we have built up sufficient Capital Reserves to provide a Balance Sheet cushion to draw upon.**

#### **Summary and Recommendations**

Our smaller than expected operating surplus should be aided in the next several months by anticipated improved income for the sources mentioned above. Winter season expenses are a potential risk to our overall expense picture and will need to be monitored.

**Other than the expense management recommendations noted above, no other action is recommended at this time.**