

Congregational Church of Laconia, UCC
Minutes of Council
November 28, 2007

PRESENT: Warren Bouton, Sandy Brallier, Emily Clement, Dave Coddington, Kathy Giovanni, Alida Millham, Judy Nelson, Beth Shehadi, Dan Tinkham, Diane Tinkham

Alida opened the meeting with a reading from the book "Practicing Our Faith."

Dan made a motion to approve the October meeting minutes. Judy seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Alida provided an update on the progress of the Stewardship program. Currently the pledged total is at approximately \$211,000, which is 2-3 percent higher than last year. From the current membership list, there are 55 non-responders that will be contacted. Warren will review the list first to confirm it is appropriate to contact each person. Alida, Dan, Bob Harrington and David Williams will be responsible for making contact with these people. Alida stated that planning should start soon for next year's program, with discussion on how to continue on with the themes that were started this year. Special attention should be paid to increasing the attendance for the leadership event. It was agreed that planning should start in February or March. Dan commented that it is about time to consider a capital campaign. The Stewardship focus group should consider this and determine what the focus of the campaign will be.

Reports from committees:

Trustees: Dave reported that planning continues for projects to be done next year. A possible solution for ceiling fan maintenance is being investigated. Ray Vercoe is working on replacing the parsonage windows. Craig Shippee has been speaking to the company that will do repairs to the church building roof. The Parish House roof also needs examination. Insurance policies were reviewed with Davis and Towle.

Nominating: Educational Ministries, Outreach and Parish Activities all have one opening remaining. The nominated slate of officers for next year will be Dan Tinkham as Moderator, Sue Smith as Vice-Moderator, Kathy Giovanni as Recording Clerk and Don Clarke as Treasurer. Debi Coddington will serve as an at-large council member. Jean Clarke is working to develop a job description for the position of Historian. Letters have been sent to those who have accepted nominations. Sue Smith currently has a position on the Educational Ministries committee and is willing to serve out her term as well as accept the Vice-Moderator position, but the consensus of the group was that this would present a conflict, even though it is not prohibited by the by-laws. The Nominating committee will need to recruit another member to fill Sue's slot.

Parish Activities: Judy reported that members of the committee were cleaning the kitchen today. She requested that the convection oven be cleaned. She will talk to the Sexton about getting this done.

Diaconate: The recent Circle of Grace lecture series was successful, drawing 25-35 people for each lecture. The feedback received has been positive. Christmas Caroling is planned for December 23rd at 3pm. There will be a Christmas Tea at the Taylor Community on December 19th. Four children will receive bibles on Bible Sunday (December 2nd). On December 7th a Christmas Carol sing-along will be held and will be open to the public. A copy of Jane Babin's book will be purchased for the church library and general ordering information will be printed in Tower Tidings.

Educational Ministries: Diane reported that it has been difficult to find new members for the new church year. A new women's book group will be starting on November 29th. This year's Christmas pageant will return to the classic Beth Ide version and it will be held at 4pm on December 16th. The High School class will present a worship service for the K-8 Church School classes on Dec 2nd. They will do a modified version of the service for patients at the Belknap County Nursing Home on December 9th. Dwindling numbers in Church School are still a concern and the committee is soliciting ideas from the Council on how to increase attendance.

Emily reported that she has been working with Diaconate on Christmas caroling and bells at the nursing home, with the Music committee on the Corey Crowder concert coming up in January, and the Stitches of Love group on the hat and mitten tree for foster children. The youth groups will be connecting with their Gilford Community Church counterparts over Christmas vacation. She has also been working with Mike McCarn to plan the Back Bay mission trip coming up in March.

Warren reported that he has been scheduling visits with church members each week and has found this to very enjoyable. He stated that the church needs to have a discussion about civil unions, which will become legal on January 1st.

A general note to all committee chairs was that reports are needed for the Annual Report by the time Council meets again.

Other Business:

Alida opened the floor for a discussion of continuing opportunities for us to meet the goals set earlier in the church year, particularly in the area of communication. Some initiatives are already underway, such as the video equipment installation and the Corey Crowder concert, which will reach a broader audience.

It was noted that the Circle of Grace lecture topics (cultural diversity, economic demographics, gay/lesbian issues, children and family, refugee resettlement) all represent needs of the community. The first step, discussion, has been taken. Now it is time to decide how to respond and take action.

It was agreed that there is a greater record of success when a clear focus is set for the group, such as increasing the number of families and children participating in church programs. Sandy commented that we should visit where we are based on the overarching goals and that committees could then set their goals in line with the agreed upon focus.

An idea discussed was to ask others outside of the church their perception of the Laconia UCC. If the perception is not what we expected, goals can be set accordingly to present the message as we intend it.

Dan closed the meeting with some interesting facts about the Back Bay Mission.

Next Council meeting – January 2, 2008, 7:00 pm