

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

October 3, 2011

The Regular Meeting of the Church Council, 1st Congregational Church of Deep River, was called to order at 7:35p.m. in the Upper Room by Moderator Bob Butkus.

Members in Attendance: Pat Wilson, Cathy Smith, Emily Bjornberg, Jayne Mather, Jon Hardy, Jack Coulter, Fran Phinney, Dale Winchell, Laurie Eriksson, Sybil Higgins, Allyson Glass, Valerie Nucci, Rev. Timothy Haut, Bob Butkus-Moderator, and Deb Van Wyngaarden-Clerk.

Rev. Haut opened with a prayer. Paul Karam passed away this morning and Tim asked that we keep his family in our prayers.

A motion was made by Val Nucci to accept the minutes of the Regular Meeting of Monday, September 12, 2011 with the following correction: Memorial Fund should be \$7,790.39. It was seconded Sybil Higgins, which passed by unanimous vote.

Collector's Report – As of September 30, 2011 \$170,556.08 has been turned over to the General Fund. Of that amount \$1,780.00 is advanced 2011 pledges received in 2010 and \$142,869.21 received in 2011 for a total of \$124,990.47 or 64% of amount budgeted for pledge goal. The total of Prayed For to date is \$23,376.00 or 67% of amount budgeted.

Note from Collector: End of September should be at 75%.

Treasurer's Report – The following report is as of September 30, 2011: Burroughs Savings Accounts (Repairs and Maintenance)-\$3861.08; Cemetery Fund-\$9725.60; Debit Card Account-\$807.64; Doris Pelton Memorial Organ Fund-\$45.33; General Fund-\$14,112.20*; Gifts & Bequests-\$46,609.71; Good Samaritan-\$7223.80; Grohs Investments Fund for CE-\$4000.00; Grohs Savings Fund for CE-\$2971.59; Haut Fund (Ministerial Scholarship Fund)-\$5744.39; Kitchen Fund-\$1219.33; Macgregor Fund (Outdoor Ministry)-\$4122.84; Memorial Fund-\$8415.39; Mission Fund-\$16,755.23; Phelps Savings CD-\$5806.46; Phelps Savings (Music)-\$1923.41; Program Maintenance Savings-\$9506.04; Sabbatical Fund-\$6027.78; Samuel F. Snow Fund-\$1,012.39; Stephen Ministry Fund-\$2642.02; Supplemental health Insurance(6-month CD)-\$21,625.69; and Youth Music Fund-\$833.35.

Note from Treasurer: Balance of General Fund on 01/01/2011 was \$36,244.57 which indicates we have had to tap into prior year surplus. Shortfall in General Fund budget as of 09/30/2011 is \$18,515.11.

Cemetery –Val Nucci reported that there was one interment and it was for our beloved Fred Phinney.

Christian Education –Laurie Eriksson said that the Mission Fair raised \$672.80 and was down from last year. They discussed that if they do pizza again, they might have to charge more per slice. She thanked everyone who helped out and Maureen Douglasfor organizing the fair. Class aides and room parents are still needed for Sunday School.

Christian Service – Emily Bjornbergreported for Gerry Nolin that the group is focusing on trying to get more people signed up for Eddy Shelter.

Church Delegates – No report or representative.

CMAT– No report or representative.

Deaconry– No report or representative.

Historical Committee – No report or representative.

Senior Minister –Rev. Haut noted the difficult situations recently in our church including memorial services for beloved members of our church and others in challenging health situations. He along with Emily B. and Allyson G. have looked over the visitation list and are working on a schedule. Rev. Haut presided at four weddings and two baptisms. Tim also attended the state-wide annual meeting of the CT UCC Clergy at Silver Lake with 89 other clergy. There was a presentation about the emerging church and what the structure of a church will look like over the next 50 years. “The Great Emergence” was how people are less and less feeling it necessary to align with a religious organization. A Healing Service is planned for 10/19 and Rev. Haut is leading a historical walking tour of Fountain Hill Cemetery on Saturday, October 29th at 10am. He also noted that the Blessing of the Animals was held this past Saturday. Other upcoming dates include: Homecoming on 10/23, CT Conference in Guildford from 10/21-10/22 where he is Assistant Moderator. He also mentioned Sunday School VIP Sunday on 10/23 and 18 went on the Confirmation Class hike.

Director Christian Education – Sybil Higgins gave the total for Heifer Project donation as \$1607.30 which includes \$216.30 from the Ark’s. UNICEF Sunday is on 10/30 and the 7/8 grades will give the sermon. Bring a Friend to Sunday is on 10/16. VIP will be held on 10/23 and kids will hand out invites on 10/16 to members in church to attend a Sunday School class. There were 41 at the Youth Communion Service on Sunday and the 2nd Annual Food Challenge organized by the 7/8 grades will be held on Nov 6th. The Confirmation Hike went well and the School Kit Collection wraps up this month. Six (6) families that were inactive have rejoined Sunday School and eight (8) new families have joined. Sybil is finishing up the religious awards for the scouts. She has once again teamed up with Emily and the Youth groups in organizing the Harvest Dinner Theater scheduled for 11/13 and are looking for talent. Tim mentioned that there was no group for teens until 12 years ago when Sybil organized the Teen Issues group. Council discussed what a positive impact our Teens have on each other and teens outside our church. So much so that new kids want to be confirmed and become a part of our loving church.

Director of Youth & Family Ministry– Emily Bjornberg reported the following:

The following are reports from Youth Groups:

Joy Fellowship – held their kick-off pizza party on Oct. 2nd and planned a schedule for the year. Their next event is on Nov. 6th where they will be reorganizing the Deep River Food Pantry.

Jr. PF – will kick off on 10/23 with a scavenger hunt.

Sr. PF – is planning the Harvest Dinner which will be held on 11/13. They have also planned activities for rest of year.

Mission Trips – The 2012 church organized trip this year for teens is working in Appalachia in West Virginia in conjunction with a UCC church in the area the 2nd week in July. The main focus will be on home rehabilitation. The trip can accommodate 10-50 people with dorm style lodging. The cost per participant will be \$500 and additional fundraising is planned.

It was the goal this year to keep the cost of the trip down so that the Mission Trip Fund Line is not depleted so a larger trip (possibly out West) could be taken in 2013 using funds saved. This is why Emily asked for \$500.00 per participant; the same as NOLA in 2011. Emily noted that transportation to West Virginia will be in vans. Deb noted that in order to keep the Mission Fund line “healthy” that sponsorships for any trip should be kept at the \$850 sponsorship minimum set in the Council approved guidelines.

Jayne Mather asked that prior to the Annual Budget Meeting in March that a final breakdown of budget be presented by all trips sponsored by DRCC – Dominican Republic, El Salvador and NOLA.

MOTION: Deb V.W. made a motion that the 2012 church organized trip this year for teens will be to Appalachia in West Virginia in conjunction with a UCC church in the area during the second week in July. The individual participant cost will be \$500.00 Val Nucci seconded the motion which passed by unanimous vote.

MOTION: Emily Bjornberg presented a request and motion on behalf of Jane Moen and Pam Visel to organize another trip to El Salvador through by Project Fiat. The trip will be from July 20-28th at a participant cost of \$1600 per person which includes a \$200.00 /participant fee if needed. It was seconded by Fran P., which passed by unanimous vote.

Rev. Haut had concerns that the mission trips should not be hitting up the same organizations for monies. Deb V.W. and Sybil H. will give Emily B. the list of organizations and businesses that were solicited on behalf of NOLA so she has that list. The Appalachia trip will use this solicitation list for their trip. Rev. Haut will provide what organizations the Dominican Republic solicited as well. Emily B. will ask El Salvador for their list. Emily B. will be responsible for making sure there is no overlap in solicitations.

It was agreed at Council that the legitimate missionary workers of the church for 2012 will be Dominican Republic, church organized teen mission trip to Appalachia in West Virginia, and El Salvador. This means that they are under the mission umbrella and that the trips are covered under the church insurance policy. Dayle L. will need to verify if additional insurance riders are needed for trips outside the United States.

Deb V.W. said that NOLA held its stock holders meeting and the event was well attended. They were able to replace the \$1300 sponsorship given to them for the trip and had \$562.32 (to be verified by the church treasurer) remaining in the account. Since the donations were for NOLA, the group is sending the remaining funds to the religious group they worked with, Epworth Project, to help with finances to complete the houses the group worked on.

Nominating – Fran Phinney had nothing to report.

Stewardship– Dale Winchell reported that they sent out giving statement last week to over 300 families. Last year the church received 172 giving cards back and they are hoping for all members – giving or not – to return the 2012 giving card. A new letter with a giving card on the bottom will be sent out once the group receives an excel sheet with all members of the church (giving or not) from the Church Office. On 10/9 the replica of the Church will be placed in the Narthex and giving cards in the pews. The office has been sent an announcement on behalf of the Stewardship Committee to be placed in the weekly bulletin. Deb V.W. will make a brief announcement on 10/16 and we hope to have “Grace Carver and the Stewies” perform on 10/23 – Homecoming Sunday. New to the giving card this year is a question that if direct deposit is available, would you sign-up. The committee was looking at new ways to offer members ways to pay their pledges to the church. Dale said that the 3 members are meeting with Trustees on 10/18 at 7pm. Cathy Smith mentioned that the statement letter received in the mail was a good letter.

Trustees – Jack Coulter reiterated the Treasurer’s Report that there is an \$18,000 shortfall. It is projected that there could be a \$40,000 pledge deficit at end of year based on what was pledged and what was budgeted. Jack said that everybody has to be a steward of the church. The Trustees are joyful of the mission trips that occur through the church and the positive impact it has but they are concerned that some members might be substituting their pledges to the operation of the church to these trips. The Trustees will be meeting on Tuesday to discuss budget. Dayle Larson is in the process of collecting narratives from the various committees and boards to organize a narrative budget to explain costs so members understand what their pledges are supporting. Jayne Mather noted that they are waiting to see if the church meets the income levels needed to

support the programs DRCC currently has. She and Jack noted that this is a very serious issue. Lastly, Jack noted that propane costs went up and they are in the process of looking into a new supplier.

Kitchen Improvement Committee – Deb V. noted that it was nice that donations that honor Fred Phinney are going to support this committee that he loved and worked hard on.

Women’s Fellowship– Emily B. and Deb V.W. are working on the Women’s Fellowship Movie Night scheduled for 10/22. They are also planning on a Women’s Retreat in April/May. The thought was that everyone read one book and then have a book talk at the retreat as well as other workshops. Sybil H. and Judy Skinner have been looking to reenergize and keep this wonderful program maintained. They all hope to get the group up and running with this initial get-together.

On another note, Tim mentioned issues regarding funeral receptions held at the church. It has become overwhelming for some members of the church as there is a limited pool of people that can assist at receptions. Also, the same folks are asked to provide food. Council talked about ways to maintain this program. One suggestion is that the church team up with a few local caterers to offer selections for those wanting to hold receptions at the church. There needs to be a set fee not a “donation” to cover costs associated with the program. Fran P. will get the funeral committee together and discuss issues and suggestions.

Annual Fundraising Events– Cathy Smith introduced Pat Wilson who will give updates at Council meetings as needed. She said that the Christmas Faire will be on Saturday, Dec. 3rd. A few more people have joined the committee which has been helpful. Also, several people have dropped out after committing to chairing booths just this month. She was glad to report that three booths were filled after a heartfelt appeal that booth won’t happen if someone didn’t step up. The mission of the Christmas Faire Committee is to bring the Church together as a whole and that every booth and everyone is equal. Cathy also said that Mt. St. John’s will be helping out again through Christian Service. They will be at Church service the following Sunday and will be also selling their greenery again in Fellowship Hall.

Pastoral Relations–No report or representative. Allyson G. thanked everyone for the wonderful welcome.

Personnel–Jayne reported that the members on the committee sit down once a year with all staff members for annual reviews. During their meetings, minor revisions to job descriptions and other items regarding performance, etc. are discussed. They also have reviewed the Church Street Child Care employee manual and have made suggestions. The committee is also available throughout the year to discuss individual employee concerns.

Outdoor Ministry – No representative or report. Jack C. reported that the church will be saving \$800 a year in taxes for the property that was owned by the Church and donated to the Deep River Land Trust. The transaction took place last week; though we no longer own the property we have use of it.

Old Business– None.

NEW BIZ –

Dale W. gave a reminder that the Men’s Breakfast is this Saturday at 8:30am.

Council wants all boards and committees to be reminded that representation at Council Meetings is important as many issues are discussed.

MOTION: Bob Butkus made a motion to grant permission for the Destiny's Children Choir Group to perform in March, 2012 at the church. It will be a free-will offering and Christian Service will help with hospitality. It was seconded by Deb V.W. which passed by unanimous vote.

Thula Swize postponed their trip to the area; there will not be a concert in November. Council agreed that they could perform at the Church in May, 2012.

Rev. Haut gave the closing prayer. He asked to keep Cy Higgins in our prayers during his trip home, for Francis Phinney as she has surgery this week, and the Karam family.

Emily B., Sybil H. and Rev. Haut exited the meeting as Council went into a Special Meeting to discuss raises for 2012.

Jayne Mather spoke on behalf of Personnel. She said that they reviewed cost of living increase and compared salaries within the UCC and private industry. Last year there was no increase in wages for staff. Personnel recommended a 2% increase across the board for 2012. The committee was mindful that the economy isn't in the greatest shape but felt staff should be given at least a cost of living increase. This increase would be about a \$3000 increase to the overall budget.

MOTION: Val Nucci made a motion to accept the recommendation by Personnel for a 2% cost of living increase for all church personnel. It was seconded by Jack Coulter, which passed by unanimous vote.

The only question was regarding supplemental health insurance if the church was carrying too much or too little. Jayne M. responded that the account is where it should be.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Deb Van Wyngaarden
Church Council Clerk