

Hamline Church United Methodist Town Hall Forum & Church Council Meeting

January 31, 2023 at 7 p.m. via Zoom

Attendance: Rev Mariah Furness Tollgaard, Rachel Joyeux, Angela Wolf Scott, Kyle Pennington, Janet Beneke, Steve Bloom, Emma Close, Stephanie Engebrecht, Jeff Dreisbach, Nathaniel Dempsey, Stephanie Jones, Adine Momoh, Trudy Dunham, Roger Greiling, Ellen Schroeder, Pete Theisen, Paul Klinger, Becky Omdahl, Becky Boland, Natalie Wiersma.

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Kyle Pennington, Church Council Chair, opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. with a prayer.

Convene as Church Conference

Rev. Mariah Tollgaard, Presiding Elder, gave a summary of the agenda for the evening. She called a vote to approve the Church Council Leadership 2022-2023 because new members have joined since the previous vote. Jeff Dreisbach moved to approve the leadership list for 2022-2023. Adine Momoh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting moved to the affirmation of lay speakers and lay servants. Steve Bloom spoke briefly about the process of becoming one, and how to identify your calling and strengths in the role. Becky Boland spoke about being a Certified Lay Minister, emphasizing the role of leading alongside pastors as is stated in the mission of the Methodist Church. This year's Lay Speakers include Beth Beaty and Sharon Fields, the Lay Servants include Steve Bloom and Sharon Fields, and the Certified Lay Ministers include Becky Boland and Beth Beaty. Pastor Mariah called for a vote, and Kyle made a motion to affirm the continued support of our Lay Speakers, Lay Servants, and certified Lay Ministers. Emma Close seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Membership Report

Pastor Mariah moved on to the Membership Report and explained the purpose of the vote, but noted there is no one on the list this year. She mentioned there will be a fuller audit of the membership in the coming year. Pastor Mariah asked for a vote, and Pete Theisen made a motion to accept the Membership Report. Steve Bloom seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report & 2023 Budget

Pete reviewed the Financial Report, mentioning this year we passed an audit with very few areas to improve. The plan is to audit every 2-3 years. Angela Wolf-Scott made a motion to approve the Finance Checklist. Trudy Dunham seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Pete then reviewed the Fund Balance Report. He noted significant losses in the market and even in bonds over the past year. This has been the toughest year since 2008, but he anticipates a better year and noted we have ample funds in other accounts including the endowment. The future goal is to try to make up some of these losses. Adine made a motion to accept the Fund Balance Report, and Kyle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Finally, Pete shared a summary of the Church budget for 2023 and pledges, the latter of which should cover our budget, staffing, and loss to inflation. He stressed that the church congregation really came through this year, and we continue to be in a strong financial position, and Pastor Mariah likewise shared her gratitude for the resources and dedication of the church community.

Trustees Report

Jeff took over the discussion of the Trustees Report, recalling the guidelines before reviewing the form. He introduced Stephanie Engebrecht, the new Facilities Manager. He reviewed the church's expenditures over 2022. As there were no questions, Pastor Mariah noted the window restoration is almost complete, and the Heritage Team is planning an April 30th celebration and rededication of the windows, which has been a 10+ year process. Angela moved to accept the Trustees Report. Nathaniel Dempsey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Missions Report

Pastor Mariah explained how the Mission Report details all our partnerships, commitments, and ways we serve throughout the year. She invited us to celebrate these commitments and those who compiled the report.

Becky Boland expressed her gratitude for the church leadership, noting how it is unusual to have such a healthy community and commitment.

Steve moved to adjourn the Town Hall meeting, Kyle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CHURCH COUNCIL AGENDA

Attendance: Rev Mariah Furness Tollgaard, Rachel Joyeux, Angela Wolf Scott, Kyle Pennington, Janet Beneke, Emma Close, Stephanie Engebrecht, Jeff Dreisbach, Nathaniel Dempsey, Stephanie Jones, Adine Momoh, Ellen Schroeder, Pete Theisen, Natalie Wiersma.

The Council Meeting began at 7:45 p.m., and Stephanie Engebrecht introduced herself. The rest of the council introduced themselves and shared their roles on the council.

Consent Agenda

Kyle asked for any questions or discussion of the Consent Agenda, which includes Minutes from the November Church Conference & Council Meeting and the December Electronic Vote; a Growth Grant for the Photo Directory; and a Recommendation for a Coffee Maker purchase. Adine mentioned she was glad they are compiling the directory. Stephanie shared some exciting features of the new coffee maker. Pete made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda in its entirety. Janet Beneke seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Agenda

Adine began the conversation on MCD/Learning Garden, who have asked to be released from their lease a year early. She outlined the economic and personal aspects of the request, and said it's up to us to allow or not, suggesting we may want to set some conditions, such as a contingency-based release if we (or they) can find a new tenant. Or, if no new tenant is found, the church could require that they honor their lease and pay through the end of the term (June 2024). For various reasons, Angela at MCD is trying to help the church find a new tenant, but none have panned out so far. Pastor Mariah noted they have fully paid all their back-rent, and they have dropped down to using three rooms. It's likely they will ask to be released from paying for the fourth room they rent. She noted a broker like Cushman-Wakefield could be a resource for finding a new tenant, though that would involve a finder's fee. Pete asked about our rate, wondering if we're on target and charging an appropriate amount. Both Pete and Adine agreed it might be a good idea for both MCD and Hamline Church to each seek out new tenants until one is found, but that they should be required to pay the difference until the space is filled. Pete said from a budgetary perspective it is important to receive that income. Nathaniel asked why they initially asked for such a long-term lease in the first place. Pastor Mariah replied it was a 2-year lease in the beginning, then they asked for a longer term at renegotiation but overextended elsewhere in their business, opening multiple locations. Adine wondered if there might be some stipulation in the lease that set out what happens in the case of an early end to the lease.

Pastor Mariah noted there would be a lot of work around preparing for a new tenant, including work on the playground. Kyle asked what the group thought of going 1-2 months without rent to do work on the rooms, but Pastor Mariah noted we can just ask them to utilize upstairs classrooms if we need to do repairs. There was a general, unofficial consensus that we should require them to pay what they owe if they do not find someone to take over the lease, and we will simultaneously pursue working with a broker. Nathaniel asked if we are going to respond in writing, and Pastor Mariah affirmed we would. The council briefly reviewed the lease, and Pete asked if we have been fulfilling our own obligations to MCD; Pastor Mariah affirmed that we've been quick to respond to any issues. Pastor Mariah said she would consult with the trustees

before responding. Kyle made a motion to pursue working with a broker to find a new tenant. Adine seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

SPRC

The council held a closed discussion on staffing.

Pete moved to close the meeting. Kyle seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Pastor Mariah closed the meeting with a prayer.

The next Church Council meeting will be held virtually on February 28, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.