

**UNION CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COMMON MINISTRY
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2021**

Present:

Absent:

Pastors	Bridget Flad Daniels		
Moderator	Tim Harder		
Vice Moderator	Heather Collins		
Treasurer	Jeff Gibson		
Clerk	Gail Hohenstein		
Education	Nancy Gibson		
Gifts & Memorials	Paco Espinosa		
Inreach & Membership	Denise Olson		
Outreach	Achim Siefert	Christie Reese	
Stewardship		Clay Reese	
Worship	Betty Bienash		
Communications Coordinator		Ruth Homigraus Mary Ann Hudson	
Guest(s)			

*HOW DOES WHAT WE AS COMMON MINISTRY ARE DOING AFFECT THE
CHURCH'S RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE WORK?*

Meeting held via Zoom.

Moderator Tim Harder called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Gathering Prayer: Bridget shared a prayer calling on the gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgement courage, knowledge, reverence and awe in God's presence.

Additions to the Agenda: None.

Congregational Joys and Concerns: Joys and concerns were shared.

Minister's Report: Bridget said it has been a very full month. She worked with Education Ministry quite a bit largely orienting teachers and leaders. She noted that Nancy did a great job of recruiting. There have been several memorial services, some for church members, some church neighbors, and some personal. She reported that while she was on vacation it was learned that the organ leather (bellows), which had reached their estimated life span of 40-60 years, had begun to leak. Tim authorized the replacement (approximately \$4,000), which will be paid for from the balance remaining in the organ repair fund. It is expected that the repair will be accomplished without missing a Sunday.

Clerk's Report

The minutes for the regular meetings of August 12 were approved (Heather/Denise).

Treasurer's Report

Jeff was unable to provide the report due to a software issue. Katrina is working on this problem and Jeff expects to have the report available next week. Bridget added gratitude to Katrina and Christine Bartsch (Advantage Bookkeeping owner) for their efforts to work with the software vendors to get this resolved. There will be meticulous paper records kept while the issues are pending resolution.

New Business

- **EPH Liaison – Sherry Warren:** Nomination of Sherry Warren as EPH Liaison approved (Betty/Achim).

Continuing Business

- Return to Worship Task Force: Many thanks to the dedication of the Task Force, which has been and will continue to put in a considerable amount of time and effort in this time of increased COVID activity in the Green Bay community. Betty walked through the highlights of the recommendation (attached). Motion to accept the recommendations approved (Betty/Heather).
- Generosity Team: The team continues to meet with a focus on the upcoming pledge campaign, Theme (borrowed from the Quakers): Love Your Neighbor-No Exceptions. Shaun Shoulden and Ruth Homigraus are working on the pledge brochure. Bridget is also working with the team on a “narrative” budget, which in addition to providing numbers, will provide context for the budget categories. Possible pledge card formatting was discussed. As a side note Bridget mentioned that Christopher is doing good work in enforcing our parking policies which were adopted a couple of years ago after a lot of work by Jammie VerGiesen (who was then Stewardship Chair). Bridget will send the policy out to Common Ministry so that the newer members are aware of its terms.
- Space Ministry Task Force: Bridget reiterated that the two current non-profits using our building will be given priority for space along with our FF and child ministry. The team is looking for architects and/or design build firms to help with planning potential renovations such as movable walls in the Mayflower room, ADA compliant rest room facilities on the lower level, and more.

Ministry Reports (unless covered in Ministry meeting minutes)

EDUCATION

Mayflower classrooms have been cleaned out and the carpets have been cleaned. Bridget will meet next week with the parents and volunteers involved in Faith Formation to discuss virtual/in-person options. Parents of 2-3rd graders will receive a letter asking whether they would prefer that Bible distribution be virtual or in-person.

GIFTS & MEMORIALS

No report. Meeting next week.

MEMBERSHIP & INREACH

New Member classes are scheduled for 10/7 & 13 (both dates virtual). Denise will be asking for CM sign-ups. New members will be welcomed on 10/24. She reminded us about the Reunion Sunday picnic, which will be a BYO lunch in the park (if the weather is good).

OUTREACH

The team discussed Afghan refugee at Ft. McCoy, and giving information is in the newsletter. The Volunteer Fair has been delayed. Rummage sale items are being gathered. There will be lots of Mayflower items available. Heifer Sunday will be 11/7. Thanks to Sherry Warren and Heather Collins for organizing. Blessing Box folks are exploring additional possibilities for stocking the box. Neighbors In Need will be conducted offering in October.

STEWARDSHIP

Bridget shared 2 current building concerns, both involving water. They are working to diagnose the cause of water seeping up through floor in the Brain Center. There is also evidence of water leaking in the area of the stairways to the balcony in the Sanctuary. A lift will be rented so that the roofer can make a repair and create an estimate for a possible longer-term solution.

WORSHIP

There will be opportunities to work on canvasses for visually responding to our experiences during this pandemic and what this pandemic has meant to people. Many thanks to Anne Rakow-Weist, who has been working very hard and creatively on this project. The canvasses will be blessed on 10/26. Anne plans to create a compilation of the canvasses. Bridget has proposed an Adult Ed class with photos of the pieces and the compilation giving people a chance to reflect and discuss. Offering Communion to folks visited by the Visitation Ministry will be launched on October 3, World Communion Sunday. Bridget added that

Worship and Education have begun to consider what the Christmas Pageant will look like this year. Please let Bridget know about any interest in leading the pageant.

JOSHUA Report: Jeff reported the biggest thing on the JOSHUA agenda is annual banquet, which will be October 25 at the Riverside Ballroom. Keynote speaker is Walter Lanier, who is Pastor at the Progressive Baptist Church in Milwaukee and reportedly a firebrand of progressivism.

Communications Report: No report.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was approved. After prayer, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m. (Denise/Jeff)

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Hohenstein
Clerk

Next meeting: October 14, 6 p.m. via Zoom
Prayer: Denise

Approved

Recommendations from Resuming In-Person Worship Task Force August 23rd, 2021

- Underlying philosophy:
 - Develop plans in a manner that meets established safety protocols as well as reflects our commitment to make the Christ spirit dominant in our lives and in all human relations.
 - In-Person activities in priority order:
 - Worship
 - Pastoral care
 - Education: in-person education for children and youth over adult education
 - Meetings
 - Wesleyan Covenant:
 - In essential things, unity; in non-essential things, liberty; in all things, charity.
 - It is our hope that official church messaging be compassionate and nuanced rather than compulsory.
- Worship:
 - Resuming In-Person Task Force recommends not limiting attendance or asking for reservations for worship services at this time people seem to be abiding by our requirements for social distancing and use of masks at all times while an individual is in the building and at current attendance levels reservations wouldn't add value. However, the team will continue to monitor COVID activity in the area and can revisit this recommendation as needed.
 - Average attendance since we have resumed in-person worship has been 50-60 people per service with the exception of two Sunday services including baptisms.
 - We may need to move special services such as baptisms to take place outside of normal Sunday services. Bridget will be very direct with baptismal families about the options to either limit guests or celebrate outside of Sunday worship.
 - An additional pew will automatically be added to anticipated pews reserved for family and guests when special services take place during a regular Sunday service.
 - Health checks:
 - The Resuming In-Person Worship Task Force does not recommend requiring health checks as people enter the church building at this time, but it will continue to monitor COVID activity in the area and procedures used by schools, hospitals, clinics, etc., and

recommendations from the WI Conference UCC and WI Council of Churches.

- Communications:
 - The weekly email blast will thank individuals to “Love your neighbor as yourself,” include a reminder regarding COVID best practices as outlined by the CDC and WI DHS, ask individuals to be vaccinated if possible and to worship on-line if they have any COVID symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID. Communications will also convey that church leaders and staff are monitoring the evolving situation as it pertains to COVID.
 - Ushers will thank individuals as they enter the sanctuary for following social distancing and masking requirements and will be asked to take a more active role in maintaining social distancing, particularly as is delineated by the roped off pews.
- Church leadership:
 - Church leaders by nature of their roles have extensive COVID exposure. As a result, the Resuming In-Person Worship Task Force recommends approaches that can help them limit exposure.
- Education:
 - Because of the experiential nature of many activities and the developmental needs of participants, the Resuming In-Person Worship Task Force recommends that children and youth experiences be a priority if healthfully possible. It also recommends that educational classes be on-line when this approach does not compromise the experience or content.
 - Common Ministry has recommended that families, teachers, and aides who are involved in Faith Formation, PF, and YCA gather via Zoom to discuss approaches that can best protect and serve both children and their families as well as teachers and aides. If, in consultation with families and volunteers, Faith Formation decides to hold classes in-person, teachers can still send resources to those families who choose not to participate in-person.
 - For the time being, the Resuming In-Person Worship Task Force recommends that adult education be on-line when possible in order to protect the health and well being of participants and to limit exposures for individuals. If adult in-person educational classes do take place, then the task force recommends that attendance be limited via registration in order achieve social distancing.
 - The leader or convener of a class or group may wish to have one on one conversations with individuals to determine the healthiest practices for

all participants. The task force recommends that the convener receive coaching from Bridget about positive communication approaches.

- We discussed whether or not to encourage classes to meet bi-weekly and decided to recommend that classes meet weekly for retention and regularity purposes.
- However, for the time being, the task force recommends that whenever possible “one time” adult educational classes take place exclusively on-line. This will also make outside speakers possible for the classes.
- Outside of church sponsored activities:
 - Groups such as Souper Cooks, Men’s Breakfast and Women’s Lunch Bunch, which meet outside of Union, meet in public places over which we have no control. We cannot guarantee that everyone in attendance be vaccinated or that all people they will encounter in the space be vaccinated. As a result, the task force recommends that individuals who are interested may discuss their participation with the convener and take part in the activity if they are comfortable doing so.
 - Bridget passed on the following language to the conveners of the above groups: “Because the WI DHS lists COVID transmission levels in Brown County as “very high” for unvaccinated people, we strongly encourage those who are unvaccinated and those who are otherwise vulnerable to connect with / serve the church in a different way. Volunteers will be expected to wear masks while indoors. We also note that we cannot guarantee that volunteers will not encounter people who are unvaccinated while at the shelter / restaurant.”
- Meetings:
 - For the time being, the task force recommends that all meetings take place via Zoom / electronically.
 - For the time being, the task force recommends that anyone meeting with anyone else within the church building be masked and maintain social distancing at all times.