

Council Minutes: February 2023
Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ
Tuesday, February 28, 6:30 pm

1. Call to Order – Scott Morgan, Moderator
Scott called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

Members present:

Scott Morgan – Moderator
Sonia Jordan – Moderator Elect
Devon Kim – Past Moderator
Larissa Long – Clerk
Doni Mooberry Slough – Treasurer
Rich Bireta – Deputy Treasurer
Davie Ambler – At Large Member
Susan Osborn – At Large Member
Becky Eason – At Large Member
Valerie Miller Coleman
Caroline Lawson Dean
Debbie Schmidt – Stewardship
Korey Kaul – Christian Education
Sue Denning – Deacons
Dana Dole - Fellowship
Kelley Stillings – Membership
Brandy Ernzen– Mission & Service
Kathy Bowen – Music & Fine Arts
Dick Orchard - Endowment

Members not present:

Annas Boyer – Personnel
Susan McCarthy – History

2. Invocation – Valerie read passages on ways to achieve prayerful moments and closed with a recording by the King’s College choir of “My Song is Love Unknown”.

3. Consent Agenda

Scott gave a brief explanation of the consent agenda, which included the following items:

- 3.1. Approve Agenda
- 3.2. Approve Minutes from January 24, 2023
- 3.3. Receive Financial Reports
- 3.4. Confirm Tim Metz as Stewardship representative on Personnel Committee
- 3.5. To facilitate better cash management, approve:

The Treasurer or Deputy Treasurer are hereby authorized to open a Premier Savings Account at Truity Credit and transfer up to \$250,000 to that account.

The officers of the Church are:

Moderator: Scott Morgan
Moderator-Elect: Sonia Jordan
Treasurer: Doni Mooberry Slough
Clerk: Larissa Long

Kathy Bowen moved to approve the consent agenda; Devon Kim seconded; motion carried unanimously.

4. Welcome and introductions

Scott welcomed the members to Council and explained they are voting members and as such, they need to prepare for each meeting – read the meeting materials; ask questions and treat each other with respect and courtesy.

Council members then divided into teams of two and following a few minutes of conversation provided the following about each other: name; how long they've been a member of Plymouth; Council role and something others might not know about them.

5. Treasurer's Report – Doni Mooberry Slough, Treasurer

5.1 Financial Update – Through January 31, we are 8.3% of the way through the year; have received 9.2% of projected annual income and spent 5.4% of projected annual expenses. Endowment has fully funded its annual contribution, but only 1/12 of the income is included in this report.

Debbie Schmidt said that due to an oversight, Stewardship didn't include funding for the Handbell Director's salary of \$2,040 plus FICA of \$156 in the 2023 Mission Spending Plan (MSP).

Debbie moved to have Council add \$2,040 plus \$156 FICA to the Mission Spending Plan (MSP) at the March meeting; Doni seconded; motion carried unanimously. The Bylaws allow Council to increase or decrease the MSP by amounts of three percent or less provided the motion passes by at least two-thirds of the Council membership. The Bylaws also require Council to provide notice of at least three weeks before the meeting at which it will vote to alter the MSP.

5.2 Basic Board Financial Literacy – This is under development and will be on-going.

6. Old Business

6.1 Personnel Committee, Update on Senior Pastor Review – Devon Kim

Devon said the committee followed Plymouth's policy for the Senior Pastor's evaluation. Referencing the statistics Ruth DeWitt provided at the annual meeting, she noted feedback was requested and obtained from many segments across the church. A synopsis of the feedback was prepared and presented to Valerie in January. The evaluation was positive.

6.2 Bylaws Task Force Report, Introduction to draft Constitution and Bylaws (see attachments)

Scott gave a brief overview of the history of bylaw revisions, stating that the last major revision was 35 years ago, although minor revisions have since been made.

Using a slide presentation (attached), he reviewed the work of the Bylaws Task Force, noting some of the more significant proposed revisions:

- Blending Council and Stewardship into one governing body.
- Reducing the size of Council from current 17 or 18 to 10 voting members.
- Restructuring remaining boards to smaller Standing Ministries directed by staff.
- Creating new, flexible ministry teams to enable members to live their faith.
- Moving many details from Bylaws to Council-controlled Policies.

Notebooks with copies of the constitution and bylaws drafts, the Bylaws Task Force executive summary and report and other supplemental information were distributed to Council members. They will also receive the documents electronically.

Scott provided a tentative timeframe for congregational approval:

- Informational meetings will be held between services in March and April.

- Council will discuss at March meeting.
 - Review article by article.
- Called congregational meeting to be held the month following Council's approval.
 - Perhaps as soon as May, but hopefully no later than late summer/early fall.

He asked Council members to read the documents and be prepared to discuss at the March meeting. They are also encouraged to contact Scott or other Bylaws Task Force members with questions before then. Scott also said that he or any other member of the Task Force were willing to meet with Boards to help explain the proposed changes.

6.3 Issue Position Statement on Trans Youth, Feedback Report – Devon Kim
Devon said congregation feedback was obtained via:

- Fellowship forums (2 in person; 1 on line).
 - Approximately 50-60 attended
- Two mission moments
- Congregation emails

Devon read the statement (attached). She then moved to publish the statement as it stands and for Council to vote on the statement at the March meeting. (The Advocacy Process Discernment Policy requires publication of a proposed statement two weeks before a Council vote.) Brandy Erzen seconded.

In response to questions, Scott said one individual asked if the statement would be used for lobbying purposes; it is not. Devon said no negative comments were received. Motion approved unanimously.

7. New Business

7.1 Goals for coming year: Facilities, Finances, Governance and Membership – Scott Morgan and Valerie Miller-Coleman

7.1.1. Overview of strategy development and review
Council sets goals and oversees implementation.

- Goals reviewed annually.
- Some are multi-year.

7.1.2. Governance strategy including focused goals and timeline – Scott Morgan
Scott referenced the document, "Governance Goal" (attached) which includes subgoals, strategies and proposed timelines.

Valerie provided the following:

- Facilities – Master Plan phases developed - Will bring plan to Council in March.
- Finances – Strengthen fundraising; tighten financial controls/procedures.
- Membership – Clarify and create meaningful relationships.
- Strategies will be developed by staff and have targets.
 - Need to determine what is measured and if it is meaningful.

8. Moderator's Report

Scott said the bylaws overview was his report.

9. Associate Pastor's Report – Caroline Lawson Dean

Working on Plymouth Academy – 1619 Project, Understanding the Cross – OWL.
A special thanks to Kara Holcombe for preparation of Easter gift bags.

10. Pastor's Report – Valerie Miller-Coleman

Good feelings as in person activities are taking place at Plymouth.

February 26 total attendance was 524; 353 in person; 85 at Ash Wednesday service.

Thankful for the opportunity to take a personal retreat at a Monastery.

Current organization of communication staff is working well.

11. Open Forum

Susan Osborn would like more opportunities to greet people. Dana said the Fellowship Board is enhancing fellowship hour with an improved coffee blend and cookies. Susan also asked who she should contact for training on Breeze (Heather).

Sue Denning thanked Scott for the Moderator's article in "The Rock".

12. Adjournment and Lord's Prayer

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Larissa Long, Clerk