

Council Minutes: April 2024  
Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Tuesday, April 23, 6:30 pm

1. Call to Order – Sonia Jordan, Moderator  
Sonia called the meeting to order at 6:33.

*Voting Members Present:*

Sonia Jordan – Moderator  
Rich Bireta – Moderator Elect  
Scott Morgan – Immediate-Past Moderator  
David Trevino – At Large Member  
Norine Spears – At Large Member  
Doug Eason – At Large Member  
Debbie Schmidt – At Large Member

*Voting Members Not Present:*

Stephen Carttar – Treasurer  
Christi Houston – At Large Member  
Jeff Eriksen – At Large Member

*Ex Officio Members Present:*

Valerie Miller-Coleman – Senior Pastor  
Caroline Lawson Dean – Associate Pastor

*Others Present:*

Larissa Long – Clerk  
Mark Reedy – Deputy Treasurer  
Devon Kim – Executive Director of Capital Campaign  
Kathy Bowen – Music and Fine Arts

2. Invocation – Valerie Miller-Coleman  
Valerie led attendees in prayer.

3. Consent Agenda

- 3.1 Approve Agenda
- 3.2 Approve minutes from March 26, 2024 Council Meeting
- 3.3 Receive Financial Reports
- 3.4 Approval of Banking Relationship with Silver Lake Bank for Capital Campaign Purchases
- 3.5 Approval of Georgia Orchard to the Membership Board – Elected until the next Annual Meeting and then will be approved by the congregation.

Doug had questions regarding the Silver Lake Bank relationship and asked that item 3.4 be pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Doug then moved to approve the Consent Agenda as modified and consider item 3.4 as a separate item; Scott seconded; motion carried unanimously.

4. Church Treasurer’s Report – Mark Reedy, Deputy Treasurer
  - 4.1 Financial Update

1. As of March 31, 2024
  - 25% of the year has passed
  - 28% of revenue has been received (26% of pledge collections)
  - 25% of expenses have been paid
2. Check register of all checks written for the first quarter and the source of funds are included in the financial reports.
3. Capital Campaign expenses total \$25,958 as of March 31, with \$15,000 of that paid to Generis of the \$40,000 agreement.
4. Endowment activity for the first quarter will be reported in April financials.
5. Subject to Council approval, a new relationship with Silver Lake Bank to facilitate Capital Campaign activity will be established.

In response to Doug's question regarding the establishment of a banking relationship with Silver Lake, Mark said the bank purchased Plymouth's tax credits for masonry work completed in 2023. He also noted the desire to segregate Capital Campaign funds as much as possible from operating funds. Silver Lake also has some features and fees that may be of interest and include:

- No monthly service charge, withdrawal or deposit charges on primary operating account.
- No charge for internal funds transfers or ACH activity.
- Premium rate on savings account.
- Church CD with penalty-free withdrawals.

Doug asked if funds had been received for the state historic tax credits. Rich said they hadn't, but the delay wasn't because of the Silver Lake. He also said that Plymouth isn't tied to the bank for future tax credits.

Scott moved to approve the establishment of a banking relationship with Silver State Bank; Doug seconded; motion passed unanimously.

## 5. Old Business

### 5.1 Capital Campaign update – Devon Kim, Executive Director of Capital Campaign

Devon said expenses to date are a little below what was budgeted, primarily due to lower printing costs and expenses for round table events.

The Campaign is now in the public phase and proceeding according to plan, but has been modified to fit Plymouth's goals, culture and history. Invitations to the May 11 commitment event will be sent this week. On Sunday, May 12 a campaign announcement will be made during the service along with an invitation for all who haven't made a commitment to do so the following Sunday. The campaign video has been well received and had 1700+ Facebook views as of today.

David asked if there are opportunities to receive feedback about the campaign. He just wants to make sure the campaign isn't rigid and changes can be made if needed. Devon said one-on-one conversations are taking place and she feels good about those meetings as most are supportive. Yes, both positive and negative feedback has been received and both are of value. Negatives include comments about using the same text each Sunday and saying a workbook really isn't needed.

Devon said if anyone hears feedback that would be helpful or has questions about the campaign they feel they can't answer, they should reach out to Devon, Doug or Valerie. In addition, the website provides a lot of campaign information, including a Q&A page.

In response to Debbie's inquiry regarding the number of giving units at Plymouth, Devon said about 400. She added that approximately 92 attended stakeholder events and 66 attended generosity events. The hope is for advance commitments from 30-50 households.

## 5.2 Disaster Response Plan – David Trevino, Council at Large Member

David has contacted liaisons with the Kansas Oklahoma Conference and was given direction on finding information to assist in plan development. He said a manual from UCC and the Insurance Board will be studied and that the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) website on cybersecurity has "Protecting Places of Worship", which is a self-assessment.

Scott said a DHS representative worked with the library, and his wife, Kathleen, found him extremely helpful. Scott will provide David with the representative's contact information, as he also works with churches.

David will send the information he's found to Council for review prior to the May meeting.

## 6. New Business

### 6.1 Donation to Lawrence Juneteenth Celebration from the Preston Racial Justice Fund – Caroline Lawson Dean, Associate Pastor

Caroline said Plymouth has contributed \$1,000 to this event for several years and wants to continue that support this year. Plymouth would be a "Logo" sponsor and receive recognition from the stage and on social media.

In response to Doug's question regarding the use of activity funds, Caroline responded yes, the \$1,000 would be from the Preston Racial Justice Fund.

Rich noted that the balance sheet reflects funds that Service and Justice hasn't used for several years. Caroline said those funds are earmarked for University Ministry, which can include ECM.

Doug moved to approve the \$1,000 contribution to the Lawrence Juneteenth Celebration; Rich seconded; motion approved unanimously.

### 6.2 Narthex Carpet – Utilizing Endowment Funds, Doug Eason, Facilities Chair and Council At Large Member

Doug said an estimate from Kring's includes:

- Replace carpet in the Narthex (\$18,500).
- Replace broken tile in entrance (\$1,400 for full replacement if unable to match).
- Replace carpet runner on north stairwell which is sun damaged (\$1,300).

Doug moved to authorize an expenditure of up to \$22,000 to replace the carpet and tile from Endowed Funds Account 3801100. Debbie seconded the motion.

Rich provided a brief history of endowment funds used for building maintenance. The current balance is about \$110,000 which Doug said will be used for:

- Various roof repairs due to hail damage (insurance claim filed) or roofing that may not have been initially repaired optimally.
- South Church HVAC unit which is leaking water and must be checked on routinely.
- Lower priorities include Mayflower Room carpeting and windows.

Scott said these expenses are paid from endowment, but we need to continue to let the congregation know how much endowed funds support the church.

Caroline wanted to make sure a backup plan is in place to check on the HVAC that's leaking.

Doug said solar panels won't be installed until roof repairs are completed.

There being no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Moderator's Report – Sonia Jordan

Sonia spent the past two Sundays at soccer tournaments but did read a chapter in Psalms which said worship is a time you should long for. The text reminded her of the importance of being in attendance both physically and spiritually.

8. Associate Pastor's Report – Caroline Lawson Dean

She is participating in new member orientation and confirmation classes. In each, clear expectations regarding church attendance and spiritual and financial giving are given

- Eight confirmation class members will join the church on Sunday.
- Plymouth is one of eighteen sponsors of Lawrence Pride.
- The chili cook-off raised \$3,500.
- The Easter offering was \$5,200.
- Sixteen youth will participate in this year's service trip.
- The Justice Matters Assembly is on April 28.

9. Pastor's Report – Valerie Miller-Coleman

- Eight hundred attended Easter services (both services and online).
- Seeing a slight decline in online attendance; but increase in physical presence.
- New member class includes four retired clergy.

10. Board Chair Comments

Kathy said Kim has expressed concern regarding the requirement of Council approval for expenditures of \$1,000 or more. Scott said if the expenditure is in the Music & Fine Arts budget, approval isn't needed. It's only required if activity funds are used, and the payee will receive \$1,000 or more.

Sonia asked board liaisons to check with their boards and see if clarification is needed regarding the \$1,000 approval policy.

11. Open Forum

Doug said the “Moment for Mission” seemed to occur at the wrong time during the Easter Service, especially since the Easter offering was mentioned. He also said that radio transmission of the Sunday service is starting late and sometimes there’s a minute of silence or filler. Caroline said she is also aware of this issue and she’ll check with Jeremy to see how the problem can be resolved.

12. Adjournment and Lord’s Prayer

Doug moved to adjourn; Norine seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Important Future Dates:

Next Council Meeting – May 28, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Tentative 2024-25 Council Dates (fourth Tuesday except third in November and December)

June 25, August 27, September 24, October 22, November 19, December 17, January 28, 2025