

Council Minutes: April 2023  
Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Tuesday, April 25, 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  
Larissa Long – Clerk  
Doni Mooberry Slough – Treasurer  
David 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  
Linda Thompson - Fellowship  
Kelley Stillings – Membership  
Brandy Emzen– Mission & Service  
Kathy Bowen – Music & Fine Arts  
Dick Orchard – Endowment  
Susan McCarthy - History

Members not present:

Devon Kim – Immediate-Past Moderator  
Rich Bireta – Deputy Treasurer  
Sue Denning - Deacons  
Annas Boyer – Personnel

2. Invocation – Valerie Miller-Coleman  
Valerie encouraged us to “widen the circle” – continue the invitation to be a part of the faith community. She reminded us that today’s church is built upon what we’ve inherited from the early church. Members of the early church didn’t always know what they were doing either, but through meetings, discussion and arguments, processes and procedures were developed. Mistakes occurred but were met with Grace.
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 March 28, 2023
  - 3.3. Receive Financial Reports

Brandy Emzen moved to approve the consent agenda; Kelley Stillings seconded; motion carried unanimously.
4. Church Treasurer’s Report – Doni Mooberry Slough, Treasurer
  - 4.1. Financial Update – Through March 31, we are 25% of the way through the year; have received 25% of projected annual income and have spent 24% of projected annual expenses. (To avoid distorting the numbers, these figures do not include Endowment income and expenses.)

Responding to a question regarding the five-year financial plan, Doni said funds may be drawn from operating reserves this year, but only if needed. However, if not used this year she is confident some reserve funds will be needed in 2024.

Her research indicates we should expect around 50% of giving to be via digital platforms in the future. We currently are unable to determine the amount given digitally but should be able to do so soon. She also said pastor involvement in finances correlates to increased funding.

## 5. Old Business

### 5.1 Goals and Strategy Update – Scott Morgan

Scott said this item would be on the agenda each month. He's currently focused on governance (bylaws) and communications (improving access to documents for all members). Finance and membership will be discussed in coming meetings.

Facilities – Valerie reported that a final candidate for Facilities Manager has been agreed upon and the intent is for the individual to start work in mid-May.

### 5.2 Bylaws and Policy Review – Scott Morgan

#### 5.2.1. Overview, revisions, and general questions

Scott sent updated copies of draft bylaws and policies to everyone that requested them but hasn't received significant feedback. Meetings with various boards have been helpful and resulted in some changes. Two meetings have been held with the congregation. The first was better attended than the second, which he hopes indicates members are becoming more comfortable with the proposed revisions.

**Constitution** – Scott reviewed the changes made since the March meeting.

#### 5.2.2 Article-by-article consideration continued starting with **Article V. Governance**

##### **Section 1. - Officers**

Reducing to five (Moderator Team, Clerk and Treasurer)

##### **A. Moderator**

- (3) The annual report won't be compiled and printed for the annual meeting but will be provided later in the year.

##### **E. Treasurer**

- (4) Replace reference to bond requirement with alternative such as background check; minimum credit score.

##### **Section 2. – Council**

##### **B. Composition**

- (1) Ten voting members
- Moderator team, treasurer, six at-large.
  - Pastors are ex officio, without vote.
  - A majority is required to pass something so a tie vote does not count as a majority.
- (1) (e) Six at-large members
- Concern expressed regarding ability of six at-large members adequately representing diversity of congregation.
  - Current at-large members could complete Council terms.
    - Develop a matrix to ensure diversity is represented. Consider matrix descriptions that include the verbiage "such as".
  - Need communications between Council and Standing Ministries.
    - Each at-large member will be a liaison to a Standing Ministry
    - Add planning meetings with Standing Ministries and other groups/entities (# mtgs to be determined).
      - Planning, coordination, goal setting
    - Unable to stream Council meetings currently but hope to provide in future.

##### **C. Operation**

No major changes.

#### **D. Duties**

(1) (g) Budget sessions currently are conducted by Stewardship finance committee, although current bylaws call for Council to do this. The same process will continue but under the Finance Committee of Council.

#### **F. – Emergency Powers**

New – added to provide outline of actions in event of emergency.

### **Section 3. – Governing and Operating Documents**

#### **A. Overview**

(3) Resolutions are statements of Plymouth beliefs, such as recent Issue Position Statement on Trans Youth.

(4) Memoranda of Understanding – an example would be approval of winter shelter for specified time frame.

### **Section 4 – General Governance**

#### **C. Nominating Committee**

- Currently - Moderator-Elect appoints a nominating committee to work with pastors and develop a pool of candidates for elected positions, including Moderator-Elect.
  - Requests for names from pulpit.
  - Suggestions from boards.
- Proposed language has moderator team and two additional members reflecting Plymouth diversity.
  - Intent is to get the congregation involved with recruiting.
  - Nominating committee approved by Council.
  - Utilize matrix to assure diversity.
  - Could nominations w/bios be provided to congregation prior to annual meeting?
  - Work on process for nominations from other than the nominating committee.

#### **Article VI. Ministries**

- Current revisions state ministries will work with staff in collaboration just as they do now.
- The intent is for all Standing Ministries to have an appropriate number of members to achieve goals.
  - Music & Fine Arts has requested nine.

Ministries or Boards?

- Ministries better reflects the service aspect.
- Boards suggests governance.

#### **Article VII. Pastors and Staff**

Section 1. A. (1) (a) Senior Pastor Search Committee

Added “...consult with the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference”.

Section 2. A (1) (a) Associate Pastor Search Committee

Added “...consult with the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference”.

Consensus was reached on Article V. Governance. Council will continue line-by-line review with Article VI. Ministries at its May meeting.

6. New Business

7. Moderator’s Report – Scott Morgan  
Nothing further to report.

8. Associate Pastor’s Report – Caroline Lawson Dean

1. On Confirmation Sunday (April 23) six young woman joined Plymouth Church.

2. The 2024 Confirmation class will have 15-17 participants.
3. Justice Matters 2023 Action Assembly is on May 7 at the Lied Center. Issues are elder care, mental health, homelessness, and restorative practices in schools.
  - a. Mission moment on Sunday, April 30.
  - b. See Caroline for tickets.

9. Pastor's Report – Valerie Miller-Coleman

1. There will be eight baptisms on Sunday, April 30.
2. Twenty-two individuals will join the church on Sunday.
3. Easter service combined attendance was 833. In person attendance was 533.
4. Average April attendance was 371.
5. The Chancel Choir will perform its Spring Major Choral Work "Requiem" on May 7.
6. The Children's Musical is on May 14.

10. Open Forum

11. Adjournment and Lord's Prayer

Debbie Schmidt moved to adjourn the meeting; Brandy Emzen seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

12. Important Future Dates

Next Council Meeting – May 23, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. – This meeting will be in person.

Tentative 2023 Council Dates (fourth Tuesday except third in November and December): June 27, (no July) August 22, September 26, October 24, November 21, December 19.

Respectfully submitted by  
Larissa Long, Clerk