

Council Minutes: March 2024  
Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ  
Tuesday, March 26, 6:30 pm

1. Call to Order – Sonia Jordan, Moderator  
Following adjournment of the Planning and Coordinating Session, Sonia called the meeting to order at 7:42 pm.

*Voting Members Present:*

Sonia Jordan – Moderator  
Rich Bireta – Moderator Elect  
Scott Morgan – Immediate-Past Moderator  
Stephen Carttar – Treasurer  
David Trevino – At Large Member  
Norine Spears – At Large Member  
Christi Houston – At Large Member  
Doug Eason – At Large Member  
Jeff Eriksen – At Large Member

*Voting Members Not Present:*

Debbie Schmidt – At Large Member

*Ex Officio Members Present:*

Caroline Lawson Dean – Associate Pastor

*Others Present :*

Larissa Long – Clerk  
Mark Reedy – Deputy Treasurer

2. Invocation – Caroline Lawson Dean  
Caroline said the information shared at the Planning and Coordinating Session was very special and helpful.
3. Consent Agenda
  - 3.1 Approve Agenda
  - 3.2 Approve Minutes from February 27, 2024 Council Meeting and March 9, 2024 Special Council Session
  - 3.3 Receive Financial Reports

Doug moved to approve the Consent Agenda; Scott seconded; motion carried unanimously.

4. Church Treasurer’s Report – Stephen Carttar, Treasurer
  - 4.1. Financial Update

The financial performance of Plymouth Church for the two months ended February 29, 2024 was generally in line with expectations.

Actual to budget activity:

- We are 2 months or 16.67% of the way through the year.

- Income – We have received 18.31% of budgeted income, excluding designated Endowment.
- Expenses – We have spent 15.58% of budgeted expenses, excluding designated Endowment.

Stephen introduced the dashboard, a three-page report providing monthly and year-to-date revenue and expense by Class and To Budget. He said in a continued effort to provide transparency, the intent is to provide the check register on the website. However, he wants to discuss with the Finance Committee before proceeding.

When asked about unfavorable year-to-date pledged income of \$13,395, he said this is not unusual, as revenue to budget pledged income historically is about 8% per month, then 12% in December.

Doug asked about pledge statements, which were recently sent to members. Stephen said the intent was to provide statements on a quarterly basis. Doug said some messages accompanying the statements created unintended issues in the past and suggested consideration be given to messaging.

## 5. Old Business

### 5.1. Capital Campaign Update – Devon Kim, Executive Director of Capital Campaign

Devon said a 40-page booklet has been created using marketing materials from Generis, but specific to our campaign. The booklet will be available following April 7th and 14th services and will be delivered or mailed to members unable to pick them up. She added that some portions of the booklet are tied to sermons planned for the campaign period.

Video production is underway and has included filming during church services as well as footage of the sanctuary. The video will be shown at the April 10 and 13 Generosity Roundtables and available on social media.

Scott asked if groundwork for lead gifts was in place. Devon said one-on-one conversations are taking place, but nothing will be announced until May 11, during Advance Commitment Night. On May 12 it will be announced that Commitment Sunday is May 19.

She said there will not be a final design provided until we know the campaign has been a success. Regarding the organ, the second organ company is out, so Kim is now working with a third company. She also said consideration is being given to naming opportunities.

### 5.2. Corporate Resolution Review. Approval – Stephen Carttar, Treasurer and David Trevino, Council At-Large Member

Stephen said the new version has been vetted and approved by David. He thanked Rich again for his willingness to have his name as Past Deputy Treasurer listed on the resolution.

Scott moved to approve the Corporate Resolution as presented; Doug seconded; motion carried unanimously.

## 6. New Business

### 6.1. Senior Pastor Evaluation Update – Devon Kim, Personnel Committee Chair

Devon explained that the Personnel Committee's responsibility was to evaluate the Sr. Pastor's performance based on her job description. A structured questionnaire which includes both rubric and freeform responses is sent to various segments of the congregation and staff, with the intent of obtaining diverse, constructive, and robust feedback from individuals who interact with Valerie. This process has been followed for the past four years.

Because of concerns expressed regarding the Sr. Pastor's evaluation process, Devon asked Council to consider providing an opportunity for the congregation at large to provide feedback broadly about the church.

Caroline said that anyone having feedback for Valerie, Caroline or Heather should feel free to contact them. She added that if there are complaints regarding staff, they should contact the staff member's supervisor (Valerie, Caroline or Heather).

Stephen said it's always helpful to evaluate against defined metrics and asked if Devon would share the form developed for the Sr. Pastor's evaluation. Devon agreed to share the form.

Sonia said she'll work with Valerie and Caroline to develop a framework for broad feedback about the church.

### 6.2. Planning & Coordinating Sessions – Sonia Jordan, Moderator

#### 6.2.1. Identification of what went well. What could have gone better?

- Sonia said committee and board attendees' names on table tents would be helpful.
- Jeff thought it was great, but perhaps ask for specific information at the next meeting.
- Doug said a lot of dates were shared; a deep dive into everything wasn't needed. Suggested asking what they need help with.
- Caroline said it was a good space to gather dates for all church events but have them send in advance.
- Sonia agreed about an hour is needed for the session.
- Scott felt it was a huge improvement over what historically happened under the old structure.
- Norine said we need to be flexible.

#### 6.2.2. Schedule remaining sessions for 2024

The sessions will begin at 6:30 pm, preceding the June and October Council meetings.

### 6.3. Disaster Response Plan: Preview & Identify Next Steps – David Trevino, Council Member At-Large

David said pursuant to the current policies, the Sr. Pastor is responsible for the development and maintenance of a plan to address any event that would disrupt

Plymouth operations. When he asked Valerie to see it, she said a plan wasn't in place and delegated the development of a disaster response plan to him.

He has reviewed the plans of other churches and said the UCC has contacts for such plans. There may be templates that will provide a sense of what should be included.

He said we will need to assess where we are currently, determine what we want and our tolerance level. He hopes to have some information by the April Council meeting.

When asked what all is considered in such a plan, David said it could include any number of areas, such as cybersecurity, fire, pandemic, tornado, active shooters, etc.

Sonia thanked him for his willingness to work on the plan and said she would like to work with him.

7. Moderator's Report – Sonia Jordan

Sonia expressed her gratitude for Scott's work last year and gave him a package of his favorite "goodies", which included lots of chocolate!

8. Associate Pastor's Report – Caroline Lawson Dean

- Twenty-three youth are going to Chicago this summer.
- Twenty-three confirmation students are on a retreat this weekend.
- A Prayer Loom will be in the Mayflower Room on Easter Sunday.

9. Pastor's Report – Valerie Miller-Coleman

No report.

10. Board Chair Comments

No board comments.

11. Meetings of the Church Council are open to all Plymouth members. This open forum allows any church member to address the Council regarding Plymouth Congregational Church United Church of Christ, program, plans or policies.

12. Adjournment and Lord's Prayer

Doug moved to adjourn the meeting; Norene seconded; motion approved unanimously.

13. Important Future Dates

Next Council Meeting: April 23, 2024 at 6:30 pm – this meeting will be in person.