

Community Congregational Church

Council Meeting, March 19, 2023

In attendance: George Whitt, Robyn Firth, Cathy Karr, Arlene Penman, Linda O'Riley, Pastor Heather, Nancy Lindley, Julie Wells, Tina Hudson, Betty Armstrong, Maribeth Peninger. Guests: Nancy Icks, Rich Baker, Danny White, David Wilde, Lynda Burns, Jane Hart.

Quorum was established, Danny offered a prayer. George Whitt, Vice Moderator, opened the meeting. The minutes of the January and February meetings were approved as written.

Finance: Julie reminded everyone that Sue Jones had emailed all the financial reports earlier in the week. Since pledging did not happen until January, the Trustees built a budget on previous year's pledges. Therefore the annual report showed a \$67,000 deficit, after the actual pledges were totaled we are at a \$78,000 deficit.

Trustee : Working on several items, I,e., parking lot and locks for the building.

Minister:

- Pastor Heather asked how the Non Violent Communication workshop was received by the Council. Everyone felt it was good, something we can all use in our daily lives but it will take continued practice. When discussing an issue with someone we should remember to ask ourselves, "What is it that person needs?" She talked about the analogy of the giraffe (who is a non-violent communicator – looking at everything from far above and not talking) and the jackal (who is always running around fighting and yelling).
- We will be working on refining job descriptions for the Council members after Easter.
- Prynness has scheduled the Hall for eight sessions of "Maker Markets" on Saturdays starting early summer. This is a place where individuals pay a small fee to sell their goods. Our congregation can sell items if they pay the fee for a table.
- Our youth (6th grade through 9th grade) will be traveling to LaPuente for a mission trip on July 7 thru July 10. The cost will be \$150. They will be having a bake sale in June to help raise money for this trip. Pastor thinks there will be about 12 students going.
- Pastor read a list of home-bound members who will receive the flowers which will decorate the church on Easter in honor or remembrance of loved ones. These are for sale now for a \$18 donation. Council members will deliver these flowers after the Easter service.

Stewardship: In the near future Council members will be involved in a "Thank-A-Thon" where we all meet together and call individual congregation members to thank them. A written script will be provided. Julie, Sue, Lyn and Heather will be developing a letter to send to all congregants regarding pledging and our financial situation.

With the coming of Easter a new schedule for April meetings was moved by Linda O'Riley, seconded by Robyn Firth, and approved by the members. Trustees will meet on the 3rd Sunday (April 16) and Council will meet on the 4th Sunday (April 23). April 30 will be a 5th Sunday pot-luck.

Scholarship: Linda reported the Board will be soliciting ideas from the congregation as to what to do with the Smith Scholarship Trust when the money reverts to the general fund of the Church, sometime in 2024. This will be on-going for this year so everyone will be encouraged to brainstorm ideas for the use of the funds.

Nancy Lindley closed with prayer. Next meeting is April 23.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene Penman, Secretary

March 12, 2023

Trustee minutes

In attendance: Tina Hudson, Linda O'Riley, Andy Kovats, George Whitt, Julie Wells, Laura Ettinger Harwell, Lyn Ettinger Harwell, Heather McDuffee, Prynness Favors

We discussed the doors and locks of the hall. We need to find a way to let renters in without giving out keys. The current plan is to put a digital lock on the kitchen door and put locks on the inside of the east doors of the hall.

The church will be opening a Venmo account to help the work flow when scheduling events in the hall.

We discussed briefly the parking lot. Lyn has talked to the city about them using our lot. We are tabling until they get back to us with how much we will get.

We will have an all church work day on 4/22/2023. There will be a wide variety of things to do.

February Pastor's Report for Trustees

COMMUNICATION ABOUT CHANGES

I am realizing that there is a lot of change happening in the church building that might be raising lots of questions. I am the first pastor in this Post-Covid reality of coming back to the church building with fewer people involved.

I would like to offer frequent communication with Trustees and the congregation for a well informed community. I will hold Community Conversations after church to keep people up to date on changes and to receive feedback and ideas that are direct and helpful. The first Community Conversation will be on March 19 and it will only last 15 minutes. Folks will need to

come with prepared questions and know that my door is always open to submit further questions or feedback. Email, call or text. I'm here. And I'm listening.

BIG PROBLEMS CAN BE SOLVED

We are looking at a larger deficit than originally thought due to a large every other year gift, some lower pledges and fewer pledging units. Julie and Lyn will work together to come up with a way to communicate this to the congregation. I have established a spending freeze for staff. But there is only so much that we can cut as the staff already works on a bare bones budget.

An obvious way for sustainability is to increase our income by renting out our spaces when we are not using them, which is about 90% of the time. Renting spaces means that every space is clean, tidy, neutral and with flexible furniture for lots of possibility.

DIGITAL LOCKS

With renters, we need a way for them to enter and exit the building without having a staff person there. Much like an Air BNB, they will have a self check-in system. We have purchased 2 keypad locks: one for the church kitchen door and one for the parsonage back door. We can program unique codes for renters and the locks are connected to an app that can alert us to when people were in the building and what code was used. This will help with security as well.

*Trustees need to troubleshoot all of the snags before I call Rich Baker to install them. This includes whether or not we want to abolish keys for parishioners and grandfathered renters and only use the keypad. I recommend that 2 Trustees and Prynness have the app to help keep eyes on the building.

COMMUNITY HALL

In January and February, Prynness and I have been trying to thin the clutter around the church and create neutral spaces for rentals. We are putting things away in designated places to protect the church's property from being tampered with and/or being moved to unknown places (or even stolen). The fewer the temptations the better.

1. Took down bulletin boards and artwork.
2. Flags for boy scouts and Kiwanis were put in the large closet.
3. Stored extra tables that are just out or leaning against the walls.

THE LOUNGE (*Downstairs space east of the sanctuary*)

1. Moved an old wooden craft cabinet on wheels out of the North Room to become the welcome desk for newcomers. This will house information for visitors and welcome bags.

*PLAN IN PROCESS: One large bulletin board will become a “The Hub” where members can receive information, events, calendars, pantry collection basket and nametags.

*The other large bulletin board will be for our children’s artwork.

*We would like to purchase comfortable seating for socializing and even create a reading nook by the North Room for our more introverted folks.

*We could have coffee and fellowship in the lounge from time to time as there is a coffee set up by the nursery. It is also a great space for receptions for concerts, small funerals or even art exhibits.

*We will also create a History Corner where all of our history will be displayed and stored.

THE NORTH ROOM

1. Moved some storage furniture out for the Buddhist meditation group (renting the space on Saturdays). They have offered to help on our work day in April.
 - a. Will take a picture so that the sangha can set the room up for Sunday meetings.
2. Moved Women’s Fellowship mission cabinet out into the hall. Fits perfectly by the North door.

*PLAN IN PROCESS: Trying to figure out appropriate storage for the Buddhist group as we know that foreign items tend to grow legs and move. I would hate for any of their items to go missing. Plus, I would like to take back the Sunday School rooms that are being used for storage.

PARSONAGE

A turn of the century home is challenging to use as an office space. We tried the former set up for a few months and decided it didn’t work for us. Pryncess and I work collaboratively and we couldn’t communicate well from separate rooms. We decided that we needed to be in the same room to maximize our time and workload. Therefore, we...

1. Moved ourselves into one room.
2. Gave away broken and unusable chairs on Facebook
3. Sold 2 printers, which paid for paint in the parsonage.
4. Painted (or tried to) over the several layers of wallpaper. We hit a snag when we ran out of paint.
5. Created a welcoming area with comfortable seating for small meetings and socializing.
6. Gave away the unsafe picnic table on FB. Jane Hart supplied a patio table and chairs for food pantry guests and eating lunch outdoors.
7. Gave the large dining room table (used as a work table) and chairs to a large family.

8. Had the Junk King come on 1/23/2023 to take 7 empty filing cabinets, 3 corporate style desks and some other heavy items. It took them 4 hours and it cost \$500 with tip. Prynness and I sold furniture from our boutique and event space to offset the \$500. I put that cash in the Bookkeeper's drawer on January 31st.
9. Prynness and I bought smaller desks (out of our own money).
10. We supplied the office with a table, bookshelves and a coffee station from the boutique and from Prynness' Air BNB.

*PLAN IN PROCESS: We are using one bedroom upstairs as office storage, one bedroom as mission storage. A third bedroom is storing items from our boutique, which is very temporary until we can figure out whether or not we can set up the boutique/bookstore downstairs as another possible income stream or as a way to make money for missions. That would leave two bedrooms upstairs that would make great office space for mental health therapists or bodyworkers (massage therapists or Reiki practitioners). I am going to empty both rooms and take pictures of them for private offices.

PARKING LOT

*Brandy and I spent February 18th attending the parking lot for the Mardi Gras parade. We charged \$15/car and made \$210. People were happy to pay it. It's an underutilized cash cow!

*PLAN IN PROCESS: Working on finalizing some details for parking lot income. There are two possible options.

1. Lyn met with the city and they would stripe, maintain and enforce the parking lot for us. And yes, they would be willing to work around all of our stipulations and validations for MES parents, church and special events. And we would give our church members and regular attendees validation tags for their cars. After much thought and prayer, this would be a huge weight lifted off of our shoulders. We need to be honest about our bandwidth to enforce and maintain the parking lot. Prynness and I cannot be monitoring the parking lot with our hours. And having signs up that the city is now managing the parking lot would give gravitas to enforcement. I don't think people will take it seriously if we do it and I'm too much of a softy to tow cars. If we are afraid that people will have a bad taste in their mouths about the church if we ticket and tow, we can inform people that we aren't giving them tickets, the city is. Depending on how much the city would give us for the parking lot, this is the best option for the least amount of work from us. They will get back to us about a contract.
2. Another option would be Text2Park. There is a \$150 set up fee and one time fees to install signs. We can control the cost and change it at any time for things like Carnivale and parades. We can also validate up to 500 cars at a time (we only

have 25 or so spots) by blocking out times when parking is free. There is no penalty to end the contract and the contract is for a year to year contract. They take a cut per transaction (\$1 for \$5, so we would charge the customer \$6 to park). Text2Park outsources enforcement, which would be an added cost, depending on what company we go with. The enforcement companies are remote by cameras at the entrance and the exit. Because customers use a credit card, the enforcement companies would charge the card if the car is in violation. If customers don't pay at all, those cars get towed. Pretty cut and dry.

EXTRA THINGS

*Looking ahead in March and April, we have 2 events on the books, several inquiries and quite a few tours. We will not be disclosing all of the events. They will be listed as "Private Event" on the calendar. This is to help make boundaries for our renters. Cost to rent spaces varies with the room, how many people attend the event, number of hours, whether or not there is food and drink, and if the people are members. So we cannot answer questions about how much we are charging.

*There have been a few questions about how things are being paid for. In November, I asked Trustees to take \$1500 out of my salary for reimbursable expenses to pay for things. If things aren't coming out of those reimbursable expenses, I am paying for them out of my own pocket or I'm covering the cost through selling things on Facebook. Most Americans have too much stuff. And churches tend to collect our unwanted stuff. We don't have the space for that anymore.

DREAM A LITTLE DREAM

1. I would love to reclaim the 2 Sunday School rooms (without the partition creating storage) as a "one room" style classroom that has toddlers and preschoolers on one side and elementary school children on the other.
2. I have been praying over what to use the nursery for, since very few parents nowadays give up their babies during a church hour. You will see most parents with their babies in worship. Playgrounds are springing up in churches all over America because parents spend the majority of their week away from their children and worship is a time to spend spiritual time with children, something that parents don't do on their own.
3. Therefore, I am toying with the idea of transforming the nursery to a teen cave with flexible seating (so that the room could also be used for support groups or even small group studies).

4. HOWEVER, there are different expectations and policies about children's and youth ministries than 20+ years ago when the building was built. Many things have to happen before we use the Sunday School room and the nursery for minors. This includes that we replace or alter the classroom doors to doors with windows or Dutch style doors that open on the top.
5. We also need to secure doors to the outside so that they can be exited in case of a fire.
6. Children ministry policies require 2 adults in spaces with children. These adults would be trained bi-annually and background checked.
7. Until we meet these criteria, we cannot have children's ministry at CCC.