

**Peace United Church of Christ
Coordinating Council Meeting Minutes
August 17, 2021 — 6:30 pm by Zoom**

Present: Moderator, Tom Hystead; Vice-Moderator, Joan Peterson; Treasurer, Dick Goese; Spiritual Life Representative, Susan Larson-Kidd, Education Representative, Penny Cragun; Acting for Justice Representative, Monica Liddle; Stewardship Representative: Dave Courtright, At Large members; Jessica Olson, Bud Trnka, and Mary Adams; Matt Ryan, Faith Formation Minister, Nathan Holst

Absent: Secretary, Diane Swanoski; Past Moderator, Doug Bowen-Bailey (on temporary leave from the Council)

Observers: Nancy Nelson, Peace Office Coordinator

Call to Order and Introductions: Tom Hystead. Call to order at 6:35 p.m.

Opening Meditation: Bud Trnka. Peace synonyms “popcorn”. [Please sign up](#) for future meditations.

Agenda Additions and Approval: Motion and second to approve agenda approved as emailed. Unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes of July 20, 2021 Council Meeting. Motion and second to approve minutes as emailed. Unanimously approved.

Reports of Standing Committees

Finance Committee: Dick Goese

- June 30, 2021 Financial Statements
 - Income has fallen behind approximately one month’s worth (approx. \$40,000).
 - Expenses are down even more, keeping the budget strong.
 - Rosemary Feriancek, Bookkeeper, is working to make Finance reports more accurately reflect the various special funds and CHUM donations.
 - Rev. Briggs final payout will be reflected in next month’s budget reports.
 - Motion from the Financial Committee to approve reports. Unanimously passed.
- Designated Funds Policies
 - Of the designated funds (PK Fund, Foy Scholarship, and Jubilee Fund), only the Jubilee Fund has written policy. The UCC Conference attorney is adamant that there be written policy for each fund.. The Finance Committee will make an appeal for people to work on creating purpose statements and guidelines for each. The written policies will be part of the church’s overall Financial Policy.
- There are too many designations on the website for contributions. Dick suggests that it be reduced to include only non-pledge items. He also requests that pledge monies not

be split between different budget line items. He will contact those who have been making such requests.

Human Resources Committee: Written report by Leanne Ventrella

HR Committee Report to Coordinating Council
August 2021

- The HR Committee has not met since the last Council meeting.
- Recruitment for the Administrative Coordinator position closed on July 30 and interviews were held the week of August 2. Elise Courtright was selected to fill the position and began working as Administrative Coordinator on August 11. She will be working up to 30 hours per week and in addition to the Administrative Coordinator responsibilities, she will be retaining her responsibilities as Peace Bell editor.
- Nancy Nelson's hours have been increased from 22 to 24 hours per week.
- Dan Shepard's hours will remain at 40 hours per week and he will be responsible for the physical space for building facility requests.
- In lieu of performance evaluations this year, in the absence of a pastor, members of the HR Committee are individually meeting with each Peace employee for a check-in to discuss what's on their minds, how things are going and future focus.
- Rev. Charlotte Franz will now take on the responsibility of filtering staff questions and needs and work with staff to ensure the proper team leaders, Council members or HR are involved.
- Recognition of Janell Kohls and Tim Peters will take place at the August 15 worship service and coffee hour.

Request for Council Discussion/Action: None

Respectfully submitted, Leanne Ventrella, HR Committee Chair

Additional Comments - Joan Peterson

- Job descriptions have been reviewed and rewritten for Nancy Nelson and Elise Courtright to clarify who does what and separation of duties.
- There were exit interviews with Janell Kohls and Tim Peters.
- I-9 forms have been submitted for each employee.
- Personnel files need to be cleaned up. HR is trying to figure out how to do it.
- Joan will thank Charlotte and all of the staff for doing their jobs so well during this transition time. It is suggested to bring treats and flowers to the staff meeting tomorrow as a thank you from the Council. Joan Peterson will pick up and present at the meeting. There are monies in the HR budget for this.
- Tim Peters duties have been divided between Elise and Dan Shepard, Custodian.
- Someone will cover Dan's duties while he is on vacation.

Nominating Committee: to be discussed in New Business.

Written Committee Representative Reports

Christian Education: No written report submitted. Penny Cragun reports:

- The Adult Ed Committee will be meeting this month.
- Sharon Dawson shares that VBS is going on right now with protocols set forth by the COVID guidelines.

Christian Spiritual Life: Written report by Susan Larson-Kidd.

Council Report for Christian Spiritual Life
August 2021

Food and Fellowship

The committee has worked hard and continued to have great success with the coffee hour and picnic being well attended (85 people at picnic service last Sunday). They are working on cleaning the kitchen this month and planning for their next event November 14th Stewardship Sunday. Coffee hour will be outside for September due to COVID restrictions.

Health and Wellness

This team did not meet during the past month. Ellen Shelton is stepping down from the team and will let me know when a new chairperson steps up.

Shared Ministry

Shared Ministry won't meet until 8/25. There is a picture directory meeting 8/26. They've had a very good response from photographers in the congregation who will attend the meeting.

Worship and Arts

This committee met and set up worship for the next month. COVID restrictions are changing some things during worship. We have two tent services left. Taize is moving to the 4th Sunday of the month with no other 8:30 services until we get an interim pastor. Charlotte is doing a synod service this coming Sunday that looks amazing. Streaming of services is in discussion.

Worship Tech Team update

There are two Tech Teams - IT Tech Team (Dave Courtright) and the Worship Tech Team. The Worship Tech Team met to discuss the future of streaming and the availability of volunteers. With much purposeful discussion, the team decided to do this until October:

- Stream the first and third Sundays at our “low level streaming” our 10:30 service.
- Stream the fourth Sunday at our 8:30 service.
- Not stream on the third Sunday, or if there is a 5th Sunday.
- We also discussed boundaries and fees surrounding streaming and running sound/video for special events.
- We will meet again, in light of COVID restrictions, in October to review how this is working.

Faith Formation

- This committee did not meet during the past month but is planning to this month.

No action items for the Council at this time.

Respectfully submitted, Susan Larson Kidd 8/11/21

Acting for Justice Hub: No written report submitted

Christian Stewardship: Written report submitted by Dave Courtright

Christian Stewardship Report: August 2021

Stewardship Team -

The Stewardship Team held their annual fall campaign planning session at sea, and came up with a theme for this fall. They are hard at work making sure we have a wonderful fall campaign, and have been bringing some wonderful gratitude speakers to our services. Below is their intro letter as a way of sharing the beautiful work they've been doing.

2022 Stewardship Theme Intro - “Rooted in Love, Growing in Hope Together”

This has been a year of challenges. We have had to make changes in our lives that were difficult, sometimes leaving us feeling isolated and depleted. We long for connection: to each other, and to our own and our community's spiritual well-being.

The UCC theme for this year's Stewardship Campaign is “Rooted in Love”, which feels so fitting for our congregation during this time of transition. We are reminded of and find comfort in knowing that we are truly rooted in love - the love of our God and the life of Jesus Christ, but also in our care and concern for each other.

The Peace Church Stewardship Team has decided to add our own tagline: “Growing in Hope Together” to remind us that there is hope offered through faith and scriptural text. As the pandemic subsides, we will build (and rebuild) the relationships with each other because they are integral to our spiritual well-being and faith journeys. We need each other for support, community, and inspiration.

During this interim time at Peace, we must remember that the church is not a building or its leader, but *us!* We are members and friends who come together with love and hope. We are called back into fellowship to nourish our souls and to show up in the life of our church to do the work we are called to do. Come - be part of this exciting transitional time in the life of Peace Church. Show up with open hearts to support this powerful community of faith.

Romans 15:13 - May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Property Team -

The Property Team has had minimal meeting time recently between busy summers and some turnover of team members. We will definitely be missing having Tim Peters taking care of so many routine building needs. We will be scheduling some work on the roof before winter, approximately \$4600 to reseal sections and prolong the life of the current roof. Estimate for a full replacement is \$265,000, which should be at least 5 years or more in the future, but something to keep in mind.

Action needed by the Council: None
Submitted by Dave Courtright

Written Minister's Reports

Faith Formation Minister: Written report by Pastor Nathan Holst (see Attachment #1)
Additional comments by Pastor Nathan:

- Shift in programming for Jr. and Sr. High School youth. Proposed OWLs in 9th grade, Confirmation for grades 10 & 11. The Council supports the programming shift.

Administrative Consultant: Rev. Charlotte Frantz - no written report submitted.

Old Business

Pastoral Relations – Tom Hystead

- Review Timeline and address issues going forward. Tom will include Council action items from the Pastoral Relations timeline to future Council agendas as needed.

SSC Response - Tom Hystead

- Motion by Joan Peterson to adopt the Comments to the SSC response and Path Forward, along with the introductory disclaimer, and forward them to the Conference. Seconded by Mary Adams. Unanimously approved..
- It is important that the Council follow through with the difficult work recommended in the SSC Report, especially timely Holy Listening to mend relationships and bring people back together.

Holy Listening - Bud Trnka

- Christine Kellogg, owner/manager of Conflicts Resolved, is interested in facilitating Holy Listening with the leadership and staff of Peace. A Zoom meeting will be set for next Tuesday, August 24th @ 6:30 p.m. to discuss the scope and logistics of the Holy Listening. Any Council members that can join the conversation are encouraged to do so.
- Another option for Holy Listening is LeaderWise, a Christian based facilitation group. They have offered to meet with the Council for 90 minutes to discuss our situation and what they offer.

New Business:

Search Committee #2 Update; Jessica Olson

- The Search Committee has conducted second interviews with candidates using questions submitted by staff, Council members, and Pastoral Relations Committee, and included representatives from each as observers of the interviews. They have also contacted references of the candidates and have come to a decision to make a recommendation of one of the candidates.
- It is also recommended to form a Transition Team at this time. Jessica will draft an invitation to the congregation, along with a description of what the role of this new team will be. Congregation members that expressed interest in the Interim Search Committee will be contacted directly to see if interested in being on the Transition Team.

Fall Programming – Staff Recommendations (See Attachment #2)

- The Council supports staff recommendations regarding fall programming and recognizes the continued diligent work of the staff to keep the church and its programming operating duringt this ongoing time of transition and pandemic.

Committee and Team vacancies - Tom Hystead

- The Tech Team, Finance Committee, Property Committee, Christian Education, and other teams/committees are short of members. Keep in mind anyone who may be interested or well suited to one of these teams and invite them to participate.
- Tom will include an invitation to participate in teams/committees and/or the 150th Anniversary planning in his Peace Bell Moderator's Report.

150th Anniversary Commemoration - Tom Hystead

- The 150th Anniversary of Peace Church will be celebrated next year. Marsha Hystead has volunteered to be involved in planning for the Commemoration.

Motion by Jessica Olson to move to Executive Session. Second by Bud Trnka and unanimously passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Swanoski, Treasurer

Next meeting: Tuesday, September 21, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m. by Zoom
Devotion: Diane Swanoski

Attachment #1

Faith Formation Minister Report for August 2021
Nathan Holst

Events/small groups

-All on Sabbath for the summer

Worship

-I have been rotating in roles with helping lead liturgy, including prayers.

-I continue to provide music for the service as needed.

-I am set to preach again on Sept. 5th.

Youth

-We had 8 middle school youth and 3 high school youth for 2 different morning canoe outings on the St. Louis River at the end of July. We had a ton of fun together!

-Our trip through Camp Amnicon on the Brule River with 5 high school youth was an incredible time. It was just the kind of trip I'd hope for—safe, lots of fun, meaningful conversations, and personal growth. The kids are already asking about a trip for next year.

-I met with Sara Olson Dean to plan for 2nd year confirmation and we have all of what we need in place for the fall. We'll be contacting parents soon and starting to meet again in September. We still have some logistical details to figure out, but we hope to start confirmation mentors again, having caring adults be a part of the confirmation experience.

-In addition to 2nd year confirmation planning, Sara and I talked about some structural changes for this fall. I will attach a document which explains the rationale, but we would like to move OWL to 9th grade year (instead of current 8th grade) and confirmation to 10th and 11th grade. I talked through the proposal with Charlotte Franz and she supported the idea. At her suggestion, we have also reached out to parents of incoming 9th graders (who are most affected by the decision) to get feedback from them about the change. We received positive feedback about it, and we would like to move forward with the changes.

-I just canceled the Fenske trip because of the fires nearby. I will be working on a local alternative way for youth to connect in the next couple weeks.

-This week I am helping Sharon with VBS and supporting youth in their role as leaders.

OWL

-We are all set with facilitators for the fall and will be meeting with them to prepare in the next couple weeks. We plan to start up the program in late September and will be meeting at UUCD (unless we are not able to at that point because of covid). I have been in touch with folks at Pilgrim about the program and have also started gathering a list of potential facilitators who want to be trained in the next year.

Administrative/Other

-I have been meeting with Sergei Hanka and Katie Murphy's to do premarital counseling/wedding planning.

-I continue to co-coordinate the FB page with other staff.

- I have been writing birthday cards to members of the congregation. Thanks to Cindy M. for addressing them and getting them ready for me to sign and send.
 - Continuing to meet with staff on a weekly basis.
 - A good portion of my time each week goes to dealing with Gabriel fund requests.
 - I meet with a number of the teams of the congregation each month through zoom-- Acting for Justice, Dismantling Racism, Spiritual Journey, Adult Education, Worship and Arts, Shared Ministry, Climate Justice, and others more informally. Some of our teams will continue to meet in the summer, while others will take a break.
 - I continue in my racial justice organizing role as a part of SURJ (Showing Up for Racial Justice) in building relationships with leaders of color and indigenous leaders here in Duluth, as well as education work within the white community.
 - I continue in my role on the Amos Task Force, which is a conference group charged with helping the conference make a short term and long term plan to more deeply engaging with racial justice, spurred in response to the murder of George Floyd and the uprisings. The team has been asked to continue for another year, and I have indicated that I am willing to continue.
- Nathan Holst

Attachment #2

Recommendations from Peace Church Staff re: Fall Programming (September and October 2021)

Update: These recommendations were submitted to both the Covid Task Force and Worship and Arts Team. Their recommendations are included in red for easy reference.

On Monday, August 2, Peace United Church of Christ staff met to review and make recommendations regarding fall programming. We began with a brief overview of the past 15 months (see the last two pages of this report) and our impressions of the context for this fall's programming. The following recommendations reflect the staff's attention to the following:

- 1) Covid is not over and precautions are warranted (confirmed later in the day by reports and recommendations from CDC, Governor Waltz's office, and the next day by Mayor Emily Larson)
- 2) As a congregation we need to make program decisions that protect children not yet eligible for vaccines and respectful of youth and adults who choose not to be vaccinated, cannot be vaccinated, or for whom vaccinations do not provide adequate protection.
- 3) We need to make program decisions that encourage connections between and among congregants and friends of Peace.
- 4) The number of staff changes impacts staff capacity to lead and/or support programs.
- 5) These recommendations are for September and October and we recommend their review in mid-October for winter planning. By then we will have more experience with the impact of Covid on schools and we expect that new staff will be in place.

Wednesday Evening Programs

- 1) We recommend the dinners be suspended during September and October. This frees up Fellowship Hall as a larger space for children's programming and eliminates a gathering in which social distancing and masks are difficult. We discussed "food to go" options and concluded that the expense and effort without the benefit of community building suggested this was not a good option. (Confirmed by Covid Task Force)
- 2) We recommend that Kids Club be held in Fellowship Hall where social distancing and masking is possible. (Recommended as good idea by Covid Task Force)
- 3) We recommend that Youth Group be held in the Tent or in the Sanctuary where there is more room for social distancing and masking. Jim and Nathan discussed the timing of Youth Group and choir practice and concluded they could work out the use of the Sanctuary space. This might require a slight adjustment in the time of choir rehearsals. (Masks in sanctuary per covid task force)
- 4) We recommend that Confirmation classes be held in the Tent or in the Sanctuary where there is more room for social distancing and masking. (Masks in Sanctuary per covid task force.)
- 5) We recommend that small groups and teams consider using Zoom if possible. If in person meetings are necessary or desirable, plan for outdoor or social distanced space. (Recommended by covid task force.)

Use of Masks - Please note: The staff had much discussion and are not totally clear about some details about the application of these policies.

- 1) We recommend that groups using the building be required to use masks. (Recommendation by covid task force that everyone using the building wear masks.)
- 2) We recommend that policies re: masks and covid protocols be applied consistently. (Also a concern of the covid task force. Agreed.)
- 3) We recommend that volunteers or persons seeking services from the church wear masks while they are in the building. (Recommended by covid task force policy)
- 4) We recommend that within the office, staff members use their discretion regarding mask wearing. (Covid task force recommended that vaccinated staff members may use discretion when in the office; that when non-staff are in the office, staff should wear masks.)
- 5) From the covid task force: Food for any gathering should be restricted to outdoors and there should be no self-service. Servers should wear gloves and masks to serve individual portions or individually packaged foods.

Communications

- 1) We recommend that the twice weekly email updates continue.

2) We recommend that the Friday email update be available in print on Sunday mornings and thus replace the announcement sheet (pre-pandemic) inserted into the bulletin. (Worship and Arts agreed with this proposal.)

3) We recommend continued updating of website and FB page as a means of communicating with both members and guests.

Sunday morning worship and education

1) We recommend that basic livestream of the 10:30 worship service continue. (Tech team capacity is to stream two 10:30 services each month and the 8:30 Taize on the fourth Sunday of the month.)

2) We recommend that a Taize service be offered on the 4th Sunday of each month at 8:30. (Worship and arts agreed. Tech team will livestream.)

3) We recommend that nursery rooms be open for parents to use with restless children, but that childcare provided by the church continue to be suspended.

4) We recommend that the 8:30 service be temporarily suspended (other than the Taize service.) This recommendation came after some considerable discussion. We expect that some congregants, particularly those with children, may be hesitant to come back in person. We think having a single service will help those who do come in person to connect with each other. Offering one service rather than two reduces workload for service leaders and staff responsible for lining up volunteers. (Worship and Arts agreed, reluctantly and after some discussion. Also recommended that we see the fall as a “gradual re-opening” or “soft re-opening.”)

5) We recommend that Sharon plan Sunday School with input from parents about their preference for in person or Zoom. Given that Sunday school brings together children from various schools and requires volunteer teachers, Zoom might be a good option.

6) If Sunday School is in person, we recommend that Sharon plan for group learning and activities in the Fellowship Hall or larger spaces where social distancing is possible. (Affirmed by the covid task force. Masks required in indoor space.)

_____ 7) Whether on Zoom or in person, we recommend Sunday School at 9:30.

_____ 8) We recommend at least once a month all church events at 11:30 that can be held outside, in Fellowship Hall or in drive-by fashion.

9) We recommend that adult education on Sundays when no all church activities are scheduled be at 11:30. There may be the need for congregational discussions related to this interim period or there may be community events/issues to be presented. Whether Zoom or in person should be determined by the nature of the event.

- 10) **From the covid task force: Choir may be unmasked for one anthem in a service and**

speakers may be unmasked when actually leading worship. Otherwise, choir and worship leaders are to be masked like the rest of the congregation.

11) From the covid task force: Sanctuary seating should discourage people from sitting at the ends of the rows nearest the choir.

Sundays in September and October

Sept. 5 Labor Day weekend. Pride Sunday. Last Sunday in the tent.

Preacher: Nathan Holst. Liturgist: Gudrun Witrak

Pride parade in Superior

(Pride breakfast and community service is at First United Methodist)

Sept. 12 Rally Day (recommend 10:30 service only)

Preacher: Sarah Olson Dean, Liturgist: Nathan Holst

Story for all Ages—Sharon Dawson

the Bible as the Word; parents as spiritual teachers;

11:30 Dedication of Nat Hawley bench

11:30 Root beer floats and Bibles for Kindergartners and 3rd Graders

Sept. 19 (recommend 10:30 service only)

Sept. 26 (recommend 10:30 preaching service and 8:30 Taize service)

Oct. 3 World Communion Sunday (recommend 10:30 service only)

Neighbors in Need offering

Oct. 10 Stewardship Kick-off (recommend 10:30 service only)

11:30 Fall Festival

Oct. 17 (recommend 10:30 service only)

Oct. 24 (recommend 10:30 preaching service and 8:30 Taize)

Oct. 31 (recommend 10:30 service only)

Items not discussed

Card ministry—refer to Shared Ministry and Pamela Mittlefehldt

Passing the offering plates—Covid Task Force and/or Worship and Arts (will continue placing plate in the back; no passing during worship until other covid restrictions lifted)

Small groups formerly facilitated by staff such as Woman's Brown Bag Lunch. Are there others? --refer to Shared Ministry. Hybrid meetings and technology to improve them.

Protocol for food service at coffee hour and other events—Task Force and Food and Fellowship Team (covid task force recommends that coffee hour be held outside. Cathy

Ameel (shared ministry) recommends serving coffee hour rain or shine—use the tent space, especially if it is very hot or raining.)

Pandemic learning—and what went well

We began our planning by brainstorming what went well in the past 17 months—this list is not in any particular order. My impression was that we were a bit surprised by how much actually seemed to go well.

- Live Streaming worship (Kudos to a terrific tech team!)
- Giving—Folks have been generous to meet church and community needs
- Staff and volunteer flexibility
- Worship leadership (thank you, authorized clergy and others)
- Peace became a hub for connecting people even during time of physical separation
- Choir zoom
- Nancy's consistency in the office
- Increased frequency of congregational emails (Tuesdays and Fridays)
- Card ministry (thank you, Pamela M.)
- Staff stepping up to do whatever was needed
- Simplification—had to look at how and why we do things the way we do
- New possibilities for how to do things
- Mindfulness of visuals in worship (i.e. Sharon's cardboard kids)
- Music every Sunday (small groups, plexiglass dividers, etc.)
- Covid team guidance (thank you, thank you)
- Outdoor events and use of the Tent as auxiliary space
- Connections with other congregations also trying to figure things out
- Thinking "outside the box"
- Zoom

Pandemic learning—and what didn't go so well (or as well as we would have liked!)

And then there is this side—things that didn't go quite as well as we had hoped. There is no particular order to this list.

- Experience with first interim
- Hybrid meetings—awkward and difficult
- Hiccups with Zoom
- Covid related protocols
 - "outsiders" didn't know protocols church had adopted
 - People had different interpretations of protocols and when/to whom they applied
 - Hesitancy to speak up when protocols not followed
 - Inconsistency of application of protocols confused people
 - Confusion about locking building—interruptions to staff when people needed to come in
- Emotional challenges of pandemic
- Times of mourning or celebration difficult
- Weddings and funerals with reduced capacity
- Delays in funeral or memorial services
- Not as much opportunity for regular checking in with each other

- Increased interruptions to staff to meet community needs, especially use of Gabriel funds
- Confusion about whether and which service would be available by livestream
- Signage and website updates
- Fewer Sunday “regular giving” donations

Submitted on behalf of staff by Charlotte Frantz, Administrative consultant