

**Peace United Church of Christ
Coordinating Council Meeting
January 18, 2022 — 6:30 pm via Zoom**

Present: Moderator, Tom Hystead; Vice-Moderator, Joan Peterson; Treasurer, Dick Goese; Secretary, Diane Swanoski, 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, Mary Adams, Bud Trnka, and Matt Ryan, Rev. Jim Mitulski, Faith Formation Minister, Nathan Holst; Interim Pastoral Associate, Charlotte Frantz

Guest: Elise Courtright, Administrative Coordinator

Call to Order at 6:35 p.m. by Tom Hystead

Opening Meditation: Tom Hystead shares an excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. ([Sign up for future devotion](#))

Agenda Additions and Approval - Late addition to the agenda is Approval of UCC NGLI application for Nathan Holst (New Business). It is moved, seconded and unanimously agreed to approve the agenda including the application approval.

Approval of Consent Agenda (Financial statements, HR report, written committee representative reports, and COVID Task Force Update.) It is moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to approve the Consent Agenda as emailed.

Reports of Standing Committees

Finance Committee: Financial Reports submitted by Dick Goese. He shares:

- Income dropped during the last few months of the year.
- Several large year end expenses resulted in a \$24,000+ deficit. Some of these expenses include Rev. Charlotte Frantz's salary, Nathan Holst's CPE, and visit/moving expenses for Pastor Jim.
- Cash flow is still OK thanks to large balances of designated funds.

Human Resources Committee: Written report by LeAnne Ventrella (Attachment #1).

Nominating Committee – N/A

Written Committee Representative Reports

Christian Education: Written report submitted by Penny Cragun (Attachment #2).

Christian Spiritual Life: Written report submitted by Susan Larson Kidd (Attachment #3).

Additional comments:

- There is no one remaining on the Health and Wellness Task Force. Susan Larson Kidd and Monica Liddle have offered to try and get it started up again. Bud Trnka offers to help. There will be a request for new members in the Peace Bell and through email.

Acting for Justice Hub: Written report submitted by Monica Liddle (Attachment #4).

Christian Stewardship: Written report submitted by Dave Courtright (Attachment #5).

Additional comments -

- Thank you to Dave Courtright who has been putting in a lot of time helping out with custodian duties while Dan Shepard, custodian, is out due to injury.
- Church members have also been very supportive in assisting with custodial duties during Dan's absence. Cleaning duties are currently scheduled with volunteers until the end of January.
- It is suggested to consider maintenance responsibility in the Daycare lease, which is different than, and in addition to custodial duties (which are currently Peace Church's responsibility).

Minister's Reports

Rev. Mitulski - Interim Minister

- Christmas services had record attendance.
- Thank you to Susan Larson Kidd for her tech support.
- We are currently in the season of Epiphany.
- Pastor Jim has led two Talk, Listen, and Pray sessions. Some good information has come from the meetings and it has been a good opportunity for folks to ask questions and provide feedback. There is a need for more conversations, which Pastor Jim is considering. Lack of personal connection has been a major issue.
- Peace Church has had a good active appearance at several recent social justice events in the community.
- February is Black History Month.
- Lent will begin in March and will include midweek services.
- There has been a COVID outbreak within our staff this week.
- There is currently a COVID spike in Duluth - twice the infection rate of any major city. All church activities will be on Zoom or livestream over the next two weeks. Some activities have been postponed, including confirmation and choir. The next two Sunday worship services will be online only - live streamed and recorded.
- It is moved and seconded to postpone the Congregational Meeting until Sunday, February 13th. The motion passes unanimously.
- The office will be closed for the next two weeks. Charlotte Frantz offers to have her email used for church contact during this time.
- Pastor Jim will be offering a Zoom prayer meeting for anyone interested.

Nathan Holst - Faith Formation Minister - Written report Attachment #6. Additional comments by Nathan -

- Nathan has been meeting with Peace Church parents of children and youth. Many parents are staying away because of COVID. There is a need for safety and reconnection.
- Gabriel Fund - There has been discussion of increased capacity (including increased capacity for staff) with other churches, to spread out responsibilities and distribution of Gabriel funds. Churches are reignited in their reinvestment in this mission and service to our community.
- **Action item** - The Council is asked to support Nathan in his application for NGLI (Next Generation Leadership Initiative). NGLI is a five year program for young clergy to help support them and give them leadership training. Two week-long training institutes for

continuing education are required each year. A motion is made by Susan Larson Kidd to approve the application and support Nathan in this process. Bud Trnka seconds the motion and it passes unanimously.

Charlotte Frantz-Interim Pastoral Assoc. Minister - Written report Attachment #7.

Additional comments by Charlotte -

- Charlotte has been working on following up with authorized ministers in our congregation concerning their covenants within the church and the greater community. Charlotte and Pastor Jim will meet by Zoom with these ministers to ask some questions and require some accountability. Retired clergy may also be included. The goal is to help clergy feel more supported by our church as they carry out their ministries in the community.
- Jim Soderberg's funeral will be held in-person at Peace Church within the next couple of weeks.

Old Business

COVID Task Force Update

- The COVID Task Force will meet again Wed. 1/19.
- See recommendations for the next couple of weeks in Pastor Jim's comments.

Stewardship Campaign Update

- Letters have gone out to members asking to consider increasing their pledge or consider pledging if they haven't yet.
- The Stewardship Team will meet on Thursday, 1/20 to discuss pledges.
- The Team is asked to update the Council after their meeting.

2022 Proposed Budget

- Council budget discussion is postponed until after the Stewardship Team meeting.
- The Sunday, January 23rd adult forum about the budget needs to be rescheduled.

New Business:

Council Retreat Planning -

- The Council Retreat scheduled for Saturday, January 22nd, is postponed until Saturday, February 12th, from 9:30-noon by Zoom.

Establish a Brokerage Account (A/I)

- Dick Goese, Treasurer, has researched setting up a brokerage account for Peace Church to receive stocks. Such an account could be set up with Morgan Stanley.
- Pastor Jim will check with the United Church Fund regarding their brokerage services and fees.
- There is a motion by Dave Courtright to authorize the Finance Committee to establish a brokerage account in the name of Peace Church. The motion is seconded by Joan Peterson and unanimously approved.

Motion to move to Executive Session -

- It is moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to move to executive session.

Adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

Next meetings:

January 23, 2022 - 2022 Budget Preview - postponed
TBD - Council Budget discussion
Saturday, February 12 - Coordinating Council Retreat 9:30-noon on Zoom
Sunday, February 13 - Congregational Meeting
February 15, 2022 - Coordinating Council Meeting ([sign-up for devotion](#))

Attachment #1

HR Committee Report to Coordinating Council January 2022

The HR Committee met on January 4, 2022:

Proposed HR Budget

- Committee was appreciative and thanks the Council for accepting the recommended increases in staff compensation

Employee Leave Balances

- Reviewing employee vacation and sick leave balances. In early 2021, the HR Committee learned that staff were not accruing and carrying over vacation and sick leave as outlined in the Employee Handbook. Options are being discussed to ensure procedures are followed and there is equity for employees.

Employee Handbook

- A review is being completed of the Employee Handbook and there will be proposed changes to submit to Council following an upcoming HR meeting.

Dan's Sick Leave

- It appears Dan will have sufficient sick leave and vacation to cover his medical leave. It may be possible that he is able to return to work with limited responsibilities as he heals which would allow for less need to use his leave

Staff Training

- Discussed Pastor Jim's desire to provide of providing regular staff training sessions throughout the year

Office 365 Peace HR Account

- Thanks to the efforts of Dave Courtright, HR is now able confidentially share materials on the Peace Office 365 account. The account is only accessible to the Pastor Jim, the HR Committee Chair and the bookkeeper.

Request for Council Discussion/Action: None

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Ventrella

HR Committee Chair

Attachment #2

**Christian Education Report to Coordinating Council
January 2022**

Adult Education: The adult forums are continuing at 9:30 between services. The scheduled forums for January are:

- Jan. 2nd: A Common New Beginning: Baptism, led by Pastor Jim
- Jan. 9th: Resources We Hold in Common: The 2022 Budget Preview ●
- Jan. 16th: MLK Letter from Birmingham Jail, led by Pastor Jim
- Jan. 23rd: Searching Together: Roe vs Wade
- Jan. 30th: Our Common Connection: Covenant, led by Pastor Charlotte

The first two adult forums in February will be focused on understanding immigration and the Peace Church Circle of Support for Afghan newcomers, and on learning about culture in Afghanistan. Pastor Charlotte will be facilitating these sessions. The forum on February 20th will focus on Black History and on February 27th on Lent.

The team noted that on January 9th the forum was held in the Fellowship Hall and that this space felt safer. When the Fellowship Hall is available it might be preferable to meet there. We also will recruit volunteers to record on their phone with Facebook Live to provide remote access for persons who choose not to attend in person.

Faith Formation/Spiritual Journey Team

February is Black History month and the film “Good Trouble” will be shown and discussed.

As we move into Lent and a time of renewal, members and friends will be invited to pray together either on zoom or in person, using either “Lent of Liberation” or “Forty Day Journey with Maya Angelou” as devotional guides. This will be a chance to come together in meaningful small groups, with the hope that we might have 100 people joining in prayer. There will be various time options offered.

The Sharing our Spiritual Journey group will meet on January 3rd and 17th at 7:00 PM via Zoom. This group provides a space to reflect and share about each person’s calling, joys and challenges. The team is also thinking about a discernment committee and perhaps a “covid vent” group!

The team is proposing to gather all teams involved in faith formation (Adult Ed and Children’s Ministry along with Spiritual Journey) on February 22nd from 6:00-7:00 to discuss how these teams may more fully integrate their efforts.

Children’s Ministry - No report

Respectfully submitted, Penny Cragun

Attachment #3

Council Report for Christian Spiritual Life January 2022

Food and Fellowship

This committee has not met and had no events mainly due to COVID restrictions. Also, coffee hour was suspended for most of the month of January with tentative coffee hour planned for 1/30th on the annual meeting date depending on COVID restrictions at that time.

Health and Wellness

Sue Isernhagen reached out to all the folks who were on this committee's list indicating that there is a need to start offering some education around many health and wellness topics. Most of the members replied to her stating they were no longer on the committee and the others just did not respond. Monica Little and Susan Larson Kidd would like to co-chair this committee and send out a request to join via email blasts and the Peace Bell.

Shared Ministry

Shared Ministry committee met on January 5th, 2022. They worked on details surrounding the Inquirer's classes.

Worship and Arts

The committee met and discussed topics such as changes in the worship service, Black History month, the theme for lent from a specific reading provided by Pastor Jim, creating a Praise service, having the choir sing from the front of the church, and the success of the Renewal of Baptism.

Tech Team updates: The tech team continues to stream every 10:30 Sunday service. Susan Larson Kidd trained the team on video work and implementation on Saturday the 15th. The speakers in the sanctuary are scheduled to be moved this month. A new handheld mic was ordered to replace the one that died recently.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Larson Kidd 1/15/22

Susan Larson Kidd

Attachment #4

Acting for Justice Report from January 9, 2022 Meeting For Peace Coordinating Council: January 18, 2022 meeting

1. Report—Events and Activities

- A. Discussion of Special Funds: PK Fund, Jubilee, Gabriel, Sanctuary. Current balances of these funds are approx: PK Fund: \$49,000. Jubilee Fund: \$46,000. Sanctuary Fund: \$8,000.
- B. Gabriel Fund is in process of change in fiscal management, from Peace to St. Paul's. St. Paul's have capacity for more staff to spend more time on managing the program than we do at

Peace currently. Dick Goese, Charlotte, Nathan, Patricia Benson (St. Paul's) met in January to discuss plans. Also, work being done to get more churches more involved. See Nathan and/or Charlotte's notes to Council for more details.

- C. Recommended by Rev. Jim: Congregation needs education on special funds, also how to access and support them.
- D. Afghan Support Circle moving ahead, near to send application to US State Dept. to become official Circle.
- E. MLK event, virtual, local, Peace contributed \$200 to local NAACP to support the event.

2. Discussion needed by the Council: Questions, concerns, future plans, etc.

We may need to discuss the Gabriel Fund change, to St. Paul's.

3. Action needed by the Council: Motion from the Committee

NA

Attachment #5

Christian Stewardship report for January 2021

Stewardship Committee

This month the stewardship team has been working on preparing and sending additional letters to reach out to the congregation and ask for help in meeting our pledge goals. After much discussion and wordsmithing, two letters have been sent to households depending on pledge status to ask for further pledges for those that are able. Appeals have also gone out through emails, and members were present at the adult forum to help explain the current status of pledges and what is needed.

Property Team

The main concern of the property team this month has been filling in on maintenance and cleaning around the church while Dan recovers from his wrist injury. Elise has been coordinating numerous volunteers to tackle routine cleaning around the church, Jim Pospisil has tackled much of the shoveling, all staff has pitched in with cleaning and setup for meetings and events. These efforts are greatly appreciated, and have allowed us to get by only hiring a fill-in for the daily daycare cleaning. I've been trying to cover all the maintenance things Dan usually does for us – and the very long list of repairs from fixing toilets (with parts Dan makes sure we have on hand) to changing lightbulbs and checking our sump pumps has reiterated just how lucky we are to have him on staff.

No action needed by council.

Submitted by Dave Courtright

Attachment #6

Faith Formation Minister Report for January 2022

Nathan Holst

Events/small groups

- I've been engaging parents of elementary age kids in a series of feedback/vision sessions (see more in children section)
- I'm planning an all ages tubing event at Mont du Lac on Saturday, Feb. 5th

Worship

- I continue to lead story for all ages on Sunday morning.
- I continue to provide music for the service as needed.
- Charlotte, Jim, and I have been rotating roles on Sunday mornings in leading the worship
- I'll be preaching this Sunday

Youth

- We continue to be a really sweet group of about 10 youth. The first 2 youth groups in January we focused on MLK (leading up to MLK Day), gathering from the youth all of what they knew about MLK and the Southern Freedom Movement (Civil Rights Movement), watching videos from leaders of the movement, and talking about what we heard. I also gave a copy of John Lewis' graphic novel "March" to every youth (first book of the 3 part series). The youth were very excited to start reading, and some even asked immediately about the 2nd and 3rd book.
- Confirmation continues in the fireside room on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. Sara Olson Dean and I rotate facilitation of a curriculum using the book Manna and Mercy. Having the mentors there once a month has been a really wonderful addition and adds a lot to the conversation together.

Children

- The pageant was a great success! Our kids had a great time and the congregation seemed to really love having it. We had close to 20 kids involved.
- Because of covid surge, our numbers have been down the last couple weeks with Sunday school. I am grateful to Diane Swanoski and Pat Nelson for leading Sunday School while I led the parent feedback sessions.
- I have now led 2 out of 3 parent feedback/vision sessions with parents of elementary age kids and it has been such rich and helpful conversation. We've had about 7 or 8 parents at each session. I'm learning (or confirming) that a lot of families have been staying away because of covid and feel disconnected or out of the rhythm of coming regularly, but want ways to reconnect once this wave of covid surge is over (one family even offered to have a group out to their house for snowshoeing and a campfire, which is great!). These conversations have increased parent connection and investment, and there's some great ideas that I want to follow up on in the coming months. After the last session this Thursday, I plan to send out some of the core feedback to parents so they can hear their synthesized collective feedback. I'll share that with council next month.
- I have a meeting with the Unitarian Universalist congregation this week to talk about doing a Peace Village (as our VBS), an interfaith partnership that focuses on what different faith traditions have to say about peace. We will brainstorm other partners to start planning for the summer.

OWL

-OWL continues to run well. We may need to pause the program for a couple weeks with this covid surge (depending on what our congregations decide), but we hope to continue as planned once we're past the surge. We had a fantastic LGBTQ panel last Sunday, which I coordinated.

Administrative/Other

-We continue conversations about the Gabriel Project (see additional report sent separately). Charlotte, Dick, and I met recently with Patricia Benson (and one person) from St. Paul's to talk about the fund. Out of that meeting came the plan to meet with involved congregations (about 7-8 churches). We met this last Thursday with many of the pastors of involved churches and we are excited to be connecting again (in the past pastors used to check in about the fund regularly). We will meet again in about a month to talk about further refining the purpose of the fund and increasing capacity together to help serve folks in need in our community.

-I would like to reapply for the NGLI (next generation leadership initiative) that the UCC offers. The council supported me applying last year, and though I was not chosen on my first application, the leaders in charge of the application process encouraged me to apply again. I will need our moderator's signature on a congregational form, indicating our leadership's support in me applying again. The deadline for this document is Feb. 1st. If chosen, I would start an orientation process in August of 2022 and officially start in January of 2023. It is a 5 year program and would provide me 2 weeks of free continuing education each year (that would benefit my leadership and consequently Peace Church).

-I continue to write birthday cards for youth and children.

-Continuing to meet with staff on a weekly basis.

-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.

-Nathan Holst

Attachment #7

Report to the Co-ordinating Council
Rev. Charlotte Frantz, Interim Pastoral Associate

January 17, 2022

Since the Co-ordinating Council's December meeting, it seems my position as a part of the pastoral staff is becoming increasingly accepted and integrated into life at Peace Church. Bulletins and the newsletter list me as interim but we are no longer using the term "bridge interim." I am undertaking more responsibilities on behalf of the pastoral staff and have been asked to submit information to be included on the staff page of the website. I understand that this position is contingent on budgetary discussions and decisions, but in the meantime, these are indications of a continuing evolution.

I participate regularly in worship planning. As we move into in person worship at 8:30, I've taken responsibility for figuring out needed support for ushers and lay worship leaders. I contributed several articles in the January Peace Bell on behalf of the program staff. I continue to staff the Dismantling Racism Team and the Immigrant Welcoming Team. I assisted with preparation for the Inquirer's class and hosted a zoom gathering of authorized ministers who are members of Peace. I've been part of the

discussions regarding covid safety protocols. I am the designated “back up” staff person when Gudrun is gone and recently wrote up a summary of procedures related to planning memorial services at Peace.

I expect that in the next month or two you will receive updated covenants from authorized ministers who are members of Peace, so here is a bit of explanation: In the United Church of Christ, the term “authorized” is used to denote those members who are approved by a Conference or Association to engage in professional ministry. Authorization can be by ordination or license. Here at Peace we have 12 authorized ministers of the United Church of Christ and one Presbyterian. This includes three of us on staff.

Authorized ministers who are actively serving in ministry are expected to be members of a local congregation where they are supported and encouraged in their ministry and where they are also accountable for that ministry. Clergy serving a local congregation are in what the United Church of Christ calls a three-way covenant: an agreement between themselves, the local church they serve, and the Conference or Association in which they are authorized. Clergy called and employed to settings other than local congregations are expected to be in four way covenants: agreements between themselves, their calling/employing body, the local church, and the Conference or Association.

The Co-ordinating Council at Peace has been the representative body of the local church involved in approving four way covenants. Historically, Peace has been faithful to the creation of initial four-way covenants when needed. The conversation with authorized ministers last week included discussion about how Peace might fulfill its covenantal relationships and whether the covenants are current.

Some clergy, particularly retired clergy who are still active in ministry, do not seem to be required to be in either a three way or four way covenant. I want to raise some questions about this with our Conference Church and Ministry Committee.

I offer this background as a part of my report to you in preparation for material that may come to you in the near future.

Lastly, given the increase in my responsibilities on staff, it is becoming more desirable to work in the office instead of from home as was the case when I began as interim bridge minister. The staff and I are trying to figure out how to create some personal work space for me.

Thank you for this opportunity to be a part of the staff here at Peace.