

**Peace United Church of Christ  
Coordinating Council Meeting  
February 15, 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; Stewardship Representative: Dave Courtright, At Large members; Jessica Olson, Mary Adams, Bud Trnka, and Matt Ryan, Interim Minister, Rev. Jim Mitulski; Faith Formation Minister, Nathan Holst; Interim Pastoral Associate, Charlotte Frantz

Absent: Monica Liddle, Acting for Justice Representative

Guest: Marsha Hystead, 150th Anniversary Committee Chair

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

Opening Meditation: Diane Swanoski shares excerpts from *The Book of Joy* by Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams. ([Sign up for future devotion](#))

Agenda Additions and Approval - Addition of 150th Anniversary overview by Marsha Hystead. Written reports by Nathan Holst and Charlotte Frantz are added to the consent agenda. The HR Report will be given orally. The Stewardship Report will also be shared orally. It is moved and seconded to accept the agenda as presented. Unanimously passed.

Approval of Consent Agenda (including financial reports, written committee representative reports, Faith Formation Minister and Interim Pastoral Associate reports, COVID Task Force Update, and January Council and Special Meeting Minutes.) It is moved, seconded, and unanimously passed to approve the Consent Agenda as emailed.

**150th Celebration Report** - Marsha Hystead, 150th Celebration Chair

- The 150th Anniversary Celebration Committee consists of twelve members, including some from the Historical Committee.
- Marsha reveals the logo for the 150th anniversary.
- Goals of the year-long celebration are:
  - To reconnect and re-energize our Peace Church family.
  - Reach out to our community and see how Peace Church has been connected to Duluth and the greater community.
- We will celebrate and share significant milestones in the history of Peace Church. Marsha shares a draft of events being planned.
- A centerpiece of the celebration will be “Our Peace Stories” - a gathering of stories of Peace members.
- The committee will continue gathering the history of the 150 years.
- Another focus of the committee will be communications, including boosting our social media presence.
- It is anticipated to include a Speaker Series, featuring 1-3 nationally recognized speakers (possibly grant funded).
- Anniversary swag will be available.
- A proposed 150th anniversary celebration budget of \$10,000 is included in the 2022 proposed budget.

## Reports of Standing Committees

**Finance Committee:** Financial Reports submitted by Dick Goese. Dick notes:

- There is only one month's worth of data to share.
- January Income is behind that of last year.

**Human Resources Committee:** No written report. Joan Peterson shares:

- Pastor Jim and Leanne Ventrella, HR Chair, met with each staff member regarding the new time sheets.
- It was questioned whether unused sick pay is accumulated and paid out, it is not.
- Thank you to Leanne Ventrella and the HR committee for their excellent and dedicated work with the staff - it is a high expectation for volunteer roles. We may need to consider outsourcing this work in the future if they no longer want to do it.
- Staff professionalism training is being planned. It is anticipated to extend this training to all church leadership.
- Rose Feriancek, Bookkeeper, is getting additional Quickbooks training.
- The HR Committee is also working on wording and updates to the employee manual.

**Nominating Committee –**

- Transition Team - Mary Adams and Penny Cragun
  - The purpose of the Transition Team is to help the church define who it is.
  - Transition Team members must understand the transition process and have continued to be present during this transition time.
  - Current Transition members are: Veronica Langer, Ezra Shomberg, Mike Shrage, and Cathy Ameel.
  - Mary Adams makes a motion to add two more members to the Transition Team: Mary Junila and Bob Stevens. The motion is seconded by several Council members and unanimously passed.
  - It is discussed to include representatives of the LGBTQ and parents of young children communities. Please forward any suggestions to Mary Adams, Penny Cragun, or Matt Ryan.
- Nomination Committee - Tom Hystead
  - It is time to start thinking about new members for the Coordinating Council to replace those whose term will be ending in June.
  - According to the bylaws, the Nomination Committee consists of the current Moderator, Vice Moderator, and three more Council members. Their purpose is to determine open positions, and to vet and contact potential candidates.
  - Jessica Olson and Matt Ryan volunteer to be on the Nomination Committee.
  - Council members are asked to think about potential new members and forward names to a Nominating Committee member.
  - The possibility of mentoring for the Treasurer and Secretary positions is also discussed.

## Written Committee Representative Reports

**Christian Education:** Written report submitted by Penny Cragun (Attachment #1).

Comments by Penny:

- Faith formation and Adult Education Teams will be meeting together so each knows what the other is doing and to envision what faith formation at Peace Church looks like together.

**Christian Spiritual Life:** Written report submitted by Susan Larson Kidd (Attachment #2).

Additional comments:

- Action item - Bud Trnka, Monica Liddle, and Susan Larson Kidd met to revitalize and co-chair the Health and Wellness Team. They have proposed a new purpose for the Committee: To enhance our faith and spirituality through developing deeper appreciation for our bodies and the earth (see Attachment #3). Joan Peterson makes a motion to approve the new Health and Wellness Team purpose as proposed. Matt Ryan seconds the motion and it is unanimously passed. They will also work on recruiting new members for their team.
- The Health and Wellness Team will connect with other church teams and committees.
- Question for clarification: What is the difference between committees and teams in the church's organizational structure? The church bylaws indicate that there are four permanent Committees within the church structure - Christian Education, Christian Stewardship, Christian Spiritual Life, and Acting for Justice Hub. Teams are organized and operate within the four Committees. The newly formed subgroups, such as the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) and the Transition Team report to the Council.

**Acting for Justice Hub:** No written report submitted.

**Christian Stewardship:** No report submitted.

Dave Courtright reports:

- There were no Stewardship or Property Committee meetings this month. A Property Committee meeting will need to be scheduled to discuss how to work within the 2022 budget to accomplish what needs to be done at this time.
- Volunteers have been helping with custodial duties during Dan Shepard's absence. Pastor Jim recognizes that David and Elise Courtright have worked tirelessly to keep our building clean and in repair during this time.
- There are currently only three members on the Property Committee: David Courtright, Bud Trnka, and Denise Perry. They would like to have more members.

## Minister's Reports

### Rev. Mitulski - Interim Minister

- What transition for Peace Church during 2022 looks like:
  - A complete set of Talk, Listen, and Pray sessions, along with Sunday Connect sessions, have helped identify what work needs to be done.
  - Although we cannot reconstitute the Peace Church of 2020, there is a longing to recapture what it was.
  - The overarching dynamic that has created the most change during the past couple of years is the pandemic.
  - We need to look not only at who we are now, but who we want to be (and who we would like to attract).
  - Ongoing/upcoming tasks during transition include:
    - initiate a second wave of Talk, Listen, and Pray Sessions
    - plan and conduct a collective healing service
    - review and develop a new church profile
    - plan and offer a diversity and equity retreat for church leadership
    - audit the congregation using *Holy Cow*, to determine who we are and who we want to be.

- The Transition Team and Search Committee are not the same, however, there may be some overlap in members.
- We are developing a pool of students to train for IT help. This will allow us more flexibility and more people understanding how our programming technology works (live streaming, recording, sound, video, etc.)
- There has been some innovative programming for Black History Month.
- Lent and Holy Week is being planned, possibly in conjunction with other churches.
- Pastor Jim is trying to navigate the pace of change that is appropriate for Peace Church.
- Pastor Jim met with former Pastor Kathy Nelson. Discussion included how Peace Church grew during her tenure - by taking risks, being edgy, and stepping out on issues of meaning and social justice.
- Pastor Jim commends Peace Church staff members for continuing this “stepping out and taking risks”, especially during this time of pandemic -
  - Rev.Charlotte Frantz, Interim Pastoral Associate, for her tireless work organizing the Afghan Refugee Resettlement Project and the Peace Church Duluth Welcome Circle
  - Nathan Holst, Faith Formation Minister, held focus groups for parents of young children to discuss what they want now and in the future from Peace Church for their children and families’ spiritual learning/opportunities.
- We commend and thank Pastor Jim for moving here and helping us during this transition. We appreciate how he balances the old with the new, helping us move forward.

**Nathan Holst - Faith Formation Minister** - Written report Attachment #4.

Additional comments by Nathan -

- Focus groups with parents of young children had 5-7 parents in each session. Themes that surfaced include:
  - Appreciation of the values of community, inclusion, and vulnerability at Peace Church.
  - COVID is a big reason for non-attendance.
  - Parents are looking for opportunities to reconnect with church.
  - There is a lot of energy around music, puppets, and drama. Two Peace members have volunteered to create 30-minute portals based on these themes.
  - Other themes include: how do we talk about God, service learning opportunities, and children’s church attendance visioning.
- There is good energy in youth programming and interest, as well.
- There is conversation around men’s/women’s retreats - if and how this can happen.
- Gabriel Fund management may be addressed at the next Council meeting. Questions include: Do we want to continue being the financial part, but spread around the capacity needs? How do we share finances? Who has ownership?

**Charlotte Frantz-Interim Pastoral Assoc. Minister** - Written report Attachment #5.

Additional comments by Charlotte -

- Charlotte appreciates and enjoys being included in the pastoral work of the church.

- Charlotte officiated at Jim Soderberg's funeral. She compiled some of Jim's thoughtful writing and Facebook posts in a booklet titled *A Walk in Autumn* which is available in the church office.
- Charlotte appreciates having a dedicated workspace in the corner of the conference room. Much appreciation to John Vigen, Sara Cedars, and Warren Post for making this possible.
- Four Afghanistan refugees have arrived in Duluth. The young women are currently staying at the McCabe Renewal Center. The application that the resettlement team created is going to be used as a model for other groups - many thanks to Terri Shannon for her work on this. Other members of the Peace Church Duluth Welcome Circle are Gary Boelhower, Lyle Shannon, Penny Cragun, Mollie Stapleton Clark, Gayle and Jack Kelly, Cyndi Brown, and Charlotte Frantz. New community relationships/partnerships are being formed through this mission, including the Benedictine Sisters, members of First United Methodist Church, members of UUCD, the Islamic Center of the Twin Ports, and the League of Women Voters. Both the College of St. Scholastica and UMD have been in conversation as well.

## **Old Business**

### **COVID Task Force Update -**

- The COVID Task Force will meet next Wednesday to discuss reopening.

### **Leadership Retreat -**

- The Leadership retreat is being rescheduled until it can be in-person. We are looking at sometime in March.

## **New Business**

### **150th Anniversary Committee Report - Marsha Hystead**

- See report at beginning of meeting.

### **Health & Wellness Team - Bud Trnka and Susan Larson Kidd -**

- See report with Christian Spiritual Life report.

### **Congregational Meeting Details -**

- The meeting will be following 10:30 worship on Sunday, February 20. It will be both in-person and livestreamed.
- The agenda includes review and approval of the proposed 2022 budget and a transition report by Pastor Jim.
- Voting for those online will be done using a doodle poll. Elise Courtright can set up the doodle poll and Susan Larson Kidd will put the link into the livestream broadcast.

### **Future meeting Agenda Items -**

- Peace Church 4-way Covenant with Tom Liddle will be discussed at our next meeting.

Adjourn at 9:03 p.m.

Next Meetings:

Sunday, 2/20 - Congregational Meeting following 10:30 worship

Tuesday, 3/15 - March Coordinating Council Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, Diane Swanoski, Secretary

### **Attachment #1**

Christian Education Report to Coordinating Council  
February 2022

#### **Faith Formation**

The team has been exploring its purpose, and it seems in this interim time it would be wise to combine with the Adult Ed team. This consolidated team could be a way to work with Pastor Jim to bring some of what he is proposing to fruition in this interim time. The members of the Adult Ed team will be asked to meet with the Faith Formation Team starting in March.

For February and Black History month, there are two important events happening: watching the documentary "John Lewis: Good Trouble" and an intergenerational discussion of the graphic novel "March, Volume 1" on February 24th at 6:00 pm.

Themes for the coming months are:

March: Women's History

April: Poetry

May: Asian American History

June: Pride

Prayer groups meeting at different times and in both Zoom and in person modes will be offered during Lent, with the option of two different devotional books. Prayer leaders/facilitators are needed.

The Zoom Connect sessions have been fruitful, as have Pastor Jim's Talk, Listen, Pray sessions. A retreat day during Lent is being planned. It will be held at the Monastery on a Saturday from 10:00-5:00, with Peace members/friends joining the sisters for prayers/worship at the beginning and closing of the retreat. There will be a program in between.

This team is proposing an all faith formation meeting to make sure that all the teams are aware of what each is doing, and to integrate planning and offerings through the different age groups. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 22nd from 6:00-7:00.

#### **Adult Education**

This team is in agreement that in this interim time we join the Faith Formation team. The next combined meeting will be Tuesday March 8th at 7:30 am. We also agreed to the proposed all faith formation meeting on February 22nd. The team reviewed the monthly themes for each month and also discussed the Lenten retreat that will be held in April at the Monastery. This team is in support of holding a retreat.

Because of the restrictions related to Covid, in person forums were canceled the last Sundays in January as Peace moved to remote worship services only. Two successful Zoom sessions on Welcoming Afghan Newcomers have been held in February, with Pastor Charlotte facilitating. The first on Feb. 6th was "Immigration 101" and on February 13th Pastor Charlotte was joined by Dr. Kahil Dokhanchi and the pastor and a member of a church in Wausau, WI involved in resettling Afghan newcomers. Remaining forums in February will be on Black History month on the 20th led by Pastor Jim, and on the 27th Pastor Charlotte and the members of the Peace support circle will discuss the process of forming a support circle and welcoming Afghan newcomers to Peace and the Duluth community.

In March the theme will be Women's History, and possible women speakers include Sister Lois, the artist Janet McKenzie, and Deb Holman, who is CHUM's street outreach person. The team will meet again on Feb. 15th at 3:00 to complete planning for March.

### **Children's Ministry**

The team is excited about ideas but still limited by covid, as some are ready to come together in person and others are not yet ready. Nathan has met with parents and found that parents want to connect; he is exploring possible times for a once a month Zoom connect. Using puppets to connect with the kids was proposed and Kelli and Katey are willing to work with Nathan on this. An afternoon outing at Nathan and Veronica's was proposed. Making and delivering bags for Easter is another upcoming possible project. Children's Church in Lent or after Easter is also a possibility. Further in the future might be Wednesday night dinners with singing and drama and a service learning/volunteering project. Nathan will work on a plan to organize some of these ideas and then he will reach out to the team to complete planning for March and April.

The Children's Ministry team is on board with meeting with the faith formation team on Feb. 22nd.

## **Attachment #2**

Council Report for Christian Spiritual Life  
February 2022

### **Food and Fellowship**

This committee has not met and had no events due to COVID restrictions. Coffee hour has also been postponed until further notice.

### **Health and Wellness**

Bud, Monica and Susan met to draft committee purpose and initial plan. Sharing with council for approval 2/13/22 meeting.

### **Shared Ministry**

Shared Ministry folks set May 4th and 11th for the next Inquirer's class. May also slotted for worship for Confirmation Sunday and New Member Sunday. Graduation Sunday is June 5<sup>th</sup>. They also began to discuss more ways to get new people to attend and connect, including the increased use of social media.

### **Worship and Arts**

The committee met and discussed aspects of streaming services, changes in service structure, and lent ideas. Three services will be held for Ash Wednesday, although the evening service will be a full service and streamed. Wednesday evenings during lent may be Holden Evening Prayer services.

**Tech Team updates:** The speakers were relocated in the sanctuary improving sound quality and articulation. Changes then were made to the amps and therefore, adjustments to the sound board are also in progress. Overall, much improvement in all areas. The tech team continues to meet, learn, and move in house and on stream sound and video forward.

Action item: Health and Wellness Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Larson Kidd 2/13/22

Susan Larson Kidd

### **Attachment #3**

Proposal for new Health and Wellness Committee  
From Susan Larson Kidd, Bud Trnka and Monica Liddle

Because the Peace Health and Wellness Committee has been inactive for an extended period of time, and because we believe the need for revitalizing this committee exists, and we are motivated to re-invent it, we propose to initiate a new Health and Wellness Committee.

The **purpose** of this committee shall be:

***To enhance our spirituality and faith through developing deeper appreciation for our bodies and the Earth.***

Susan Larson Kidd, Bud Trnka and Monica Liddle will co-chair this committee and will invite other members of Peace to join. All Peace Church members will have the opportunity to participate in future activities.

Initial Actions:

To engage the Church, the first activity will be a Lenten Pilgrimage. An Earth Day engagement, in collaboration with other committees, will be the second committee endeavor.

### **Attachment #4**

Faith Formation Minister Report for February 2022  
Nathan Holst

#### **Events/small groups**

- I'm planning an all ages tubing event at Mont du Lac on Saturday, Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>
- I will be starting to promote the Men's retreat this next month, which we plan to hold at Clearwater retreat center in late April.

#### **Worship**

- I meet with Pastor Jim, music Jim, and Charlotte each week to plan the services
- 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 preached in January and plan to continue a pattern of preaching every 2-3 months

#### **Youth**

-As you know, we had to pause our in person activities this last month. After a couple week of no youth group, I gathered a few youth for 2 consecutive Wednesdays for a night hike at Hartley at our usual time on Wednesday night. We had a lot of fun together and can use that as a back up plan if we have to take a break from inside in person gathering in the future.

-Confirmation had to break this last month because of covid. We'll be resuming in person confirmation this Wednesday and then starting to prepare for our confirmation retreat in early May, followed by confirmation Sunday later that month. We have noticed a drop in participation because of covid, but there remains a small core group coming each session.

-I am planning to engage parents of middle school and high school youth (as well as one session with youth) in March with similar feedback sessions that I did with parents of elementary kids.

### **Children**

-Sunday School continued on zoom throughout the in-person break. We actually doubled our numbers because of a couple families participating on zoom that normally wouldn't have come. We'll be moving back to in-person this Sunday.

-I completed my parent feedback sessions this last month. We've had about 7 or 8 parents at each session. I'll be sharing some of the themes in our next Peace Bell:

-Parents want to nurture in our kids the values community, inclusion, vulnerability

-Covid has been challenging and many families feel disconnected; because of that, parents want:

-More opportunities to connect—gatherings outdoors with food and/or fires (as covid allows)

-Lots of energy around more music, puppets, and drama, with short opportunities for stillness (maybe a bit of yoga) and gratitude

-Want kids to know what it means to be Christian; be able to talk to kids about God

-Want more service learning opportunities and perhaps some kind of calendar of events

-Would like parents to be involved in Sunday School sometimes and have a gathering for parents other times (to connect and/or talk about parenting)

-Like the idea of a children's church (in the middle of the service) for some of our kids—have the option but not the expectation for all kids

-OWL for kids

These conversations have increased parent connection and investment, and there's some great ideas that I'll be following up on. I've already talked to Pastor Jim about it, as well as the Children's Ministry Team. As a result of these conversations, I already have 2 parents interested in doing puppets with me, and 2 parents who are committed to starting to plan for a new 20-30 min time for kids ages 0-10. I'm really excited to see how the ideas we've generated grow, and I think it has the potential to really energize and bring in more parents.

-I had a meeting with the Unitarian Universalist director of religious education (similar role as mine) 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 are excited about moving working together on this and started conversations about other ways we can partner together with our programming. Pastor Jim has encouraged me to explore further possibilities of partnership with them, as well as Pilgrim (in addition to our already formed partnership around our sexuality curriculum, OWL). I'll share more as things unfold.

### **OWL**

-We had to take a break from OWL these last 3 weeks, but we will return this Sunday. We have been in touch with our facilitators and have a plan to make up our sessions to make sure we are

finished by the end of May. I can't say enough about how amazing our 4 facilitators are—Libby Fena, Hope David, Aaron Crowell (all Peace folks), and John Dahl (Unitarian Universalist)

### **Adults**

-I've included this category this month after realizing I don't reference this work in my regular report to you. All my work around leadership with adults is included in your other reports (Faith Formation Team, Adult Ed, Worship and Arts, etc.)

### **Administrative/Other**

-We continue conversations about the Gabriel Project. We will meet with involved Clergy tomorrow to further conversation. I am excited about how this will help serve our community better and has the potential to lesson how much capacity this has taken in the past.

-I will be completing my NGLI application this month and will know if I am accepted sometime in May or June. Thank you for supporting my application process.

-I have started CPE (clinical pastoral education) as a part of my ordination process. I will be going down to the Stillwater prison each Thursday for the reflection/process portion of my CPE work. I am also working on finishing my ordination paper (a set of different required writings that the committee on ministry needs from me) by the end of the month. I will meet with the committee on ministry (the UCC conference group that oversees my ordination process) in mid-March. I hope to be able to update you on my ordination process after that meeting.

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

-Continuing to meet with staff on a weekly basis.

-Nathan Holst

## **Attachment #5**

Interim Pastoral Associate Report

Feb. 15, 2022

Rev. Charlotte Frantz

The most exciting news to share with the Council this month is the arrival of four Afghan women in Duluth, to be resettled through the efforts of our congregation and community partners. The Immigrant Welcoming Team was reconstituted in November and five of its members volunteered to do the work required to be certified as a Circle of Support for Afghan newcomers. Our application was submitted on January 20 and on January 23 we were accepted and told we would receive a group of four within a few weeks.

The Circle of Support program was developed by the State Department to make resettlement possible in areas geographically removed from resettlement agency offices. Each Circle needs a resettlement agency mentor and we have been assigned to Episcopalian Migration Ministries who has staff in Seattle, Washington.

Community partners in this project include the Benedictine Sisters, members of First United Methodist Church, members of UUUCD, and the Islamic Center of the Twin Ports and the League

of Women Voters. Both the College of St. Scholastica and UMD have been in conversation with us.

Members of Peace and the wider community have given generously to the Afghan Resettlement Fund which will be used for expenses until the women receive their authorization to work and find employment.

The goal of resettlement is to assist newcomers in becoming independent as soon as possible with help from government funded programs and community assistance like ours. I am the staff person most directly responsible for supporting and overseeing this ministry and encouraging the interface between Peace and our community partners.

In addition to the work related to resettlement, I am an integral part of the program, pastoral care and worship staff. During the past month I've served as liturgist most Sundays. I officiated at the memorial service for Jim Soderberg and produced a keepsake booklet, "A Walk in Autumn", a compilation of Jim's Facebook posts in the final season of his life.

In terms of program, I hosted the watch party for the documentary John Lewis: Good Trouble and hosted two adult forums, one related to immigration and one focused on Afghan newcomers.

In last month's report I referenced the effort to find some personal work space for me within the office complex. Soon after that we were notified of a corner workstation available from John Vigen who was closing up an office downtown. Thanks to Warren Post, we were able to pick it up and reassemble it in the corner of the Conference Room. Having a work space has made it considerably easier to be a part of the staff and to work on site.

Thank you for this continued opportunity to serve Peace Church.