

**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

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

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**

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**

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