

2016 Annual Meeting Minutes
Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ
Annual Meeting
January 31, 2016 Minutes

Opening

Moderator Peggy Alfonso called the meeting to order at 11:45 am. She indicated that more complete reports would be provided subsequently because the church staff was unable to print a full set of materials due to the recent snow storm and illness.

Rev. Tim Tutt offered a few minutes for reflection and asked Andrew Hallward-Driemeier, a deacon, to open the meeting with a prayer.

Clerk Lisa Choate declared the presence of a quorum.

Reports

Tim Tutt reflected briefly on discussions about war and peace, race and racism, the arrival of Alec, and good wishes for Mimi.

Doug Gaddis spoke for the Governance Council and reported that his experience as moderator had been wonderful. He noted three highlights: 1) finalizing the ministerial housing situation; 2) shifting the church's fiscal year dates; and 3) the incredible work done in the sanctuary and the creation of the Building 2020 committee.

Janet Moyer's report on membership was provided to all attendees. Nearly half of all visitors return. Average attendance in 2015 was 158 adults and 20 children (178). This year 18 new members joined the church. The staff worked to clean the rolls of those who are long inactive, and currently about 400 people are members of the Congregation.

Membership & Fellowship. Robert Benton reported that this has been a great year with many activities, including the chili cookoff, Easter, and picnics. Membership and Fellowship also participated in the DC Pride Festival and held a send-off for Alejandro and Grace. The board's focus was on building fellowship among members and welcoming new people to the church.

Spiritual Formation. Alexis Kassim highlighted 2015 successes. The summer Peace Camp looked at the David and Goliath story in a different way. One of the big high points was the Stop Hunger Now meal event where volunteers of all ages packed over 10,000 meals. The youth group raised the funds for the event through a coffee hour and proceeds from talent show ticket sales. In the fall, an adult spiritual development class focused on the "This I Believe" podcast series that we hope to continue in 2016.

Deacons. Brad Case reported that the focus of Deacons is to make sure that the worship service takes place every week without event. A major focus has been on pastoral care with a well-organized lay pastoral care program. They have also provided support for the seminarians like Adam Barth and Jill Johnson.

Social Justice and Action (SJA). Caryn McTighe Musil reported on the top accomplishments under Lee Aikel's leadership, which includes changing the name of the committee. The philosophy has been "we

set the dream that hardens into deed,” and they focused on what it means to act in a Christian sense in the world. SJA is tasked with distributing the Christmas and Easter offerings, for which the church raised over \$30,000 in 2015. During Summer on the Circle, SJA ran a series of classes to raise awareness about income equality and its impact on different groups.

Voluntary Corps Board. This group was on a retreat and promises a written report at a later date.

Committee Reports

Nominating. Jeannine Derr reported that all the positions are filled.

Personnel. John Hatch reported that the Personnel Committee annually reviews staff, and this year a third-year review of Tim was mandated. He thanked members for their responses gathered using an online tool. The committee is also revising the staff handbook.

Middle East Committee. Gary Walbridge reported for the Committee. The group continued its monthly meetings. Seventeen churches are now participating in the olive oil ministry. The annual craft sale was also a success.

Stewardship. Jeanine Derr reported that donations are on track. The big step this year was moving pledges online.

Property. Roy Grossnick reported that the Property Committee completed 45 action items, including painting the Sunday School classrooms and hallway outside the office; major renovation of the church offices; and a new hot water heater. For 2016, they plan to renovate the parlor and the social hall.

Arts Committee. George Singleton reported on three successful shows this year, including Ann Harwell’s quilt show and an all-church exhibition at the end of April.

MOTION 16 AM 1: The 2015 Annual Meeting minutes were approved.

Motion: Pete Davis **Second:** Brad Case **Vote:** All approved

Informational Budget Update

As was required in the motion from the November 2015 meeting, there was a budget update provided by the Treasurer, Mike Weber. For 2015, our budget showed a \$61,000 deficit. The actual was \$50,000, better than our projection, but the real deficit will actually be \$41, 809 because of a reimbursement for health coverage for an employee who left during the year. The breakdown of income and operating income was exactly as expected. Contributions were slightly higher than anticipated. We pulled \$46,000 from the endowment, which was the projected income from the endowment.

Expenses were close to budget. Salaries were under budget and we spent a good deal on the building, but this stayed within estimates.

Jan Lilja asked how Westmoreland covers its deficit. Mike Weber responded that funds to cover deficits come from the endowment. Our annual budget includes as an asset an estimate of return on the endowment (6%). When we have a deficit beyond that, it comes from the endowment.

Weber reviewed the balance sheet, which included bequest income of \$84,000 and \$58,000 for building expenses. PNC is our bank and we also keep funds at Fidelity. The \$200,000 invested in the pastor’s

house will not show as income or an investment because it is an unrealized investment at this time. A question was asked whether the Volunteer Corps house is included as an asset in this report, but it is not. Overall the investments did fairly well in 2015.

Budget Update

George Christo gave a report. Expenses came in under budget in 2015, so the year looked good in terms of actuals. We have estimated about the same in expenses for 2016, with a \$75K deficit. We had anticipated hiring a consultant, but a church member has agreed to take on the position pro bono, so we are about \$5K lower than anticipated. Otherwise the budget document provided is the same as that presented in November.

Because of the November motion, we need to reaffirm the 2016 budget,

MOTION 16 AM 2: The motion is made to reaffirm the 2016 budget initially approved at the November 2016 meeting.

Motion: Brad Case **Second:** John Hatch **Vote:** All in favor.

Robert Benton led a prayer as we moved into a consideration of the property.

Building 2020

Peggy Alfonso expressed thanks to the members of the Building 2020 Committee, which has presented a set of plans and drawings that focus on accessibility. This issue has long been important at Westmoreland and this current plan that is put in front of the Congregation is the culmination of much discussion, work, and planning, including architectural drawings.

The following motion was presented by David Bennett.

MOTION 16 AM 3:

That the members of Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ prayerfully and generously enter into a Capital Campaign with a goal of raising \$2 million to fund the "Building 2020" remodel and renovation of the church.

That a Capital Campaign Committee of 5-7 people be named and appointed by the Governance Council to lead the campaign.

That the funds remaining from the previous Capital Campaign (approx. \$25,000 – from the "HVAC" campaign of 2011) be rolled into this new Capital Campaign.

That this Capital Campaign begin any time after February 1, 2016, with pledges being committed by November 13, 2016. Pledges would be fulfilled over a 3-4 year period beginning January 1, 2017.

And that members of the church commit to encouraging one another with spiritual support and prayers as we engage in this fundraising campaign.

Motion: David Bennett **Second:** George Singleton

A number of questions followed, including how this motion relates to the second proposed motion. The first motion focuses on raising funds, and the second authorizes the 2020 Committee to move ahead.

Doug Hallward-Driemeier and Diane Kupelian spoke to support the motion, discussing how accessibility and being welcoming is a part of who we are as a church.

Mike Weber asked whether there will be a decision point when we have to evaluate whether we have raised enough money. David Bennett pointed out that this is covered in the second motion.

Caryn McTighe-Musil spoke in favor of the motion and greater accessibility. She noted that she would like Westmoreland to consider raising funds both to be stewards of the church building and for our responsibilities to the larger world. She suggested that perhaps 5 or 10% of funds raised could be added to a new fund focused on social justice issues.

Jim Schear agreed that the accessibility innovation is very persuading and asked whether our tenants and stakeholders are in favor of this. David Bennett indicated that we have talked with the leadership of the Children's Center and the Conservatory.

Tim Tutt responded to McTighe-Musil's suggestion by asking whether there is a procedural way to charge the Governance Council, Building 2020, or Capital Campaign committees with talking to the Social Justice Committee as they move forward with this initiative. This could be institutionalized by including it in the minutes.

Bob Musil suggested that indeed the time has come for this project. Many of us might contribute more if there was a designation that up to 20% of donations would go to the social justice. He also thanked the committee for the work that has been done and for those that have made the commitment to this effort. He expressed a preference for including a specific mechanism in the motion.

Ultimately the decision was made that no amendment would be offered, but that the Capital Campaign Committee should determine how to achieve this goal.

Jeff Eagan remarked on the many needs addressed in this plan, including creating a functioning kitchen, which will expand activities that can take place in the building. Mary Grossnick, speaking for Community Care, suggested that we also expand our view of outreach. We hosted a memorial service yesterday for someone who is not a member of the church. Many attending thanked her as a representative of the church, but accessibility was a real issue for some present. We close our doors to many when we are not accessible.

David Bennett presented the contents of the mailing that was sent to members by email and hard copy. He also pointed out the sketch posted on the wall of what the building would look like with the renovations.

Draft MOTION 16 AM 4:

That the members of Westmoreland Congregational United Church of Christ prayerfully, gladly and patiently enter into "Building 2020" remodel and renovation of the church facilities.

This project (outlined in material presented to the congregation) will involve reconfiguring the parking lot and pathways to make the building more accessible; constructing a new foyer/entrance containing an ADA-compliant elevator on the Massachusetts Avenue side of the building; remodeling the kitchen to make the facility usable according the health and safety code regulations; reconfiguring the social hall closet area into offices; removing the "temporary" wall from the choir room; adding a gender neutral restroom on the office/sanctuary level; reconfiguring the office and classroom space on the office level; and other related construction.

This building project is expected to cost approximately \$2 million. A Capital Campaign will be conducted to raise the funds. Pledges are expected by November 13, 2016, to commit funds for the project; pledges would be fulfilled over a 3-4 year period beginning January 1, 2017. On November 13, 2016, the amount of money pledged will be reviewed. If pledges are sufficient, the entire project will go forward. If pledges are not sufficient to underwrite the full cost, other funding options will be considered (taking out a loan, using the church's reserves, and/or other options). If other options are proposed, a recommendation will be made to the full congregation for approval.

The Building 2020 project will be overseen by the Building 2020 Committee. That committee will work closely with Capital Campaign Committee, the Governance Council and other boards and committees.

The Building 2020 Committee, with oversight by the Governance Council, is authorized to draw funds from the Capital Campaign account to fund pre-construction architectural, engineering and permitting activities; and will seek to keep the entire congregation as fully informed as possible.

As part of this motion, the members of the church commit to encouraging one another in a spirit of prayer, generosity and kindness.

Motion: David Bennett **Second:** Brad Case

Peggy Alfonso invited discussion. Questions were asked about how the decision will be made as to whether we have raised enough money. Tim Tutt pointed out that we do not have a firm cost yet given the stage of the project, hence the deliberate vagueness in the motion, but the current estimate is below \$2 million. Brad Case offered an amendment in the third paragraph: "On or about November 13, 2016, the Congregation will meet to review the amount of money pledged and to determine the way forward."

Ben Tutt seconded the amendment and the amendment to draft **Motion 16 AM 4** was approved. Several additional questions were asked about specifics of the entrance, and David Bennett indicated that these are sketches and we will have more specific discussions at a later point.

This revised motion was proposed:

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This building project is expected to cost approximately \$2 million. A Capital Campaign will be conducted to raise the funds. Pledges are expected by November 13, 2016, to commit funds for the project; pledges would be fulfilled over a 3-4 year period beginning January 1, 2017. On or about November 13, 2016, the Congregation will meet to review the amount of money pledged and to determine the way

forward. If pledges are not sufficient to underwrite the full cost, other funding options will be considered (taking out a loan, using the church's reserves, and/or other options). If other options are proposed, a recommendation will be made to the full congregation for approval.

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Vote: All in favor for both motions, including the amendments to Motion 16-AM-4.

Doug Gaddis was asked to come forward for recognition. Peggy Alfonso thanked him for his leadership and service as the Moderator in 2015, and his patience and thoughtfulness.

Moderator Peggy Alfonso closed the meeting with a prayer at 1:20.

Respectfully submitted, Lisa Choate, Clerk