

**Church Council Minutes**  
**January 25, 2022**

**Present**

Alyson Breisch, Children's Ministry  
Anne Stoddard, Trustees  
Cameron Barr, Senior Pastor  
Doug Bruce, Treasurer  
Jane Landreth, Clerk  
Jean Anne Barnes, Fellowship  
Larry Kroutil, Board of Justice, Outreach, and Services (BJOS)  
Linda Sellars, Adult Education  
Mary McMillan, Moderator  
Nubia Rivero Bello, At Large Member  
Peter Schay, Deacon  
Robin Smith, At Large Member  
Erica Tillman, Assistant Moderator  
Jeremy O'Connor, At Large Member  
Megan Hughes, Youth and Young Adults  
Susan Renwick, Membership, Engagement and Stewardship (MES)

**Not Present**

Soren Potthoff, At Large Member

**Additional Attendees**

Ian McPherson, Associate Pastor  
Mary Elizabeth Hanchey, Associate Pastor  
Vicky Gardner

**Interpretation Services:** Provided by Murtado Language Solutions.

**Call To Order:** **Mary McMillan**, Moderator called the meeting to order.

**Invocation:** **Cameron Barr**

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Pastors Ian McPherson, Mary Elizabeth Hanchey were welcomed along with Vicky Gardner.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

**Moderator Mary McMillan** asked if there were any new items to add to the agenda. In the absence of new items, the **Moderator** asked for approval of the agenda for the January 25, 2022 meeting.

**Vote:** Unanimous approval

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**SENIOR PASTOR REPORT**

**COVID-19 Update**

- Cameron Barr continues to attend the bi-weekly COVID-19 Community Clergy Group.
- As expected, the Omicron variant caused case numbers to rise rapidly. Case numbers are now falling, but not as quickly as hoped and hospitals are still stressed.
- The clergy group agreed to continue with both in-person and online options. UCCH advised people to consider family circumstances in deciding how to engage with church services and encouraged them to find the church online.
- UCCH has strengthened the church's online presence with additional segments.

**Personnel Update**

Cameron Barr noted that the new church sexton, Bruce Thomas, has already had a very positive impact. Two positions remain open.

- **Organist:** The church continues to receive applications conducts interviews as appropriate candidates apply and has another interview scheduled this week. The position will remain open until filled.
- **Director for Children's Ministry:** There is not yet an active search for a new director; the Board of Children's Ministry is being consulted.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Draft minutes for the November 3, 2021 Congregational Meeting on the budget and for the December 7, 2021 Council meeting were circulated to Council members before the meeting. Since not all Council members responded with an email approval, **Council Clerk Jane Landreth** requested approval of both sets of minutes by vote of the Council. **Moderator Mary McMillan** called for a vote on approval of the November 3, 2021 Congregational Meeting minutes and members voted unanimously to approve the minutes. Moderator McMillan then called for a vote on approval of the December 7, 2021 Council meeting minutes and those minutes were approved unanimously.

**STEWARDSHIP**

**Stewardship Board Chair Susan Renwick** reported on the results of the stewardship drive.

- The church received \$845,341.00 in pledges, representing 91% of the **\$925,000.00** goal.
- 242 pledge units submitted pledges.
- The Step Up campaign was very successful and received \$7,000 more than last year.
- Stewardship efforts that worked well:
  - Membership engagement events (cider and donuts) both at the church and at Duke Forest.
  - Stewardship testimonies received a good response; may consider providing those testimonies throughout the year, rather than just during the stewardship campaign.
  - There was a good response to email follow-up with people who had pledged in the past, but didn't submit a pledge before the end of the pledge drive.
  - Calling (in connection with updating the church directory) was not effective.

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**Susan Renwick** suggested that it may be helpful to look back at 5 years of pledge information (amounts and number of pledge units) to have a good comparison.

**Cameron Barr** noted that people who have been deeply invested in the church continued to maintain a strong commitment through pledging. The church is falling short in new pledges and pledges by people who have pledged smaller amounts.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

**Doug Bruce** reported that the church finished 2021 in very good financial condition. The year ended with a \$35,000.00 budget surplus in part as a result of \$16,000 in non-pledge revenue received in December.

**Anne Stoddard** noted that pledges fell short of the \$925 million in the aspirational budget for 2022 approved at the Congregational Meeting. Based on pledges received, the church will have an \$80-95,000 deficit in 2022.

**Cameron Barr** noted that the Council had approved the \$985 million aspirational budget with the understanding that the alternative would be to maintain funding at 2021 levels if pledges did not support the expanded budget. Based on pledges received, the church will have funding necessary to maintain 2021 base budget funding levels but will not be able to fully fund the aspirational budget. He has worked with Church Administrator Kati Ruark to begin developing budget numbers that reflect 2021 spending levels and adjusted costs (such as health insurance premiums) as a starting point for budget revisions. The congregation was advised in November that the reengagement budget would be adjusted, using the 2021 budget as a baseline, if pledges fell short. Cameron Barr advised that it is not necessary to have another congregational vote on a revised budget, but it will be important to communicate with the congregation about budget changes.

After Council discussion of how best to get input from the boards and committees on budget revisions, **Moderator Mary McMillan** summarized a proposed budget revision process:

- Cameron Barr/Kati Ruark will send out a budget document showing revised budget numbers for 2022 based on the baseline figures in the narrative budgets submitted by boards and commissions in the fall, adjusted only to show actual costs for certain personnel items (such as health insurance) that are now firm.
- By January 31, 2022, board and committee chairs will send recommendations for any revisions to their budgets with a focus on identifying any reengagement items they would recommend the church should pursue.
- A small group will review the board/committee recommendations by February 4, 2022 and send a final budget revision proposal back to board and commission chairs.
- The Church Council will approve a revised budget for 2022 on February 8, 2022.

**Moderator Mary McMillan** asked for a vote on approval of the budget revision process as described.

**Vote:** Unanimous approval.

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In response to a question about proceeding with IT work pending approval of a revised 2022 budget, **Trustee Anne Stoddard** indicated funds for the IT work will come from existing dedicated funding sources and will not have an impact on the 2022 operating budget.

**SANCTUARY COMMITTEE FUNDING AND REFUGEE UPDATE: Larry Kroutil**

- Afghan Refugee Care Team members Lindon Thayer and Melanie Joyner attended training.
- Church World Service recommends that a participating church have \$5,000.00 in funds to support a refugee program. UCCH currently has just under \$4,000.00 in the Sanctuary, Immigrant, and Refugee Support Fund so additional fund-raising may be necessary.

**Motion:** To approve one-time fundraising to support refugee families.

**Motion Proposed By:** Larry Kroutil

**Vote:** Unanimous approval.

**FUTURE COUNCIL PLANNING: Mary McMillan** noted that she had sent Council members a document to guide later discussion about how we measure success as a church and identify what has been working and what hasn't.

**APPOINTMENT TO VACANCY ON BOARD OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

On behalf of the Board of Children's Ministry, **Alyson Breisch** recommended that the Council approve the appointment of Anitra Grove to a vacancy on the Board.

**Second:** Peter Schay

**Vote:** Unanimous approval.

**Recap of Action Items: Robin Smith**

- The only action items identified were the steps for revising the 2022 budget.

**Upcoming Schedule:**

- **Tuesday February 8, 2022:** Special Council meeting to approve revised budget.
- **Tuesday, February 22, 2022:** Council meeting

**Closing Prayer:** Mary McMillan

**Adjournment:** Mary McMillan

**Respectfully Submitted by Robin Smith**

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**Appendix 1**

**Sanctuary, Immigrant, and Refugee Support**  
**Submitted by: Larry Kroutil**

**Motion:** To approve broadening designated fund 8152 (Emergency Immigration-Sanctuary) to be a fund for Sanctuary, Immigrant, and Refugee Support.

Here are key reasons for the recommended change.

- 1) A designated fund focused more broadly on sanctuary, immigrant, and refugee support is more likely to be used over the long term compared with funds that are focused narrowly on refugee resettlement or sanctuary support.

United Church previously had a designated fund for refugee resettlement to assist in resettling Karen families for which funds were not being spent. We donated the balance to the Refugee Support Center to close out the fund. Similarly, we have not been spending money out of the Sanctuary designated fund because we are not currently working with local churches to support anyone receiving sanctuary to prevent deportation.

In contrast, there are likely to be longer term needs in offering support to immigrants, including refugees from Central and South America. (Afghanistan is not the only place where people are seeking refuge from difficult political situations.)

- 2) This designated fund would help as a starting point to fund refugee resettlement.

Information that BJOS has received via the Refugee Support Center in Carrboro suggests that churches will likely need to move quickly once they are contacted to assist in settling a family. If a critical mass of people at United Church are available and interested in assisting with refugee resettlement, there will be a need for additional fundraising in the future. Nevertheless, the availability of funds from 8152 to support refugee resettlement would mean we are not starting from zero.

- 3) People who are interested in making donations to help support refugee resettlement would not need to wait for a designated fund to be set up specifically for refugee resettlement.

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**Appendix 2**

**Action Items**

#	Area	Owner	Action	Date Due	Status
			None		