

DRAFT June 2020 Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes

Attendance: 59 members in attendance via Zoom – a quorum was established.

Call to order – Moderator Pete Mueller called the meeting to order at 11:36 am.

- Announcement – The Administrative Assistant temporary 20 hour/week position filled by Julie Ridl was created to assist with church affairs during Pastor Sal’s sabbatical. The position was then extended by council through the 2nd quarter of this year to meet the church’s technological and other needs during the Covid-19 pandemic. These actions resulted in evident benefits to DUCC of having an Administrative Assistant with Julie’s skills. As a result council has approved annualizing the position.
- ZOOM Tutorial – Julie Ridl – Review of muting mic/polling questions/how to vote/how to ask questions etc.

Opening Prayer – Pastor Sal opened the meeting with a prayer.

Welcome – Pete Mueller

- Agenda overview.
- Pre-recorded video, “Who Are We at DUCC?” – In the video Pete reflected on the many changes that have occurred at DUCC since January’s mid-year congregational meeting. From Pastor Sal’s sabbatical beginning in January when Sunday in-house services were provided by congregants, to our current status of Sunday services being available on-line due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Pete reminds us that “the church doors may be closed but DUCC’s congregation remains active” and that several groups, including Sunday’s “coffee hour” continue to meet via ZOOM.

Pete then spoke about his response to Pastor Sal’s recent homily when Pastor Sal described the brutal death of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police as a murder. This homily was given before the UCC’s website had pronounced the death as a murder and lynching. This reminded Pete how “out ahead” our Pastor Sal is in responding to injustice and prompted Pete to ask himself the question, “Where are we and who are we at DUCC in the outside world?” After visiting several websites from different denominations, Pete found only one that directly addressed George Floyd’s death while the others focused on Covid-19 and stewardship. Pete then reminded us that there are 5,000 UCC churches in the U.S. with one million members, and that 1600 of these churches are open and affirming. Yet, in the scheme of things, our small 260 member DUCC church is leading! In conclusion Pete said, “I am so glad to be here at DUCC.”

Minutes – Bev Hawkes – June 2019 meeting minutes have been posted in the E-pistle for the past two weeks for review. Sue Scott **moved to approve**. Garnet Lewis second. Minutes were approved.

Pastor’s Letter – Pre-recorded video

- Pastor Sal reminded us that the 2019 annual Congregational Meeting had standing room only in the Friendship Hall and expressed gratitude for our presence in joining today’s virtual meeting.

- Church growth - DUCC continues to grow as a spiritual family with 20 new members joining in the fall of 2019.
- Community Outreach – continued throughout 2019 including highway and beach cleanups, Douglas Socials, Community Pride Events, workshops, classes, book reads and special events. In addition, more than \$30,000 FY 2019 was granted to local charities.
- January-March Sabbatical – the work of the church was ongoing while Pastor Sal was gone with congregants sharing their gifts and talents with each other by leading Sunday services and giving inspiring messages.
- Covid-19 church closing – a difficult but wise decision by council prior to Pastor Sal’s return but the church remained and continues to remain open to God and one another.
- Pastor Sal expressed how proud he is of our church members for the outreach during this pandemic and time of social unrest such as:
 - ❖ Raising money to support local businesses affected by the shutdown.
 - ❖ Packaging and delivering food for those in need.
 - ❖ “United in Song” virtual concert, viewed by over 600 that not only uplifted our spirits with music of hope and inspiration but also raised \$1000 for Christian Neighbors in Douglas.
 - ❖ Stephen Ministers and Congregational Care Team remain spiritually active as they meet the needs of others.
 - ❖ Congregants staying connected with the Sunday’s Zoom “coffee hour.”
 - ❖ Members organizing community wide “Gay Pride” event and “Black Lives Matter” march by taking to the streets safely following Covid-19 laws.
- New members – DUCC continues to grow as 15 new members recently attended the virtual New Member class and are being welcomed today. They will be honored at our first Sunday in-house service.
- DUCC logo – that shows the church walls expanding depicts our vision of spreading our progressive Christian message far and wide. This is being witnessed with over 35,000 worldwide YouTube views from as far away as the U.K., S. Africa, and Australia in addition to our having received thank you letters, emails and donations. Pastor Sal shared “how amazing this is for a small village church in Douglas, MI.”
- Re-opening church – For the coming weeks and months Pastor Sal and council leaders will continue to work with the guidance of the National UCC for re-opening and safely gathering.
- Church directory – Mike VerMerris will be sending out soon.
- Closing – Pastor Sal expressed how honored he is to serve as our Pastor, that we are missed and to remember, “God’s plans for us all is for fullness and not of harm but to give us a future of hope” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Committees – Pastor Relations Committee (PRC) - Pastor Sal expressed gratitude to Glynis Whitcomb and Greg Sherman for their leadership and guidance and for their work and support in helping to make the sabbatical a reality. Tokens of appreciation will be forthcoming. Pastor Sal also welcomed new PRC committee members David Miedema and Betsy York.

Proposed Budget – Mike Boston (Financial Oversight Committee) (FOC) presented the FY2021 budget and highlighted the assumptions underlying the budget. The assumptions noted include the following:

- Collections are forecasted to be flat compared to FY2020 at \$182,100.
- Mission spending for FY2021 are budgeted at \$33,584, virtually flat with levels in FY2020.
- Isabel Graham Fund transfer is \$33,584.
- The budget includes an Administrative Assistant position for the entire year.
- Maintenance in the FY2021 is forecasted to decrease \$6,426 primarily the result of FY2020 included a large payment of \$8,949 to the Mayotte Group. The FY2021 budget includes only routine repairs and one larger project. The budget does not include any costs related to expanding out church.
- The FY2021 budget includes a line item for contingencies in the amount of \$8,900.
- The FY2021 budget assumes no Douglas Socials but does include a church picnic.
- The Mission budget includes \$17,400 to designated organizations and the undesignated budget is \$15,600.

Garnet Lewis **moved to approve**. Will Gervais second. Budget approved.

Mike Boston noted that the church is in a strong cash position and that he will be recommending to FOC that \$15,000 - \$20,000 be moved into the church investment fund.

Updates:

- Group activities – Pastor Sal noted that as groups continue to meet on Zoom, the procedure to promote an activity (i.e. speaker, book read, virtual event etc.) is still the same as prior to the church’s shutdown. That is, after notifying Pastor Sal of the activity, the activity will then be scheduled on the calendar and promoted.
- Covid-19 related issues – Pete
 - ❖ Pastor Sal has contact with the National UCC in addition to a close working relationship with the Grand West Association through weekly meetings both of which will provide clear guidance on how and when to open.
 - ❖ Julie Ridl monitors updates from the State of Michigan and current Covid-19 related laws.
- Capital Campaign and Planned Giving – Pete noted that both have been put on hold with no date scheduled for when they will be resumed.
- Methods for giving – Julie expressed gratitude to Nuri at Meraki for his technology assistance.
 - ❖ Julie noted that there are now many technological paths to our “church doors” such as Facebook, YouTube, and podcasts in addition to our website.
 - ❖ Additional methods of giving have been implemented. These include Vanco’s Give+Text mobile interface, DUCC’s YouTube donor button (becoming available after 1,000 subscribers signed up), and the DUCC website donation process (also provided by Vanco) that now allows for giving outside of the U.S.

Appreciation – Pastor Sal

- Thank you to Karen Clark and Greg Plowe for undertaking and completing the task of updating DUCC’s Constitution and Policies.
- Thank you to Sue Fleming for her leadership and work on church council these past 2 years. A token of appreciation will be forthcoming.
- Announcement that Stan Greene will be filling the 2 year at-large council position. Affirmation given from the members.

Questions/Comments – Pete

- A member requested that a more detailed accounting be included in the budget numbers with regard to the non-pastoral church staff wages and benefits such as vacation and sick leave. The discussion concluded that council will address the request.
- It was noted during the discussion that Pastor Sal had informed council that for FY 2021 he would forgo a salary increase due to the financial hardships brought on by the pandemic. Council accommodated Pastor Sal's generous offer but will review again in 6 months.

Adjournment at 12:40 pm. Ken Whitcomb **moved to adjourn**. Garnet Lewis second. Motion approved.