

June 2023 Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes -- DRAFT

Attendance: 67 members attended in-person – a quorum was established.

Call to Order and Welcome – Moderator Pete Mueller called the meeting to order at 11:34 am, welcomed 16 new church members since January’s Congregational Meeting, and introduced 3 new Council members: Moderator, Mark Johnston; Recording Secretary, Mike VerMerris; and, At-Large, Mike Mok. A slide presentation began with a review of today’s agenda.

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

Minutes – Bev Hawkes – The June 2022 meeting minutes have been posted in the E-pistle for the past 2 weeks for review. Wendy Hamlin **moved to approve**. Laurie VanDenBeldt second. Minutes were approved.

Pastor’s Letter – Pastor Sal noted that, “when we gathered here last June for our annual meeting, we were slowly emerging from the COVID pandemic. Now – just one year later- our church is back in full swing!!”

Highlights:

- From June of last year to June of this year, we have officially welcomed more than 30 new members.
- Our online audience continues to grow with our online videos receiving more than 100,000 views from people around the world, and we have gained more than 400 new subscribers to our YouTube channel.
- This past year’s stewardship has been overwhelming enabling our church to continue its mission of working for justice, caring for creation, and helping our neighbors in need. We made it to the Top 3 of all churches nationally who contributed to the CROP Hunger Walk in addition to donating more than \$30,000 to local charities.
- We continued to care for one another through the Congregational Care Team and our church’s Stephen Ministry program.
- Our church’s Creation Justice Team led a beach cleanup, a highway cleanup and, a community book read. Our Social Justice Team helped find permanent housing for the Afghan refugee family who lived at our Spring Street house for 11 months. Members of the team continue to work with the family.
- We had three book studies as well as several well-attended workshops here at our church.
- We continue to be a strong and visible presence in the community-at-large from leading an animal blessing at Beery Field; sponsoring and participating in the Douglas Community Pride events; and, donating cereal, peanut butter and flour to Christian Neighbors Food Pantry.

- Our Friendship Hall serves as a meeting place for several community groups.
- Our Retreat House continues to provide a welcoming place of spiritual rest and renewal for visiting pastors and church staff.
- Several major improvement projects have been completed on our church campus: all new roofs and gutters; sanctuary refresh; restoration of our historic church doors; and, the transformation of the Spring Street house into our new administrative office.
- Heart filled gratitude for our dedicated church leaders and committee members; for staff, Julie Ridl and Peter Black; cantor, Jeff Spangler and our special musicians and singers; our Art Guild and Design Team; to our Sunday Volunteer Coordinator, Mike VerMerris; and, all to our Sunday readers, greeters, acolytes, ushers and communion ministers.

In closing: “I am so very grateful to each and everyone of you for your presence here and for your continued support of this very special little church which God has entrusted to our care. As always, I am honored and grateful to serve as your pastor.”

Committees:

1. Grant Proposal Committee (GPC) – Mike Mok – committee members include Tim Lemanski (chair), Sue Fleming, Beverly Hawkes, Barbara Lucier and Mike Mok. Mike gave a brief history of the Isabel Graham Fund, the fiscal method used to determine the amount of the annual grant monies available and, the GPC grant application and vetting process.

DUCC Grants FY 2023:

- Christian Neighbors \$2,500.
- The ARC of Allegan County \$5,000.
- Saugatuck Douglas Fennville Arts Initiative \$2,500.
- 70X7 Life Recovery \$2,500.
- Southwest MI Interfaith Action \$1,250.
- Children First Lakeshore \$5,000.
- Ladders of Hope Food Pantry \$4,500.
- Sylvia’s Place \$6,000.
- Saugatuck Douglas Rotary Boy’s and Girl’s Club \$5,000.
- Center for Dispute Resolution/Mediation Services \$4,000.

Total: \$38,250.

2. Wellness and Safety Committee – Bev Hawkes – committee members include Wendy Hamlin, Demetrhea Terrien, and Bev Hawkes. Bev gave an update on Council’s decision to approve Wendy Hamlin’s proposal to develop a Wellness Committee and, Council’s reasoning behind combining this newly formed Wellness Committee with the Safety Committee (formerly called the Security Committee). Bev then thanked those in the congregation who participated in a survey that asked for suggestions of how the

Wellness Committee could meet the needs of the church family and impact the community at large.

Immediate goals include:

- Reviewing the survey results.
- Purchase an updated AED through the Saugatuck Township Fire Department that will replace the current AED noting that the purchase of replacement batteries and pads for the current AED has been difficult. Bev thanked Sue Scott and Larry Fuerst for their donation of the original AED.
- Assemble and install a user-friendly and conveniently located First Aid kit.
- Organize a CPR/AED training class.

Retreat House – Kathleen Mueller, Chaplain Beth Stallinga, Capt. USN (Ret), and Rev. Marchiene Rienstra (Rev. Marty).

Background: Kathleen shared the history of the Retreat House with a slide show beginning with the purchase in 1898 for \$550 and for use as a Parsonage sheltering over 25 pastors and their families (Life #1: The First 100 Years). For the next 25 years (Life #2), the building served as the pastor's office and retreat space serving 104 guests (including interns) in 2021 and 2022. Numerous improvements were made during these years including, the remodeling of rooms, refurbishing with carpet and furniture and, in 2021 the installation of a new furnace and air conditioning. Now that the Spring Street house office space conversion for the pastor and staff is completed, the Retreat House can be dedicated to the expanded mission of a full-time retreat space for clergy and staff (Life #3) and, will include a room designated for meditation and prayer.

Mission of Hospitality: Beth shared her background as a Navy Chaplain and how that experience brought her to recognize the need for not only military personnel, but also for herself to find a safe space for renewal and Presence...a safe space of the heart...hospitality. Beth's vision for the Retreat House is that it will offer this space to clergy and staff through the expanded mission.

Prayer Personified: Rev. Marty spoke to the need for this designated space for prayer and meditation, whether alone or with others, and emphasized that this expanded mission of the Retreat House symbolizes the high value DUCC places on these practices. The Retreat House Team plans to build up this ministry and continue to enhance this mission of hospitality.

Proposed Budget FY2024 and Facilities Stewardship – Treasurer, Stacy Honson and Pete Mueller.

The Operating Budget was reviewed which included the Revenue and Expenses for FY2023 and proposed for FY2024. Campus Improvement expenses for FY2023 were in the amount of

\$111,990. These included the Spring Street house refresh (\$37,730); sanctuary refresh, church doors and new AV platform (\$16,950); and, the new roofs and gutters (\$57,310). Campus Improvement expenses for FY2024 are in the amount of \$79,725. A detailed list of these FY2024 projects, including the estimated costs was presented on slides. Questions were addressed and explanations given. Additional clarifications were also detailed in response to questions regarding what items are included under other expense headings.

The Facilities Stewardship Project in the amount of \$79,725, included in the proposed FY2024 Campus Improvement expenses include:

1. Spring Street: grade/excavate perimeter; exterior paint: walls, shutters, gutters and trim; landscaping/trees west side; sprinkler system; back fence; and, concrete-driveway, parking pad, and door slider step out.
2. Sanctuary and Friendship Hall: Friendship Hall vestibule floor repair/new door east side; north side wall water damage repairs; memorial garden fence; and, contingency expenses.

Motion: from Dick Lucier to approve the FY2024 budget as presented and moving forward with the Facilities Stewardship Project. Paul Burdick second. Motion approved.

Action: Julie Ridl will post in the E-pistle the Facilities Project “wish list”, methods on how to donate your targeted gifts and, updates on our goal of reaching the \$79,725.

Methods for Giving – Julie Ridl presented a review of ways to give (also available at DUCC’s website) and include: Online Giving; Text-to-Give; Give + app; Planned Giving; and, Talent Donation.

Appreciation and Affirmation – Pastor Sal presented thank you gifts to:

- Peter Mueller for serving as Council Moderator.
- Beverly Hawkes for serving as Council Recording Secretary.
- David Geen for serving Council At-Large.

Adjournment at 12:50 pm.

Motion: from Chris Clark to adjourn. Larry Fuerst second. Motion approved.