

First Congregational United Church of Christ – Grand Marais, MN

Summer Congregational Meeting Minutes/ June 25, 2023

Attendees: 30 participants in person and 3 on Zoom

1. Welcome and review of procedures for the meeting.
 - a. Participants asked if voting by show of hands or by ballot for the items to vote on was preferred. It was agreed by show of hands that voting by “show of hands” was preferred. A 2/3 majority is necessary to pass the new Mission Statement. A simple majority is needed for approval of Board of Directors nominees.
2. Call to Order at 11:50 by Moderator Tom Yuhasey
3. Opening prayer: Pastor Limvere
4. Purpose and Mission statement was read.
5. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Agenda was amended to reflect that the vote for Board of Directors was for two new members and three returning members, not two.
 - b. Amended agenda approval: Carol Winter/ Ann Russ. All say “aye”.
6. Approval of 2023 Winter Congregational Meeting minutes: John Bottger/Nancy Strayer; “Aye”
7. Moderator Report by Tom Yuhasey: Thanks to all the Board Members for their service. Thanks to ALL those who serve on so many different committees.
8. Pastor Report: Pastor Limvere:
 - a. Note of appreciation for how special this church is; best of all the congregations he has served.
 - b. Noted that 71% of churches have 50 or fewer attendees at worship
 - c. We are not an “At Risk” church according to parameters set out in a UCC study
 - d. Pastor Limvere asked the congregation to consider volunteering to establish a Sunday School to serve the families with young children. He estimated 2 children but probably four. The school could be on a different day and time than Sunday.
9. Treasurer’s Report: Kevin LeVoir. Printed report is available in the church office. Kevin noted that the church is meeting its bills and obligations. No questions were asked.
10. Introduction of Prospective Board of Director Candidates: Tom Yuhasey
 - a. There are seven BOD members: Tom Yuhasey, John Bottger, Kevin LeVoir, Carol Winter, Carol Bennett. Bruce Tyler, and Jen Delfs. Pastor Limvere attends the meetings.
 - b. Two of the current members have completed their 2-year terms and are stepping down: John Bottger and Carol Bennet.
 - c. Three members are volunteering to stay on the board for another term: Jen Delfs, Carol Winter, and Kevin LeVoir.
 - d. The Nominating Committee – Carol Bennett and Tom Yuhasey approached several members of the community to seek their service as board members. The candidates who agreed to serve were vetted by the committee and by Ann Russ and Nancy Starr per the rules of the by-laws.
 - e. New members to be voted on: Francie Beaster and Steve Aldrich.
 - f. Moderator asked if there were any other nominations? No.

- g. Question: Board make-up is usually members with a one-year term and some with a two-year terms for smoother transitions. There is no distinction at voting time regarding length of term of each nominee.
 - h. Proposal: Approve the board, members will determine length of individual terms at the first meeting of the new board. Nancy Starr noted she has created a chart of who is on the board and the length of their term and will provide this to the BOD.
 - i. Motion by John Bottger to approve 2 new board members and 3 continuing, all for a 2-year term, to be sorted out by the board. Second Nancy Giguere. Call for discussion: none. Call for vote: all in favor, none opposed.
11. Proposal to replace Constitutional (Sec 111) Purpose and Mission Statement with a new, more current and concise mission statement.
- a. New Statement: The mission of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Grand Marais is to:
Welcome all
Explore the mysteries of faith
Celebrate and honor creation
Work for justice and peace.
Create Community.

Motion to amend the statement and add "Minnesota" after Grand Marais made by Ann Russ/Nancy Strayer. All vote "yes"

Question regarding our status as a Just Peace Church"? Covered by "work for justice and peace".

Discussion comments:

-In the Constitution there is a "Purpose and Mission statement". The new version is just mission.

-A fuller, clearer statement like the current statement is preferred

-In the current statement there are two words which have become outdated and are divisive: "tolerance and flexibility" and should be removed.

-Shorter version is a helpful guide for decision making; easier to ask if a new idea or request meets the church mission.

- Add "purpose" to the new mission statement?

-Omit 2 offensive words and keep the original statement

- a. Call for vote by show of hands: Proposal to replace current Purpose and Mission Statement with new concise statements

- b. Results: 17 in favor; 6 opposed, 2 abstentions. A 2/3 majority (22 approving) needed of the 33 attendees. Vote does not pass.

- c. Ann Russ thanked the committee members for the hard work to create the new statement; the failed vote reflects the need for more discussion.

12. Closing prayer: Pastor Limvere

13. Meeting adjourned at 12:45

Respectfully submitted by Carol Bennett