

Country Club Christian Church
Congregational Board Minutes April 12, 2022

Attending: Jennifer Austenfeld, E.J. Becker, Sara Christensen, Erin Feitz, Dana Flora, Karen Gallagher, Shelle Jensen, Mary McClure, Becky McElduff, Matt Moeder, Kay Moffat, Jayson Parker, Tom Thornton

Not attending: Tepring Crocker, Phil Howes, Nancy Lear

Guests: David Forsee, Dan Jensen

Staff: Carla Aday, Sherri Hill

Welcome and Meditation

Matt Moeder, Board Chair, called the hybrid meeting to order at 7:15 pm. Karen Gallagher gave an opening meditation about happiness and joy.

Centennial Campaign & Centennial Building Update

Dan Jensen provided an update that the final bid provided by A.L. Huber reflected an increase of 25-30% due to general economic inflation. Even with the conservative contingency plan built into the budget, the increase is a setback putting the building project significantly over budget. The church's building team is working with the architect and contractor to value engineer without losing quality. This involves re-evaluating roughly 50 items. The objective is to come back to the board in the fall with the contract based on a final revised bid. Mr. Jensen said the consistently careful project management could not have overcome this type of unprecedented swift escalation in costs.

Dave Forsee said the Congregational Board's and Endowment Trustees' approvals of the financing package remain intact at \$11.5 million including approved loans. The team is working to right-size the project to the existing budget and not increase anticipated debt. He expects a 60-90 day process to redesign, right size and re-bid. The plan is for construction to start in the fall, though the unprecedented escalation in costs makes it difficult to be certain. At the moment, pricing has not plateaued, but the increase appears to be slowing. The building permits that have already been pulled are valid for one year.

Carla Aday responded to a question about the effect of the delay on the early childhood center by saying the plan remains to have the early childhood center under construction only in the summer remains. Families have been notified the center will be closed summer 2022 and summer 2023. It was not possible to change course with the preschool staff and stay open for summer 2022. Rev. Aday confirmed the Centennial Committee has updated key donors on the current status and will keep them in the loop as the revised plans take shape.

Mr. Moeder commended the campaign and building teams for their dedication in the face of this unavoidable challenge.

Approval of Consent Agenda

Mr. Moeder noted that the draft March 8, 2022, minutes included all the financing resolutions as received by the Board and that signed copies were prepared separately after the meeting. He asked the Board whether there were any amendments or corrections to the items on the consent agenda. There were none. The Board unanimously approved a motion to approve the consent agenda including the March 8, 2022, Congregational Board Minutes.

Personnel Committee Update

Mary McClure provided an update on upcoming changes to church staff. This includes Lara Schopp resigning as Communications Coordinator effective Aug. 1, and Mike Graves reducing his work hours in the coming months. He will retain his current teaching and preaching duties. Spiritual formation and worship coordination will be moved to a new senior associate minister position that will also include membership development, engagement and operational duties. A search committee has been formed for the communications position and the Personnel Committee will perform the search for the clergy position.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Subcommittee Update

Mr. Moeder explained this subcommittee of the Board was formed for the continuation of the social justice discussions the board had in the previous board year. Catherine Stark-Corn and Tyler Heston provide staff support. An overview of two planned proposals was provided.

1. Action and Advocacy Team as a fourth part of the Outreach and Mission Coordinating Team (OMCT). Tom Thornton explained the concept is to have 4-6 people on a team whose purpose is to receive requests for funding and support, and to make opportunities available with partner organizations that are consistent with the vision of ministry developed by the Board in the 2020-2021 year to address systemic social injustice. In addition to supporting the vision of ministry with congregational education and advocacy opportunities, there is need for a home for requests that are outside the scope of Metro Missions and the other teams under OMCT that support and partner with agencies working to address immediate critical needs for food, clothing, tutoring, etc. For example, the request to co-present the American Public Square program on April 6th about police funding, control and accountability in Kansas City went to OMCT, which is more of an umbrella organization not focused on systemic social injustice.

There was discussion about the use of the term “advocacy” and if it would be seen as equivalent to the congregation taking a position in political issues. There were questions about how the proposed team could ensure adherence to the vision of ministry over time as lay leadership changes. Ms. McClure and Rev. Aday suggested the proposal address what types of activity would be outside the scope of the Action and Advocacy Team, such as political lobbying. Mr. Moeder gave examples of supporting conviction expungement and tenants’ rights programs or promoting minority-owned businesses as activities the congregation has supported or could support that are outside of the other OMCT teams, where an Action and Advocacy Team could

receive requests then evaluate whether and shape how the congregation is involved. Rev. Aday said there is a way for the congregation to be in the public square where Jesus is.

Mr. Thornton said this preliminary discussion will be helpful in bringing a proposal to the Board with more explanation of the concept.

2. Open and Affirming Congregation Erin Feitz presented the parameters of the Disciples of Christ denominational program to recognize congregations that publicly welcome persons of all gender expressions and sexual orientations (Attachment 1). By making a public statement of welcome and taking other steps to show its commitment to not seeing gender expression or sexual orientation as a barrier to communion, membership, service, leadership, or employment in our ministry, the church can be recognized as an open and affirming congregation alongside many other metro-area churches. Ms. Feitz, Mr. Moeder, Becky McElduff and Rev. Heston have talked with Melissa Guthrie, the Director of Alliance Q, which administers the Disciples' Open and Affirming program.

Mr. Moeder said the subgroup was organized to determine how the congregation should proceed to receive a formal designation, because in many ways the congregation is already living the values of the Open and Affirming program. The next step is to bring a public statement of welcome to the Board. Ms. Feitz said this effort dovetails into the Next 100 strategic planning as a way of saying directly to the marginalized that we want them here, of embodying the teaching of Christ's radically inclusive work, and of growing as a church both among the marginalized and among those who want to associate with a congregation that is public about it.

There was discussion on the flexibility of the program to find that the welcome statement represents the decision of the congregation. Ms. McClure suggested providing more education to the congregation alongside developing a welcome statement and other action items that the designation carries. Members asked for the subgroup to come back with a clear statement of what the welcome would be and who votes on it, to recognize that welcoming all means welcoming people who may not have embraced the concepts of the program, yet do not want to be barriers to the process. Rev. Aday clarified that this church does not hold congregational votes to call ministers, it delegates to the Congregational Board to set policy.

Shelle Jensen said the Board should not overthink or belabor earning the designation because being open and affirming is a statement of pure love that gets to the basics of Jesus's teachings, noting the many local congregations highlighted in the attachment that have completed the process in their respective denominations/faiths. Sara Christensen said both of the proposals under discussion may include tough conversations, and this is a supportive and loving place to have those conversations.

Mr. Moeder offered for the subgroup to develop a proposed welcome statement and outline a plan to meet the steps required to attain an Open and Affirming designation, responsive to the points raised in the Board's discussion.

The Next 5: Five Year Strategic Plan Update

Mr. Moeder asked the members to schedule and hold small group sessions as assigned, to gather feedback on the Next 5 strategic planning project. A town hall meeting is planned for May 15th to gather feedback from those who have not been reached by other means, then a board strategic planning session on May 22nd to develop priorities based on the feedback collected through small groups and otherwise.

Senior Minister Report

Rev. Aday reported that in-person attendance is growing, and online attendance is holding steady, so there has been an overall gain in worship attendance. The attendance numbers are running lower than last year and higher than pre-pandemic. Several people have expressed an interest in joining the congregation at the first worship service they attended in person. She gave an update on educational programming and conversations with the lead givers to the Centennial Campaign.

Other Matters

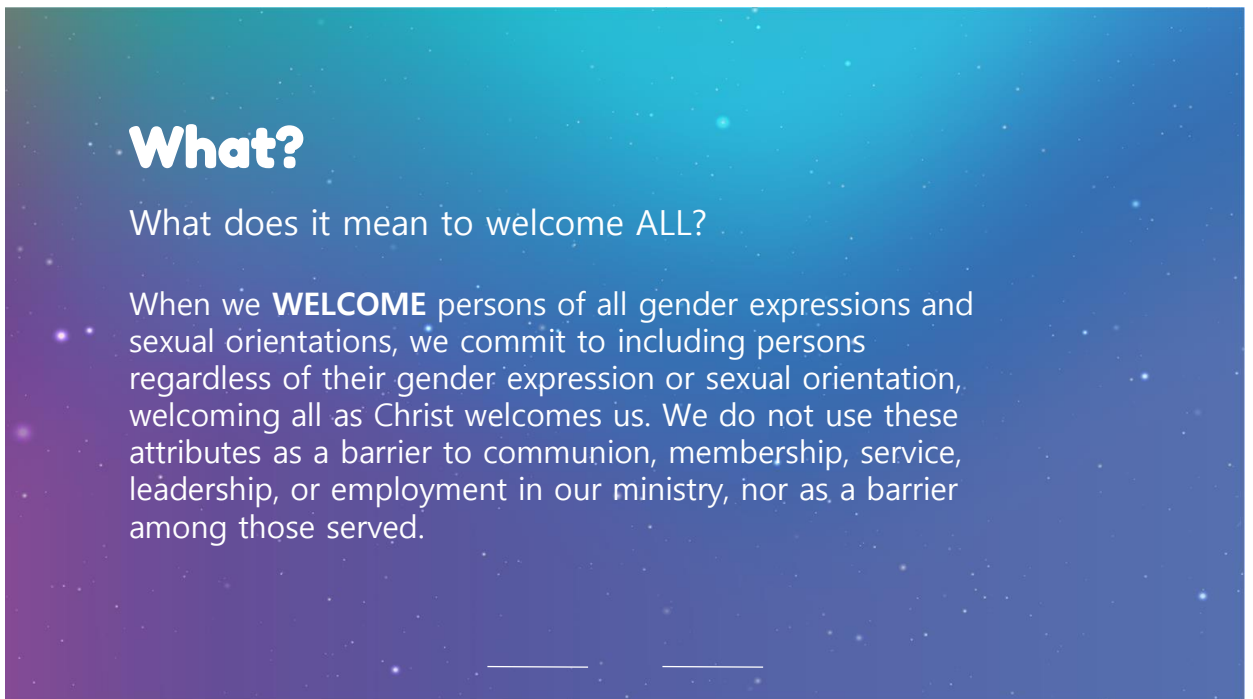
Jennifer Austenfeld asked for each Board member to identify 2-3 people to fill open spots for deacons, elders, Endowment Trustees and the Congregational Board.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment

Mr. Moeder called the meeting to a close at 9:00 pm and Rev. Aday led the Board in a closing prayer.



1



2

What does it mean to be Open & Affirming?

A ministry is **OPEN** when it commits to communicating its welcome publicly.

This communicates that we as a church recognize that these groups and individuals deserve respect.

This open welcome is specific and welcomes these groups by name

3

A ministry is **AFFIRMING** when it recognizes that LGBTQ individuals are equally loved by God regardless of who they love or how they identify with their gender.

An affirming church realizes that the becoming open-and-affirming isn't a one-time step, but a commitment to continually grow in practices of inclusion and celebration of all people, including LGBTQ+ individuals and families. An affirming church seeks to do more than just include LGBTQ+ people but to grow in new ways because of the presence, perspective, and experience of LGBTQ+ people

4

Why?

Why is it important to formally Welcome ALL?

"Everybody" usually doesn't mean everybody.

Hence: "say what you mean, mean what you say." Open & Affirming ministries—they *proclaim* and *embody* God's wide welcome and limitless love.

We have to say it explicitly- just saying "all are welcome" does not cut it for marginalized communities that have been hurt by the church. How will they know they are welcome if we do not say it?

5

Widening our Welcome embodies the teachings of Jesus Christ

Jesus taught that the realm of God isn't just for those who fit into certain religious or social expectations and norms; his ministry showed us how God's realm is found in the places that the world often marginalizes.

"The hour is coming when you will worship God neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship God in spirit and truth" (John 4)

"Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother." (Mark 3)

6

Widening our Welcome embodies the teachings of Jesus Christ

The early church had radical practices of inclusion. Instead of only those devoted to the Jewish religion (out of which Christianity began), the first generation of Christians invited people from all countries and all backgrounds to join their movement. They taught that in Christ, no one was withheld from God's presence and love.

"And through Christ God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things." (Colossians 1)

"I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him."
(Acts 10)

7

But Why do we need a formal designation?

Aren't we already doing this?

- Helps grow the church and it's a way for us to show the community who we are
- Helps people find us easily through registries
- Chips away at the "Country Club" stigma
- Goes against "exclusivity"
- This is moving forward towards the next 100 years of CCCC

8

The Trevor Project

- LGBTQ youth are **more than four times as likely** to attempt suicide than their peers
- 75% of LGBTQ youth report that they have experienced discrimination based on their sexual orientation or gender identity at least once in their lifetime, and more than half said they experienced this discrimination in the past year.
- Those who experienced discrimination in the past year attempted suicide at **more than twice the rate** of those who did not.
- The Trevor Project's research has found that LGBTQ youth who reported having at least one LGBTQ-affirming space had **35% reduced odds** of reporting a suicide attempt in the past year.

9

Who? Is already doing this...

Village Presbyterian
Lutheran Church of the Resurrection.
Country Club United Methodist Church
Crossroads Church of Kansas City
Open Table
St.Peter's United Church of Christ
Keystone United Methodist Church
First Baptist Church of Kansas City
The Kirk of Kansas City
First Lutheran Church of Greater KC
Asbury United Methodist
Colonial Church in Prairie Village
St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church
Kansas City United Church of Christ
St. Andrew's Church
Southminster Presbyterian
Second Presbyterian Church
Central Presbyterian
Linwood United Church
Peace Christian Church
Grace & Holy Trinity Cathedral
Christ the King Independent Catholic Church
Bethel United Church of Christ
St. James Lutheran Church
Parkville Presbyterian Church

Independence Boulevard Christian Church
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
Grace Covenant
Central United Methodist Church
Grandview United Methodist Church
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Guardian Angels Catholic Church
St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church
Epworth Roanoke United Methodist
Westport Presbyterian
Revolution
Broadway Church
Rainbow Menonite Church
Spirits of Hope Metro Community Church
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
St. James Catholic Church
St. Mark Hope and Peace Lutheran
Trinity United Methodist
Saint Marys Episcopal Church
Northeastminster Presbyterian
Avondale United Methodist
Episcopal Church of the Good Shepard
Engelwood Baptist Church

10

Need?

- A commitment to the Open & Affirming Ministry program
 - A consensus amongst the ministry, leadership & congregants that is confirmed by a vote to represent the whole of the congregation
 - A non-discrimination employment policy
 - A commitment to support Alliance Q either financially or through other means
 - A commitment to learning from the LGBTQ community
 - A commitment to make the Open & Affirming status public
- An Open & Affirming **Welcoming Statement**

11

There is a place at God's Table for
EVERYONE

...

All should know they have a place at
Country Club Christian Church

12