

Country Club Christian Church  
Congregational Board Minutes  
November 8, 2022

**Attending:** Jennifer Austenfeld, E.J. Becker, Kathy Buckley, Erin Feitz, Dana Flora, Shelle Jensen, J.J. Jones, Phil Klever, Becky McElduff, Glenn Mills, Matt Moeder, Kay Moffat, Tom Thornton

**Not Attending:** Liz Copeland, Sara Engber

**Staff:** Carla Aday, Tolley Beard, Tyler Heston

**Guests:** Dan Jensen, Mary McClure

***Call to Order***

Jennifer Austenfeld called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

***Welcome and Meditation***

J.J. Jones gave the opening meditation based on favorite quotations.

***Construction Update***

Dan Jensen provided an update on the Building Committee's work to value-engineer the construction plan to the budget based on economic circumstances leading to higher construction cost and higher cost of any additional debt beyond that approved by the Board under the existing construction financing plan, as well as accounting for expected material and equipment delays. The Committee plans to come to the Board in November following the completion of plans and bids by the designer and contractor.

***Open and Affirming Engagement Process***

Rev. Tyler Heston provided an update on the Disciples LGBTQ+ Alliance Q retreat in October where he was featured with the other contributors to the Colors of Hope devotional journal. Alliance Q has been an organization within the Disciples of Christ since 1977 with a mission to build a more just and inclusive church. The focus now is building more diversity of race, gender, economic status and allyship and on working for transformation, not only inclusion.

The Open and Affirming designation is a way of aligning our congregation with its values and shows our commitment to transformation. Affirming is an ongoing process that goes beyond a generic statement like "All are welcome." Part of the Open and Affirming designation is making the welcome explicit with a written and public welcoming statement.

Rev. Heston broke affirmation down into smaller elements like ensuring the church space is physically inclusive including through signage and symbols, including non-normative family

relationship stories without tokenizing, structurally connecting people intergenerationally and by interest, and socioeconomic inclusion that challenges the congregation's expectations of what is "normal."

Ms. Austenfeld outlined the next step—for the church newsletter to announce the Board's intent to take action on seeking an Open and Affirming congregation designation at its January meeting. More time to socialize and receive feedback on the designation would provide better information to discern the congregation's readiness and support. The Board unanimously approved a motion to put an announcement in the church newsletter.

### ***Consent Agenda***

Ms. Austenfeld asked the Board whether there were any amendments or corrections to the items on the consent agenda. None were offered. The Board unanimously approved a motion to approve the consent agenda including the October 11th Congregational Board Minutes.

### ***Finance Committee Report***

Glenn Mills provided the Finance Committee report with an updated format based on the Board's feedback in October showing prior year actuals and notes on the actuals to prior year and actual to budget comparisons.

### ***Senior Minister Report***

Rev. Carla Aday reviewed the dashboard. Attendance is down compared to this point in 2021, when the building first reopened and there were several centennial activities being celebrated. Average attendance is higher across all formats than at this time in 2019. Members continue to return for the first time since the pandemic closure on their own respective timelines, and there is a strong flow of first-time visitors identifying themselves as such.

Rev. Aday discussed progress toward the Next 5 Strategic Goals. The staff stepped up technology and communication work on education allowing for additional views of programming. The new Communications Director has driven an uptick in social media impressions.

Barriers to implementing the Next 5 Strategic Goals center on staffing and lack of lay leadership for ministry programming, as well as adapting to the impact of streaming on Sunday school and worship as primary ways of connecting. The staff continues to adjust strategy and planning for multi-year goals. Matt Moeder referred to Sarai Rice's remarks at the Board's retreat about this time being an inflection point for church as we know it. He encouraged Rev. Aday to give herself and the staff grace for meeting the expectation of excellence, and noted the Board needs to measure expectations over the five-year period. Other Board members spoke in support of Mr. Moeder's remarks.

### ***Executive Minister Candidate Presentation***

Rev. Aday provided an overview of the recruitment process for the Executive Minister

position. The Personnel Committee accepted the recommendation of the Search Committee to call Rev. David Bryce Bowers under the terms he had provisionally accepted pending Board agreement. The Board unanimously approved a motion to call Rev. Bowers under the recommended terms.

### ***The Next 5 Strategic Priorities***

Rev. Aday asked the Board to help break down Goal 4 under the Next 5 Strategic Plan, which is:

- “Strengthen the church’s external and internal identity as an inclusive congregation by:
- A. Effectively communicating our message and programming with the external community;
  - B. Examining the representativeness and appropriateness of the congregation’s name; and
  - C. Focusing on how we can perpetually manifest inclusivity.”

The Board brainstormed on three questions:

- 1. What are the layers of inclusivity we have in mind?
- 2. What would it look like if we were 100% effective in reaching this goal?
- 3. What might be some steps we could take over the next 5 years to get there?

### ***Closing Prayer***

Mrs. Austenfeld called the meeting to a close at 8:38 p.m. and Rev. Aday gave the closing prayer.