

Christ United Methodist Church  
Council minutes  
March 21, 2023

Present were Pastor Kurt Freeman, Hollie Kessler, Pastor Bruce Mowery, Joan Banning, Nick Fetchina, Carol Yarian, Scott Gillespie, Marlen Slagel, Jack Dwiggins, Jake and Emily Mayer, Lisa Hilsabeck, Dana Blanchard and Audra High.

Chairperson Scott Gillespie called the meeting to order and introduced two new members, Lisa Hilsabeck and Audra High. Paula Thoennes, another new member, will be joining Council at our next meeting. Scott asked Pastor Kurt to open with prayer. Pastor Kurt then asked members to share where they had seen God at work. Among the responses were reports of new volunteers: VBS, the Women's Bible Study group willing to help in the childcare ministry, MarLen with success for the Lay Leadership needs. Also, Jake supporting the youth participating in areas outside the church; our continuing to be a welcoming congregation.

The minutes of the January meeting were changed to correct the name of the Mike Linville, the Trustees chairperson, incorrectly identified as Mike Thoennes. Minutes were approved as corrected.

Jack Dwiggins reported for Discipleship. The class on Obedience was finished and a next step will be determined when the committee meets in April. He wants to keep these areas of discipleship in front of the congregation.

In the absence of Claude Sawyer, Staff Parish chairperson, Pastor Kurt reported that there had been discussion about the Early Learning changes, but there was no other information.

Nick Fetchina reported for Finance. He reported that due to COVID, the federal government had put in place a tax credit for businesses, including non-profits, who had kept their employees on the payroll during the pandemic, which Christ UMC had done. After identifying the tax credit program, consulting an accounting firm and determining that our church would qualify, applications were made for this credit. If approved, the credit would be received over the next 2 years, with the first check arriving before July. In preparation for this additional income, as each check comes in the Finance Committee will present recommendations for use to Ad Council for approval. Some areas identified by the Committee as probable recipients were payroll, Trustees and Early Learning.

Carol Yarian reported attendance has been steady and continues to increase, especially in the second service as four or five new families have begun attending. In some situations, new families have invited other new families, sharing their enthusiasm. More people are coming early to attend classes also. She is planning a luncheon soon for the new families with some staff present. She has worked with Emily Mayer to prepare gift bags for the children in Early Learning, including a card listing our Easter services and times. A blood drive is planned for May 4, and once processed, the blood will be returned to the IU and Franciscan hospitals in Lafayette for their use. Cards are being sent to members as needed. The people involved in the Prayer Initiative are in each service to be in prayer for the service and the congregation. Carol and Sylvia Vaughn attended the Breakthrough Prayer Initiative, hoping to use that information to help our congregation understand the importance of prayer in our daily lives. Carol had planned an Art Party this past Saturday and 39 women enjoyed the opportunity to paint. There will be a baseball tailgate opportunity in May.

Scott shared that Mike Linville had reported no big projects from the trustees, just small projects of preventative maintenance.

Dana Blanchard reported for Early Learning that the 3 co-directors were doing well in their new positions. Registration is ongoing for next fall and the programs are almost full at this time. Summer camp is full also.

Emily Mayer, Children's Ministry Chairperson, said that there were several more children in the program from the new families who have come, 25 this past Sunday. The nursery also is serving more children and Emily indicated that the nursery is open all morning, which appeals to parents who want to do classes in addition to worship. With the expectation of additional families with children on Easter Sunday she will need extra volunteers. She has new volunteers for VBS.

Jake reported that the number of youth involved varies greatly due to school and extra-curricular activities. During the summer they will be meeting once each month. A lock-in is being planned for mid-August. Some youth are involved in the Sunday worship services and he has been reaching out to others to become involved. Some members of the congregation are also connecting with the youth. Becca Gillaspay has been an excellent helper for Jake with the youth.

In his other task of technology, Jake has developed information to be put on cards which will be placed on the backs of seats (probably every 3<sup>rd</sup> seat) that have codes to scan for links to the church website, giving information, Sunday bulletin, etc.

Pastor Kurt commented that he has now been here for 4 years, and laity groups are working well. As a result, he is celebrating the fact that he no longer needs to call a Staff Parish meeting. Now that the church congregation is on the same page, he feels we need to begin dreaming about what could happen here. People with social anxiety have felt welcomed and this continues to happen as new families start coming. He has led good conversations with our congregation about the split in the United Methodist Church. He feels that we are a well-cared for congregation and would hope that in 3 to 5 years we would still be caring for one another. So, what is the next step? We should continue to reflect the demographics in our community. Regarding our Early Learning program, with the change in leadership, the atmosphere has changed to a much more cooperative ministry, much appreciated by the Children's ministry leader, Emily Mayer. Adding her to the Early Learning Board was suggested.

There being no other old or new business, the meeting was adjourned, and Pastor Bruce closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joan Banning, Secretary