

Regional Church Council Meeting

February 5, 2022

Via ZOOM

Opening & Prayer

The regular meeting of the Regional Church Council Meeting was called to order on 2/5/22 9:00 am, via zoom led by Candis Wilson, Moderator. Prayer and meditation led by Candis Wilson.

Present

Rev. Allen Harris, Gladys Davis, Rev Dr Pamela Barnes-Jackson, Candis Wilson, Cory King, Diane Bartlett, Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Rev. Lauren Roe (guest), Phil Hunt, Kevin Kaufman, Thomas Barnes, Rev. Faith Solon, Dan Sondles, Dr. Alecia Evans-Hayes

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of the November 5-6, 2021 meeting were reviewed. Motion by Phil Hunt 2nd by Pamela Barnes Jackson to approve.

Committee Reports:

UCC Board Representative Report – Rev. Lauren Roe. Heartland Conference looking for permanent representative from a UCC congregation. Rev. Roe filling in as representative to both until role can be filled. “Hills are Alive” campaign to revive Temple Hills. \$200,000 raised for campaign. Creating list of items to donate. Starting a confirmation camp for comprehensive confirmation class emphasizing the wider church led by Kevin Gary. *Temple Hills to become a depot for Church World Service hygiene kits/buckets donations. Rev Harris suggested a friendly competition between UCC & DOC for bucket donations. *UCC currently looking for a Communications Director. *The Living Water group is offering a training which may be something our congregations are interested in participating in.

Regional Staff – No special reports from staff. Please report any staff concerns to Rev. Harris. Staff appreciative for the Cost-of-Living raises awarded for this year.

Regional Elders – Phil Hunt. 27 churches in Search & Call. Regular work being conducted. Canis asked about where we are in communicating regional elder roles and presents. Website has been updated. Rev Harris will send out communications on a regular basis and perhaps highlight a particular elder each time. Intentional invitations to regional elders to RCC meetings was also discussed. Rev. Faith Solon asked about filling District 9 Regional Elder. Rev. Harris said it is in discernment.

Personnel- Dr. Pamela Barnes-Jackson, Chair. Placed internal job posting for food services director. 1 resume received. Offered position to Bruce Bowerman-Jett. Confirmed by Gladys Davis finance chair and Rev. Harris. The Personnel committee didn't feel regular interview process was required so a visioning dialogue with representatives from the Camp Christian Committee and RCC representative Rev. Pamela Barnes-Jackson along with Rev. Harris was conducted with candidate instead. Phil Hunt asked if this is an annual agreement or full- time position. Position is an ongoing regional staff position with off season work at 5 hours/week @ \$15/hr, camp and conference season May 1 – Sep 15 work up to 50 hours.

Vision-Dr. Alecia Evans-Hayes, Chair. *See report attached. Bible Study sessions will be passed on to Visioning committee. Now discussing essential tasks of the region and how to best accomplish them.

Finance- Gladys Davis, Treasurer. *See financial reports attached. Reports distributed and shared. Region budget surplus \$66K for 2021. Camp budget 2021 had a positive \$25,274 cash flow. Very positive. Operating fund resulted in a positive cash flow position to fund 2022 spending. All restricted funds are now in a full funded cash position and no longer underwater. A breakdown of restricted funds is included in reports. Funds have grown well in the market.

Gladys Davis reported that investments will be distributed in the 2022 year for current year spending. \$28k income will be distributed to both operating, new church, Camp Christian operating, pastoral relief, seminarians, adult conference, etc. This is the first time in quite a few years we are able to make these allocations of cash.

Phil Hunt asked about the results of Renewal Initiative. See the attached financial report showing an approximate total giving of \$80K. The total is allocated between the Region and Camp Christian operating. The renewal initiative fell short of the \$100K goal. Candis added that the actual giving surpassed prior year and should be celebrated. Phil added that Renewal campaign was close to Christmas campaign which may have impacted both. Candis said Renewal initiative will begin mid-year instead of closer to Christmas. Rev. Harris noted that inflation may have impacted giving at end of year.

Finance committee members will personally sign all annual giving statements for the year 2021. Gladys added that it is important for all RCC members to contribute monetary support to the region.

Rev. Harris asked about requirements of being RCC member to be on finance committee. Candis said this year she is allowing committees to add members without becoming RCC members since the RCC is smaller than usual. Standing committees should be as robust as possible to do necessary work of the region. A pastor in one of our congregations has

requested to be on the finance committee, but does not have time to participate on RCC too. Candis said she would allow this for this year.

Rev. Faith Solon commented that a larger issue in our current structure exists. Is current structure the best structure to engage younger people? They may be reluctant to become part of a larger structure.

Camp Christian Committee- Bruce Bowerman-Jett, Chair. The committee is working on COVID protocol for upcoming seasons well as a new position for a Regional Liaison. *The Pool sub-committee is meeting – nothing to share at this time, just dreaming among ourselves. *Free Store event led by Wendy Taylor gave out 45 pot pies. Also, a Christmas party with 26 families enjoyed a good celebration. The Free Store is looking to work with Mid-Ohio Food Collective to prep space for additional food ministry in the community.

Phil Hunt noted that churches in his area with food needs have erected boxes to hold canned goods available give/take as needed. Bruce stated that Blessing Boxes were placed around the county during pandemic. One Blessing Box remains at Free Store location.

Faith asked about conflict of interest for chairman Bruce Bowerman-Jett and new staff position as Food Service Director. Candis said this is a conflict and Bruce has submitted resignation as both Camp Christian Committee chair and RCC member effective 2/28/22. His resignation letter was read. Motion by Phil Hunt to accept resignation from Bruce Bowerman-Jett. 2nd by Faith Solon. Motion approved to accept.

Business Items Discussed:

1. Resignation Letter

Formal letter of resignation was received from Bruce Bowerman-Jett and read by Moderator, Candis Wilson. Due to regional staff position hiring, Bruce will be stepping down as chair of the Camp Christian Committee and member of the Regional Church Council effective February 28, 2022. Moved by Phil Hunt. 2nd by Faith Solon. Motion approved to accept.

2. Covenant Curriculum

Kevin Kaufman asked about RCC member training. It was scheduled but did not happen. Faith apologized for not sending reminder. 2nd Sundays 7:00 pm for 90 minutes of every month going forward. However, February session will be held February 20, 2022 due to Superbowl. Link, schedule of dates and curriculum will be sent out by Faith Solon.

3. Membership Terms of the RCC

Kevin noted that RCC shrinking. When do new members get added and renewal terms happen? This happens in the fall. Candis will discuss membership process with Rev. Harris. Membership committee trying to increase membership, but it seems to be declining. Necessary to ask if this a healthy structure. Is this an engaging structure? RCC current size is alarming. Candis said this is the year to conduct recruiting for new RCC members. Rev. Harris added that the Regional Assembly is trying to move to a more celebrating and fun format, but a business session will remain allowing for conversation and questions. Gladys Davis commented that ideal size of a board is 7-12 members. Larger boards make decision making more difficult. Candis said declining from 36 to current 11 is a concern. Candis will organize a meeting with Vision, Membership and Rev. Harris to discuss.

4. Regional Camp Liaison Position

Regional Camp Liaison position and job description discussed. At the conclusion of Rev. Alan Dicken's tenure it leads to anxiety of lack of staff to absorb this work since there is no current staff for this position. Rev. Jim Bane recently retired from New Horizon's Christian Church and offered his desire to work with Camp and Conference. Rev. Harris presented a model for a volunteer position to be evaluated annually to fill a need and match gifts & abilities of Rev. Bane. Camp is an important ministry to this region and consistent oversight is necessary. Policy & procedure should be role of Camp Christian Committee with authority given to individual entities within camps to plan program & curriculum. A position to serve as a conduit/liaison to assist between Camp Committee and programs run during summer. Liaison would serve as a resource for kitchen staff and admin staff needs. Liaison would be available to camp directors to discuss issues. Liaison has no authority but would have confidence of Rev. Harris who is ultimately responsible. This is an attempt to inject authority to programming and functionality of camp. Abuse, harassment and inappropriate conduct will go directly from liaison to Rev. Harris. At end of summer, liaison will help with year-end paperwork and programming follow-up (youth giving life to Christ, etc.) Rev. Bane feels that he would be able to be present at start up of camp on Sundays which seems to be when many questions arise.

Recommending that the position be created and that Rev. Jim Bane fill the position for 2022

Discussion: Excellent resolution in the concept as well as personnel. Rev. Harris added that this is a creative and innovative solution to a problem. No vote needed,

but Rev. Harris interested in RCC support and voice of confidence. Phil Hunt offered that the name should be approved by RCC same as Regional Elders.

Candis suggested that RCC affirm the new position as a change in structure.

Faith Solon moved to support Regional Camp Liaison position for 2022 year with option to renew. 2nd by Phil Hunt. Approved. Motion to approve Jim Bane as volunteer as Regional Camp Liaison by Phil Hunt. 2nd by Thomas Barnes. Approved.

Phil Hunt posed question regarding financial allocation of staff salary between region and camp. Candis explained a better matching of breakdown of salary between region and camp budgets. Phil Hunt asked about travel & phone expense for liaison position. Rev. Harris said this expense would go through Camp Christian.

Question was posed regarding the vacancies left by Bruce Bowerman-Jett. The Camp Christian committee will address filling committee chair at their February retreat. The Vice Moderator position will be filled at the pleasure of the RCC. It has been a training position for Moderator. This is current Moderator's last term. Cory King offered that he may be interested in volunteering to fill the Vice-Moderator position. Phil Hunt asked if we could bypass current membership committee and vote to approve today. Rev. Alecia Evans-Hayes also volunteered to fill the Vice-Moderator position. Membership committee chair, Faith Solon will meet with Candis Wilson and Rev. Harris to discuss. Decision made will be to fill the current term only.

Regional Pastor and President Report – Rev. Allen Harris.

Rev. Harris presented his written report. See attached.

Racial Justice, Connections & Communications are Rev. Harris' three priorities. Faith Solon offered the online tool called CANVA. It is free and easy for both the region and local congregations to use. Its an easy social media tool to take advantage of.

Rev. Faith Solon inquired about a central site to post all available scholarships. It is currently scattered among various sites and organizations.

Rev. Alan Dicken has been called to serve as Assoc Director for Immigrant & Refugee Response for Week of Compassion. He is working on refugee resettlement. We celebrate with Rev. Dicken in this new role and his continued ministry.

Review of Regional Calendar

The next RCC meeting is scheduled May 21, 2022 Followed by August 6, 2022, November 4-5, 2022* See calendar dates of upcoming events as included on agenda for this meeting.

Acknowledgements

Candis Wilson closed the meeting by reminding us to always remember ministerial leaders in our region. Today we lift up Rev. Jeff Wheeler, who retired as co-pastor of Northwest Christian Church, Columbus, OH in April 2021. RCC offers our appreciation of his years of service in a multitude of ways, including chair of the Commission on Ministry. The Christian Church in Ohio, at the February 5, 2022 meeting of the Regional Church Council, hereby offers our enormous gratitude for the hard and faithful work of the Rev. Dr. Jeff Wheeler for his over four years as Chair of the Commission on Ministry and his ongoing work on Team 1. Affirmed by Phil Hunt and Gladys Davis. He will continue to work as a member of the Commission on Ministry.

Adjournment

Meeting closed with worship & communion. Meeting adjourned by Candis Wilson.