

## **Hilltop United Methodist Church**

### **Church Council Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, April 16, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.**

**Present via video conference:** Pastor Matt Sipe, Kerry Rausch, Jocelin Reynolds, Karla Lassonde, Paulette Adams, Karin Gavin, Mark Wright, Don Putzier, Derrick Galinat, Stacy Vanderwerf, and Michelle Behsman.

The meeting was called to order by Don Putzier, and the council opened the meeting with prayer.

**Approval of minutes:** March 2020 Church Council minutes were reviewed and approved by consensus.

**Bible Study:** Pastor Matt presented a study of John 20:19-31.

**Calendaring:** Weekly online events include youth group and confirmation on Monday evening, storytime on Facebook on Tuesday evening, bible study on Wednesday evenings, Pub Theology on April 23 at 8:00 pm, Text Message Scavenger Hunt for youth and their families on April 26, May basket delivery by youth group on May 1, and Bloodmobile on May 11 from 12:00-6 pm.

Pastor Matt discussed the continuance of online worship through May 10 for certain, and said that returning to in person worship will be determined by Bishop Ough. Confirmation will be moved to the fall.

**Financial Report:** Mark Wright reported that through the first three months and headed into April the church is holding its own on revenues and expenses. a) Plate giving is tracking above last year. b) We are spending what we need at this point to keep the lights on but have turned down the thermostat! c) The Trustee accounts have not been funded. d) Plate giving net of payroll and expenses is a positive \$10,600 and we began the year with a checkbook balance of \$21,600. d) Finance will continue to monitor plate giving and expenses. Mark also reported that we were approved for a Payroll Protection Program loan, provided by the federal CARES act, in the amount of \$35,500. This low-interest loan for small companies and nonprofits (including churches) can be forgiven if we retain workers. Paulette Adams made a motion to approve the finance report, with a second from Don Putzier. The motion passed.

**Committee Reports:** Committee reports were received by all via email and Don asked if there were any questions or additional items to share. Derrick added that he just received word that Wayne Rom will no longer be able to serve as the community garden coordinator and the Trustees will work on finding a new coordinator.

**Brainstorming:** Pastor Matt shared that this would be a great time to do updates in the sanctuary if only we were a little further along in the MCCI process and had a plan and the funding. He feels that even after we come out of quarantine, live streaming worship will still be an essential part of our ministry and he and the Tech team have identified issues with current lighting, technology, and chancel layout that will need to be addressed in order to improve the worship experience, both in person and online. He feels that now is the time to move forward with the recommendations made by the MCCI facilities coach. The facilities team should continue their work on sanctuary remodel plan, so that we can

build support and fundraise for the project. Don said that we could certainly move forward by requesting bids and estimates. Michelle suggested that we include updates from the MCCI teams in our weekly newsletter.

Pastor Matt asked council to consider what it might look like when we return to “regular” worship and to brainstorm ways that we can be the church, if we are not allowed to gather in larger groups. Stacy suggested that we could meet in smaller groups in homes until we are able to meet in large groups. She also mentioned continuing with Connect Groups throughout the summer, with some still meeting online as needed. Derrick mentioned the need for fellowship and suggested virtual meetups or drop-ins. This idea quickly gained support and council decided that the very next Sunday worshippers would be invited to online fellowship via BlueJeans video conferencing. Matt asked Michelle to put a link on the website to make it easy for people to connect. Jocelin and Kerry offered to serve as online fellowship “hosts” this Sunday and Stacy and Karla offered to serve on the following Sunday.

Other concerns were shared about groups in need; younger families who are now unemployed, and students at MNSU without income. Are we reaching out and meeting the needs of those experiencing grief? Do we need to implement care groups? Can the Wesley Foundation do outreach to the students in need?

Pastor Matt also shared that Lydia Jagodzinski, member of Hilltop and former youth intern, has heard God’s call and is beginning the process to be a candidate for ministry. He said that the SPRC would need to be involved soon and the council could affirm Lydia in a future online meeting.

Matt closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Michelle Behsman