

Second Congregational Central Board –September 20, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Present: Dale Earl, Jack Terrill, Lauren Swiniuch, Joyce Mosher, Peg Round, Nancy Koch, Rev Lisa Stedman

Absent: Doug Marquart, Kathy Taylor

Meeting notice was posted in the Spire and Weekly E-news, as well as announced at Sunday services.

Rev Lisa opened the meeting with a prayer at 6:30pm.

Minutes

August 16 meeting minutes - Acceptance moved by Nancy seconded by Jack - Approved

Updates from Rev Lisa

Comcast Business came to provide Wi-Fi upgrade for the office. Several previous trips resulted with technicians not being able to do the work primarily due to not having the necessary equipment. This time he was able to get all the parts needed, though they had to be brought to him, and the job was completed.

Transition process - Following the Central Board presentation after worship on September 13, we announced that there would be small group discussion meetings to allow discussion and questions about the presentation. Four transition small group meetings were held with a total of 30 people attending the meetings, including one which was held on Zoom. Approximately 21 more of the active members were expected to attend. Rev Lisa went over who attended and who did not.

The question was asked whether we have done enough to get this essential information out? Have we reached enough of the congregation, and have they been provided an opportunity to attend? There was considerable discussion resulting in the belief that we have provided sufficient opportunities and it is time to start making specific recommendations. There was also the recommendation that a congregation led Forward Chat could provide further discussion on the presentation. Members of the Central Board could support this. It was noted that anyone in the congregation could call a Forward Chat.

The comments received at the meetings were that some members were pushing back, others appreciated hearing the information and thought it was well presented. Several people were surprised, and a range of emotions were displayed. Many understood that with declining membership the number of available and willing leaders were dwindling, The result being that there is nobody left to step up. There are too few generations left in the church. Instead of three there is probably one and a half. Several recognized that for years we have been operating at a deficit. There is no energy left. A more complete list of comments received can be found in the Central Board report in the October Spire.

At the meetings it was suggested that we should separate building issues from the community of faith. That this would simplify the discussions and decisions that would need to be made.

Rev Lisa noted that on the UCC website she found a Living Legacy Workbook, a Church Legacy and Closure Resource. She passed out copies. The workbook suggests a process that congregations should follow to reach a decision on closure and legacy. Peg and Jack will review the workbook and report back.

Rev Lisa indicated she would continue to follow up with people at the Southern New England Conference UCC.

Rev Lisa gave an update on the Music Search Team. An advertisement has gone out and they are hopeful there will be several responses. She noted that the person hired would only serve just the program year (through June).

Rev Lisa also announced that she would be retiring this coming spring. Her role as a Transitional Minister will be ending when the congregation makes their decision. She would like to stay on through June which the Central Board agreed to. She also indicated Wendy would also be retiring in the same time period. Both Rev Lisa and Wendy will announce their retirement on the October Spire.

There was a discussion on next steps for the Central Board. We will meet in October to develop a recommendation to the congregation. That recommendation will be presented at a meeting held in late October. Ultimately it is the congregation's role to decide what the outcome will be.

Jack reported on his search through the Commonwealth's website for the procedures non-profits have to follow to transfer assets. There are nine specific steps that need to be followed and we would likely need to hire a Certified Public Accountant to develop the needed 3-year financial reports and an attorney for the court filings.

Further discussion on yoking, merging or other options can be done through the faith community discussions. It would be best to separate these discussions from those of the building and what is to be done with it. There are many options available for both.

There is a need to focus on what was good. There is a long history associated with Second Church and we need to honor that. Many wonderful things were done, and we can continue to do wonderful things. There is so much potential for what can come out of Second Church.

Tasks:

- Dale indicated she would write the Central Board report for the October Spire.
- We will encourage members of the congregation to hold a Forward Chat in early October.
- Peg and Jack will review the Living Legacy Workbook.
- Rev Lisa will see if the SNEUCC has any attorneys who handle churches in transition.
- Dale has a contact to check on CPAs.

Property Committee (Jack):

- **Security/Security Cameras** – Alarmex out of Topsfield installed the 10 security cameras which are operational. Everyone was impressed with the technicians.
- **Updates to the Handicap Door, NSCS Conant St Door, and the Cabot St Doors** – Instant Alarm is expected to install the upgraded system later this month.
- **Appraisal** – Jack reviewed progress to date and requested the Central Board authorize Industrial Appraisal Company to conduct an appraisal of the property. The last one was done in 2013. The Central Board approved.
- **Family Promise** – Jack reviewed what has been done to date. He reminded the board that as Chair of the Property Team, it is his responsibility to oversee the tenants in the building and to set the rates we charge the tenants. In previous discussions Jack had proposed a \$1500/month rent for Family Promise. This was not received well by the Board or the Mission Team. Jack

conceded the point and backed down. Further discussion led to the establishment of a \$100/month rent for them. This would be reviewed in January once Family Promise is no longer paying rent on the building they are leasing.

Next meeting October 18. Meeting adjourned at 8:35.