St. John's UCC Newport Leadership Team Meeting Minutes
February 15th, 2025

President Kyle welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Those in attendance included President Kyle Taylor, Vice President Dave Stamn, Treasurer Vickie Grey Kennedy, Designated Pastor Marty Westermeyer, and guest Julie Ollier. Those absent were Secretary Pat Goins and Past President Laura Haas. President Kyle appointed himself Secretary pro tem after no members accepted the nomination.

Pastor Marty led the opening prayer for the meeting.

Minutes from the last meeting of November 16, 2024 were distributed prior to the meeting. A motion was made by Vickie seconded by Dave to approve the minutes of the meeting. No further discussion. Motion passes.

President Kyle read correspondence that was given to the Leadership Team from Kelli Taylor and John Robson.

Treasurers Report

Treasurer Vickie Grey Kennedy then presented the Treasurers Report. Vickie noted that there have been no major changes in the finances and spending so far for the end of 2024 and beginning of 2025. Only concern is that income is slightly lower than our monthly expenses and that we need to continue to work on this. President Kyle remarked that improvements continued to be made to save money like how energy usage for the church is decreased a decent amount this year when compared to this time last year. A motion was made by Kyle seconded by Dave to accept the treasurers report. No further discussion. Motion passes. President Kyle also express thanks to Vickie for updating the sheet the church counters use and coming up with a solution for the plaque for the sign.

Pastors Report

Pastor Marty Westermeyer presented the Pastors report. This report included work of October 2024 through January 2025 due to Pastor Marty being out on medical leave and Leadership Team meeting being rescheduled. Pastor Marty provided some insight into the work he does like phone calls, meetings, and funerals. Dave made a motion to accept the report seconded by Vickie. No further discussion. Motion passes.

No old business to report on at this time.

Worship

President Kyle checked in with Pastor Marty to see if anything was needed for AshWednesday, Lent, or Easter. Marty reports that everything is good to go for Ash Wednesday and that holy week/Easter are being finalized but nothing was needed at this time.

Enrichment & Spiritual Life
President Kyle has for a check-in with the St. Patrick's Luncheon. Julie Ollier let the Leadership Team know that her and Carol had decorations for the event and would be willing to help out with things but they did not want to be the head of the event. Members of the Leadership Team discussed what the best way to do the event was. It was decided that Dave would check with Diana Stamn about potentially being the head of the event and that we would have a sign-up sheet for members of the congregation to bring in items needed for the luncheon. Kyle and Office Administrator Kelli would organize the announcement and sign-up sheets. This would be the tentative plan for this event.

President Kyle was going to check in on an update for the group lunch at local restaurant following restaurant. Pat Goins was going to check into Barlycorn's so Kyle will check back with Pat.

Vice President Dave Stamn was planning on doing treat bags again for the children who attend Trent. He is still waiting on the catalogues to come out but will order when the information becomes available. Dave is requesting $300 for the project. Kyle made a motion seconded by Vickie. No further discussion. Motion passes.

Julie Ollier brought forward information regarding the East Row Yard Sale occurring Friday July 11th and Saturday July 12th. Julie plans on setting up a stand with hot dogs and water bottles. She also has the idea that members can use the church lawn for free if the provide their own table or pay a fee to have the church provide a table to sell items. The Leadership Team liked this idea and supported it to move forward and asked to let them know if anything else was needed.

Julie Ollier also wanted to check on the date for the Florence Community Band Concert. Kyle confirmed that it will occur on Sunday July 13th. Julie was looking at doing a cookout for the concert but since it is the day after the yard sale, she will instead just focus on the yard sale. The Leadership Team accepted her decision and expressed their appreciation for the work she is doing.

Education and Fellowship
President Kyle Taylor presented an update on Illumination Youth Ministry. At the end of last year, the board of Illumination reached out wanting to know what each church was going to contribute. Kyle explained that no one has followed up with our church on this and that since we have no representation on the board, no children in the program, and the location of the program was not the best for our program, it was recommended to not send funding to the program for this year. Kyle looked to Pastor Marty for advice on his recommendation and Marty discussed how the youth group is not discussed in the minister meetings so therefore he did not see any potential impact/issues with the recommendation. Kyle made the motion to not provide funding which was seconded by Vickie. No further discussion. Motion passes.

President Kyle stated that Laura Haas has Pause for Lent ready to go and does not need any support at this time for this program.

Buildings and Grounds

President Kyle presented a quote from Ark Electric for taking the outdoor electronic sign off the timer. The quote came in over $3,000. Vickie made a motion to decline the proposal which was seconded by Kyle. No further discussion. Motion passes

President Kyle presented a quote to replace the double doors that lead out to the back parking lot. There has been recent issues with the door and the company states that another break potentially could not be fixed. The quote came in at around $8,000. Kyle remarked that at the cost of doors these days, this was not too bad of a quote. Vickie would like to get more quotes for doors before approving. Julie Ollier has someone who she was going to contact for a quote. Item is tabled to next meeting as more quotes are investigated.

President Kyle presented an overview of the church's pest control. Terminix was the company who did our pest control but after months of issues of them not coming, still charging us, and not resolving any issues, Kelli and Kyle terminated our agreement with them and got quotes from other companies. Quotes were received from OPC and ScherZinger. Both quotes were reviewed with Scherzinger coming in around $1,200 a year and OPC at $1,400 compared to $2,000 when we were with Terminix. The Leadership Team liked OPC better because it provided clear language of what they cover including rats which can be hard to find coverage for. Vickie asked if the church has coverage for termites which Kyle said there was through Snowball Pest Control. A motion was made by Vickie to approve the OPC contract which was seconded by Dave. No further discussion. Motion passes

President brought forth two quotes from our technology group CSI. One was for the yearly service contract which is $2,500. Kyle went over the discussion he had with one of the owners of the company and about whether they are getting the full use out of the contract. While some of the programs like the PCI compliance help and work from home programs are used, others aspects of the plan are not used. The owner recommended to continue because some of our equipment will need replaced which the plan will cover and do at a reduce rate. Kyle made a motion seconded by Vickie to approve the contract. No further discussion. Motion passes.

The second quote was in relation to some antivirus program for the server. CSI gifted the church some antivirus initially after having extra copies. It is recommended to have the program because the server at the church is old and is liable to attacks. The cost would be $66 for 3 years and the program can be transferred if the church gets a new server. Dave makes a motion to approve the antivirus software seconded by Vickie. No further discussion. Motion passes.

President Kyle brought forth concerns with birds and the front entrance to the sanctuary. There are bird droppings all over the place and it is a pain to clean up. One solution is to put the glass back in place for a light fixture that is in the attic. Kyle will have our maintenance crew take a look into this. Julie Ollier also recommended a pain that can be put onto the top of the columns called hot feet to prevent the birds from staying up there and she can look into someone who did this at her work. Pastor Marty also discussed maybe needed the little spikes on top of the columns as well. President Kyle will check into closing the light in the attic and talking to our pest control about the top of the columns.

President Kyle brought work a request to purchase a cordless vacuum for the sanctuary to use for cleaning up after events such as weddings and funerals. Vickie requested that the Dan Grey memorial purchase the vacuum for the church. President Kyle thanked Vickie and will pass the request to the Memorial Committee.

Finance
President Kyle presented a new overview for the accounts in the church banking account. The accounts would be condensed into 5 main accounts: General (with subsection for East Row Flower Fund), Food Pantry, Program Ministry (with subsections or Good Samaritan, Straus Student Aid, and Kendrick Library), Music fund (with subsection for Choral Scholar Fund), and memorial. All remaining accounts would be absorbed into their respected category. Each fund would have a group that manages the accounts, oversees the spending of that account, and manages how incomes come into the account. The heads would be as follows: general and Program ministry would be under the Leadership Team, Food Pantry would be controlled by John Robson who heads the Food Pantry, Music Fund would be managed by Michael Sullivan Director of Music Ministries, and Memorial would be managed by the memorial committee. Along with this, any non-monthly reoccurring cost would need to have a check request that is signed by approval by a member of the respected account. The goal of this process is to keep our check request standardized, help the church manage spending/planning for a budget better, and have record of what is approved or disapproved.

Kyle moves to accept this new process with a second by Vickie. No further discussion. Motion passes.

Mission
President Kyle asked about the cookies for firefighter's mission work that was scheduled for February. Vickie has decided to postpone this event until May when it is international firefighter day.

President Kyle reports that mission work at a local group outside of the church is being managed by Tracey Barber and Julie T. and is on track per Laura. Nothing else needed here.

President Kyle reports that a letter was sent to the church from St. Paul's in Newport requesting donation of items for their emergency winter shelter. Due to it being late in the season the church will opt out of this for the time being. A discussion was had which will be looked into about creating a drop off area in the back of the church where people can drop off items for our food pantry and clothing/winter items.

Miscellaneous

President Kyle reports that the East Row Garden Club is asking for the use of the church lawn and Fellowship Hall for June 7th and 8th for the Garden Walk. Kyle moves to accept the request with a second by Dave. No further questions. Motion passes.

President Kyle reported on the strong work our maintenance crew of Connie and her husband has been doing for the church. Kyle reports that a lot of times they have only been putting down one hour of work which Kyle feels is not enough for all the work they are doing. Kyle suggested that the church give a one-time bonus of 4 hours of pay as a thank you for all they have done with the addition that Connie and her husband can double the hours they are there up to 3 hours total as long as they are both there working. Dave made a motion to accept this request with a second by Vickie. No further discussion. Motion passes.

President Kyle requested input on the sexual misconduct policies that were sent out prior to the meeting. Kyle explained that these policies are being pushed by insurance which is why the discussion is being had. Vickie wanted to make an addition that under the section on one-on-one meetings that on top of having the door open, any individual 16 years or youngers needs to have an adult family member present at the meeting. Addition was added after approval from team. It was also requested that we touch base with Trent to make sure they have something in place just to make sure we are covered with their business as well. Kyle will talk to Jan about this in the next few weeks. It was also requested that a copy of this policy be printed for each staff member to read and sign which will then be placed in their personnel file. Dave makes a motion to accept the policy with the addition Vickie made which was seconded by Vickie. Kyle also noted that there may need to be additional training for staff and Leadership Team which he will update everyone on and that staff background checks will be completed here soon. Motion passes.

President Kyle gave the floor to Julie Ollier to present the throwback Thursday campaign. Julie is going to start getting old church pictures scanned and would like to put them on Facebook and tag people to generate some buzz for the church. Julie is also coordinating with Pastor Marty on doing a weekly talk for Facebook and Youtube. President Kyle praised Julie for the idea and stated he can post the stuff for her as long as she writes up what needs to go on them. The Leadership Team expressed their gratitude for Julie and taking on this project.

The Leadership Team went in to closed session to discuss Personnel Policies and Pastor Marty's Evaluation.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kyle Taylor
President, St. John's UCC