

**Fountain Street Church Governing Board Meeting Minutes**  
**January 24, 2022**

**Board Members Present:** Steve DePolo, Win Irwin, Shellie Jeffries, Kristen Loch, Kristin Mayer, Brad Miller, Katie Mitchell, Amy Preston, James Taylor, Chip Wall, George Zuiderveen, Jerrod Nickels, Matthew Huizing, Geoff Kempter

**Staff Present:** Rev. Christopher Roe, Melissa Hoezee

**Guests:** Buzz Wynbeek, Carol Kooistra, Carole V., Chip Meier, Jon Spalding, Judith's iPad, Judy Botts, Kirsten Lundeen, Meredith Bradley, Pamela Schwaderer, Paul Arnold, Rosemary Conlin

Meeting called to order at 7:05 pm.

**Call to Community:** Chip Wall

**Congregant Comments:** None

**Officer Elections:**

Katie Mitchell: on behalf of the nominating committee, moved to accept this slate of candidates for the 2022 governing board officers committee.

Chair: Amy Preston

Vice Chair: Kristen Loch

Treasurer: Win Irwin

Secretary: Katie Mitchell

Member at Large: Shellie Jeffries

Brad seconded. The motion passed.

Amy took over chairing the meeting.

**Update:** Amber Kilpatrick submitted her resignation and the nominating committee will be searching for a replacement. Please let Board Secretary Katie Mitchell know if you or someone you know would like to be considered for the open position. Request for the Nominating Committee to work on finding a replacement.

**Calendar:** Board will continue meeting on the third Monday of the month. There will be a board workshop on Saturday, February 5. Amy will contact board members about participating. Attendance can be in person or virtual. Not a full day event, tentatively 9 am - 1pm. Rev. Jody will be leading the discussion.

**Board appointments:** Need to approve the following proposed chairs for the GB committees:

Finance Committee: Win Irwin

Nominating: Chip Wall

Oversight: Steve DePolo

Communications: Kristin Mayer

GB liaison to the Foundation board: George Zuiderveen

GB liaison to the Social Action committee: Brad Miller

Kristen Loch moved to accept the nominations. George seconded. The motion passed.

**New and Outgoing Members:** Amy welcomed the new Governing Board members, Matthew Huizing and Jerrod Nickels, and thanked outgoing members Kathy Higgins and Will Gallmeyer for their service.

**Approval of January Meeting Minutes:** Katie moved to approve the minutes from the November Governing Board meeting. Kristen Loch seconded. No discussion or changes. Motion passed unanimously.

**Stewardship Report:** Win updated on 2022 pledges - 242 pledges, \$541,644. Budget is based on \$600,000, the goal is \$650,000. Expecting to get more pledges. The committee will send a “nudge” letter in the next few days to those who pledged for 2021, but not 2022.

Committee has lots of other fundraising ideas; Covid has made that harder but they are excited. More to come. Point is, we need to raise more than is in the budget and we are willing to do that in a number of ways. Seeking board and congregation volunteers to help throughout the year.

Keep in mind that people give differently now, so we have to approach differently. They might not want to pledge. Committee is working on that. Would love to have more volunteers.

Kristen L. asked if there was an effort to reach those who didn't pledge in recent years, maybe because of the pandemic. Win said definitely yes, trying to reach the most likely pledgers first. Important to create ways for everyone to give.

Shellie asked if we still need to send thank you letters to those who have pledged. Win said many notes have been sent, but about 100 pledgers still need to be thanked by the board, even if delayed. Mailed note, email, phone call. The list will go out again and Melissa has note cards if needed.

Additional comments provided by Win:

- I sent the latest pledge report as well as the history. We will be sending out a letter to those who pledged last year, but not this year in the next couple of days.
- The Stewardship Committee is committed to undertaking several other fund-raising projects to insure we make at least or budgeted income, if not our pledge goal target.
- We are excited about our upcoming projects and encourage other GB members and congregants to join us – lots of fun and excitement 😊

**Bell Tower Report:** Win thinks he sent out the minutes from the meeting. Committee sent out a “request for qualifications” to four firms. Two responded, both very good. Team decided to work with nationally recognized Quinn Evans Architects from Ann Arbor.

Committee is concerned that we don’t totally understand the structural issue. Need a structural analysis to determine if the issues are mostly aesthetic or deeper. Win then made a motion:

- On behalf of the Bell Tower Committee, I move that the Governing Board endorse our recommendation to ask the architectural firm Quinn Evans to give us a proposal to conduct a structural analysis of our Bell Tower and to proceed with project specifications to make the necessary repairs.

Jerrod seconded the motion.

Discussion - Win emphasized how perfect Quinn Evans was for the job, considering their experience with churches and bell towers. The name might help with fundraisers.

Jerrod asked if we knew how much the structural analysis would cost. Win said no, but he could tell us that the netting cost about \$20,000. The firm that did that said the job would take a couple days, twice as long as the netting, so that would be over \$20,000. We have to find out what they want for the analysis, and it’s important that they do it and do it right. Most recent pictures look worse than we thought.

Kristen L. asked if the structural assessment would be required by anyone else we hired. Win said yes.

Kristin M. asked for clarification that the committee wanted to move ahead with this firm for them to provide a *bid* on what they *expect*. Win said yes, we need an estimate for the structural analysis. Then the board has to approve it, as we don’t expect competitive bids for the structural analysis at this point.

George asked if this is like going to the doctor and getting x-rays and other tests to determine what has to happen, but you have to pay for those other tests? Win said yes. Amy clarified that this is getting a bid for what it costs to get those other tests.

Amy restated the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- It is understood that the Bell Tower Committee would review their proposal and seek Governing Board approval of the next step in the project, which would be to get construction bids.
- We currently have approximately \$800,000 committed to this project – an extremely generous pledge of \$400,000 from an anonymous donor and \$400,000 funds that have been reserved from the Properties Committee Capital Repairs/Acquisition Fund. We will not know the final cost of the project until we receive bids from both the architect and contractor.

**Financials Report:** Win provided highlights:

## 2021 Final Financials

- Note that we reduced our loan to the foundation from \$95,000 to \$80,000.
- We also ended the year with \$172,702.53 in Unrestricted Cash Reserves (a lot from PPP).
- The Committee reviewed in detail our Capital Repair Fund, the Properties Committee 2021 final report, and their 2022 Properties Committee budget (like the new gate for the parking lot). We have sent those to the Governing Board for information and any questions you might have. We've received gifts for various things, and the committee is living up to the restrictions on the gifts and tracking. We got a nice report from Melissa. Final reports are available from the committee.
- We also noted the terrific year the Foundation concluded – with \$4,706,448 in investments at the end of the year.
- Our summary of 2021 results:  
“This was a unique year due to the pandemic and loss of our Senior Minister. While the results financially were very good, they cannot be repeated.”

George mentioned he'd been at a Foundation meeting. The number had gone down a bit as of today, but it was a good year.

## 2022 Budget

- We are asking for approval of the 2022 Budget that has been sent to the Governing Board. The only change to the budget is that our health insurance costs have risen and we have incorporated those increases. Currently, most employees use our insurance.
- Pledges will continue to come in. Much harder to know what we'll get from rentals/events, so we're being conservative and watching expenses. The Stewardship Committee is working on additional income opportunities as well. It will be months before we can know exactly how much income we will receive in 2022.
- The Finance Committee feels that this is the best budget we can offer at this time and that we are fortunate to have an Unrestricted Cash Reserve to make sure we have a balanced operating result at the end of 2022 (would maintain \$119,000 in reserves).

Win moved to accept the 2022 budget. Geoff seconded the motion.

Discussion - Kristin M. asked about a mention that the Finance Committee was thinking of analyzing a *recommended* cash reserves amount. Win said we referred that to the Oversight Committee at the last meeting and made a recommendation. Oversight will come back for a policy. Kristin also asked about making adjustments for staffing; is that reflected in this budget? Win said no additional staffing in the budget now, but the Finance Committee will come back to that.

Amy restated the motion, and it passed unanimously. Amy reminded that we also had to vote on the financials report. Win moved to accept the 2021 financials report. Kristen L. seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Listening Circle Update:** Kristin M. said the Communications Committee took a little break in December but is back to follow up on what they heard in the Listening Circles. Key points:

- Starting to plan a formal ceremony to name things that we need to let go from the past and identify the values we want to carry forward long term. Concerns about being stuck in the past are a big thing.
- We were able to coordinate with Rev. Christopher about identifying what's too broken to be fixed. Still, it's important for this to be a board/lay leadership/congregational effort.
- Writing a letter to send from Committee to the congregation about the key points we gathered from the listening circles.

Kristen L. asked about the ceremony - would this be outside of Sunday services (keeping in mind separation and lay leadership). Kristin M. said they were thinking a Sunday because that's when people are in the building. But also trying to think of a way to publicly state what we're struggling with letting go of. There's also overlap with the Broadbased Community Organizing effort in West Michigan, and those congregants are planning to facilitate deeper connections in small groups, which might be a great place for this outside of the Sunday setting.

Did discuss how the Zoom groups after virtual services were a great setting for these conversations. How could we do something like that, maybe not on a Sunday, but a gathering space to mix people into new groups.

George said he was looking forward to seeing written summaries of what came out of the Listening Circles, which sounds like it is coming next. Will there be a time after these discussed events to make the next move?

Kristin M. shared the Jamboard notes (shared with the Gov. Bd.) from the sessions. Big points about wanting more membership, building welcoming community, wanting more social justice work here and in the community, wanting more diverse membership. Fears overlapped - concerns about keeping the building, larger/more diverse membership, stuck in the past. The coming letter will pull these themes together.

Brad asked how many participants we had in the Listening Circles. Kristin M. said she'd have to recount... Brad asked if it was 16 or 60? Kristin said probably closer to 60. Not as many as we wanted, but we had 3 or 4 circles running at a time some days with 6-8 people in them.

Jerrold saw a comment about wanting 2 services. Was there a lot of that? Kristin M. said it wasn't a common theme that came up repeatedly. Jerrold asked if we think we captured the opinions of the 9:30 service people. Kristin said we did from the people who signed up, but she's not sure how many of those people were participants in the early service.

**Staff Report:** Rev. Christopher referred to the distributed report. Themes are continuing the worship cycle through June with lots of exciting speakers and guest musicians. People are being very generous and offering. Choir is on hiatus due to Covid. Plans to roll through spring. Religious Services is working on the Summer Speakers Series.

We keep managing Covid. We've done all we can to make the church safe. At this point it's an individual choice rather than an institutional one. We'll keep pivoting as needed.

Trying to offer programs but a lot of people are saying they are very busy so not a ton happening there.

We've had an uptick in new members which is unexpected in this season, because many are on YouTube, but 2 or three in recent weeks. Rev. Christopher wishes he had more to give to membership welcoming and inclusion, which we should do every week but we're just not there. Anyone who wants to participate is welcome because this is important. These people really go through a funnel and it's a process.

Amy encouraged board members to support this effort and be available to newcomers. She also noticed that groups for church tours have gone well. Rev. Christopher said yes 20-30 which is great. Shows interest and is appreciated.

George asked about the pivot from institutional decision making to individual decision making regarding Covid. What does that mean? Rev. Christopher said it means we've done all we can to make recommendations for how to be safe. We have to let people make decisions for themselves from there and then work to make everyone feel included whether they're in person or not. It's less about things like closing the church and more about getting people used to keeping themselves safe.

**New Business:** George said he'd like some kind of update on the Senior Minister Search Committee action. Amy said the Nominating Group has been formed, and there's a vacancy because of Amber stepping down. Group said they'd have an update at the Feb. meeting.

Jerrold said he learned that the Search Committee is fully independent from the Governing Board. It might be helpful to publicize that to be sure people understand that it's not the Gov. Bd. making the recommendation.

Kristin M. asked Amy to remind her of the date of the Gov. Board half day workshop. Amy said Feb. 5th.

George complimented Amy on chairing and running the Zoom. Amy said thank you and that Kristin M. had been helping.

Shellie asked if Melissa could update on Samaritas. Melissa said they took a break in December but are back using the 3rd and 4th floors.

**Congregant Comments (new item for the end of meetings):** Meredith Bradley thanked the Gov. Board and staff for the efforts to keep things going. Amazing that everyone is willing to give so much to keep FSC running.

Amy suggested the new members make the motion to adjourn and second. Jerrold moved to adjourn and Matthew seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.