

All Souls Church Council Meeting Notes

Building Beloved Communities

Saturday, September 24, 2016, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

9:00 Opening

- Arrival, Breakfast, & Icebreakers Council Steering Committee Members
- Chalice Lighting and Reading

Opening in a pastoral way, Rev. Rob explained that he's hearing that a lot of members are overwhelmed and in despair over the state of the world. He read out the Wendell Berry poem beginning, "when despair for the world..." It was lovely.

- Welcome and Introductions Cledwyn Jones (Council Chair)

9:35 Staffing Update

Rev. Rob Hardies

Wanted to give a bit of an update on staffing changes: there are three things.

1. Rev. Susan will start her sabbatical October 1. The two sabbaticals ended up close together because the Capital Campaign pushed Rob's sabbatical back. It is not ideal to have the two sabbaticals together, but it might have been worse to have Rob gone during the capital campaign and renovations. Rev. Susan's last Sunday is this one.
2. Rev. Parker will stay with us as sabbatical minister for pastoral care while Rev. Susan is gone on sabbatical. She will also liaise with most of the same committees and projects that Rev. Susan has. She will be preaching once/month. Rev. Parker begins on October 1.
3. Rev. Rob Keithan became our part-time social justice consultant while Rob H was gone, and his contract has been extended until March. When the contract comes up, Rob K will probably not renew b/c he has other work in the world. We will seek another staff member to take over that position then.
4. Leo has been let go because of budget concerns. His position was terminated - and given the budget challenges, we thought we wouldn't be able to support that position moving forward. It being the most recent added, it was also the first to go. FYI, Leo's health care and disability are already being taken care of.

Questions:

1. In terms of the position, where do those responsibilities fall now? Rev. Rob H will supervise program staff. Liaising with council, LDNC, and covenant groups etc., are not figured out yet, and we're still working on that. We do want to make sure everyone's cared for. Gary will take over covenant group organization.
2. Do we know how Leo's doing? We don't know. But we should definitely reach out with cards. We do know he'll be going into another round of surgery unrelated to his accident, so he'll be doing more recovery.

9:40 Staff Speed Dating

Karen King, Staff

Karen announced the rules:

2-10 minute sessions.

1 minute per person per question/answer.

You have to move for the second session if other folks want to be at the table.

We'll end with staff members will ask 1-minute's worth of questions to the congregation after the session.

Staff in attendance: James Ploesser, Rose Eaton, Heather Cramer, Dolores Miller, Rob Hardies, Jen Hayman.

Staff questions:

1. Rob: in 5 years, All Souls will celebrate our bicentennial. What are your hopes and dreams for who All Souls will be on the bicentennial date? What does that look like for you? In other words: Who do you want us to be when we grow up?
2. Rose: Do you know that Gary does communications, and I do room reservations?
 - a. How can you manage, maintain, and improve your volunteer corps??
3. Jen: We've done a lot to grow the music programs to have more opportunities, but where are the GAPS? I see one opportunity with the young kids and youth, but what are other holes I'm missing?
 - a. Where are some opportunities that I might not see, for collaboration with other programs, eg. how can we interact with green souls or social justice groups??
 - b. I'd love to do a big community sing, but how will you help get the word out beyond our doors?
4. James: what are the opportunities that you'd like to invite youth (high school students) to participate in at the church. How can we have more intergenerational interaction? AND whatever you're thinking of, would that appeal to a teenager, and how do we make it appeal to a teenager?
5. Heather: I want EVERY ONE to welcome at the church. The ushers and greeters do a great job, but how can we make it easier for you to make it something that you do?
6. Dolores: how do you and your team plan to volunteer for RE???

10:10 Leading the Beloved Community Through Uncertain times

Rev. Rob Hardies

Rob: Cledwyn asked me to talk about what's on my mind coming back from sabbatical. I've been reflecting that this is the 15th year for me at All Souls. That's 15 anniversaries of our shared ministries together in service to this church and its mission. I'd like to invite everyone to take a moment, turn to someone near you, and reflect on a highlight of the church's ministry to you or to the world together.

...

I think it's important to remember what it felt like when we ourselves received the ministry of the church. Because, when I was on sabbatical I felt a bit like I had no community. Although that was freeing in one respect, it also really got me in touch with how much I/we need religious community as human beings. The hardest times were being away at times like the Orlando shooting and the Dallas murders and the killings of so many black men like in Minneapolis. It felt like, being cut off, like I was the crazy one. It was great to come back to the community to remember who I am, what I love, and what I stand for in these times. I think of that like times of terror, though some folks say that's inflammatory. So, times of division, retreat, hate, fear, nativism, times of inhospitality to the stranger. I see that all over our culture and the world. I just came back from the sabbatical with a sense of the importance of us continuing to build the beloved community in these times.

I came back with a renewed sense of commitment of use going forward, building an antiracist, inter-generational community that seeks to repair what is being harmed and destroyed and torn down in the world. A community that stands in solidarity with those that need to be served, that cares for one another, tends to our own despair and grief, raises our children

with hope in a time in which we sometimes despair over what our own grandchildren's lives will be.

I come back ever committed to building the core of the church, which is the beloved community. It is a goal that will always stand before us. We are always living into it and falling short of it. It is both glorious and painful, and it is the work that we are called to do.

One of the ways I want to work with the Council going forward is for each of our ministries to do an audit on how we can commit more to building the anti-racist, multicultural, intergenerational, etc., beloved community.

One other thing: on a more practical level: 2017 is going to be a hard year for us financially. Because of our recent investment in the church, we took out a mortgage to do all the things great things we did. Next year, our mortgage is going to require payment, and that's a big bill (150-200K) per year going to hit the books in April. Additionally, annual giving has stayed flat because we were all stretching so hard to pay our capital campaign gifts.

SO, we respond with generosity, belt tightening, and do more with less and be creative with that. That mortgage is our collective responsibility, and it's a challenge.

THANK YOU for all the work you do, and every way in which you are generous to the congregation. I love you all!

10:30 BREAK!

10:45 Committee/Program Updates

· 10:45 – Database Improvements Gary Penn and Rose Eaton

Please check out the binder - check out your photo, if you don't like it, send a new one. Please ALSO check the information on your group and correct it using the sticky notes in the binder.

Database update - (see packets on your tables)

- Gary, Heather, and I revamped the group structure. You are able to access it through the website - if you don't have an account ASK GARY. When you log in, there's a green navigation bar, hover over the "groups," and select "small groups."
- On that next page, you'll see four categories community, governance, social justice, and spirituality. Click on your category: you'll see all the groups in your category, and the groups can have multiple leaders. If you're a leader, you'll have appropriate permissions to change things. If you don't, see Gary. There may also be committees and subcommittees. You can review info (hit the magnifying glass), edit info (hit the pencil), see meetings and how often they're held. See who the staff liaison is for each group. Can also print this screen.
- Can change names, but don't do it lightly - definitely TALK TO ROSE beforehand
- Can change start dates, update topics, and add descriptions of your group - THIS DESCRIPTION WILL BE ADDED TO OUR WEBSITE. Remember to update your information!!!!
- Can set addresses for offsite meetings (only people in your committee will be able to see that) can set regular meeting times and dates.
- Can set whether or not you'll provide childcare (MUST COORDINATE WITH DOLORES BEFOREHAND). Can add committee sign-ups, can add website (*if you've vetted with Gary Penn.*)
- Make it visible.
- Do not let people automatically join, let them express interest, and contact them.
- Can automatically send email reminders before the meeting.

- Opportunities always posted in the narthex.
- NEW: kids can choose their own activity and may be in mixed age groups. This will be an experiment.
- Question: how many kids? Answer: We serve about 300 kids and youth together, including those who visit
- Question: are the skits rehearsed? Answer: The skits are not rehearsed, but we send home instructions and ask parents to review, then ask the kids to arrive a half hour early to review.
- Question: how many volunteers. Answer: all total there are about 100 volunteers.

11:30 BREAK!

11:45 Board of Trustees Listening Session Peg Barrett, Board President

- Communications
 - The Board runs on policy governance, and it receives reports from staff quarterly. At the upcoming meeting, we'll review the communications policy.
 - We want to make sure that our professional staff is staying within the policy guidelines.
 - Communications requirements for the board were available. Peg asked that folks review the policy and write down concerns/ideas regarding it.
 - Peg asked for comments and questions, and received the following.
 - Comment: Rose is great!
 - Question: how involved is the bot in the anti-racism workshop? Answer: The 8th Principle Committee has done an assessment us, but not everyone has been trained - we're working to create programs with more variety of time commitment.
 - Question: Can all observe the board meetings? Answer: yes - all are welcome. And we're working toward having better communication regarding when the meetings will be and the agenda.
 - Question: Can the board do a better job of letting the congregation know about financial situation? Answer: We go round and round about that - partly because there are so many factors that go into the financial life of the church.
 - Comment: Announcements about community are VERY restricted from the pulpit - we should open up the Sunday pulpit announcements. Response: We will convey that comment and keep an eye out for ways to do better.
 - Comment: Concerned about lack of communication with people because of some issue with "Constant Contact" failing and kicking folks off the list for some reason; Response: thanks for letting us know!!

12:00 Building Communities Together – Council Caucuses

- 12:00 – Social Justice Round Table Report Cathy Tortorici, Rev. Rob Keithan
 - Cledwyn explained what the Social Justice group has been up to (esp., the get out the vote effort)
 - Susan - comment: we worked with Rob Kiethan over the summer, and this was great because we got volunteer training, and recognized that "we are stronger together" - they're now planning two Green Souls events with Young Souls - so we think our event turnout is going to be better because of it.
 - Question: explain the high level. Answer: we've oriented the caucuses on goal areas on community, spirituality, and social justice, and also maybe foundations/governance -

essentially they are mini councils. This also helps staff liaisons to interface with their affinities.

12:10 – Group Caucuses – Guided Activity Social Justice, Spiritual Development, and Community-Building

- Community Group take aways: community groups would like to meet together more often. But the groups have different strengths - how do they help each other build on those strengths. Some gaps: how do folks transition to a different age group (young to center, center to silver?) without falling through the gaps. Would love to have more intergenerational events.
- Spirituality Group takeaways: how to make connections between All souls and the wider UU community? How are our physical spaces reflective of who we are? Revitalization of a neighborhood ministry - that may also assist us in multigenerational connections - try to organize travel for folks. Finding meeting time is hard - but can we find ministers and formal icebreakers. The group is diverse and have different strengths - Adult Spiritual Development has low staff support, while Vespers has lots. How to connect on levels other than ASC as a SJ platform? Maybe we can have a fun event across group and generational boundaries to come together. Finally: plug for sacred spaces which will have a quilt display at the end of the month. Can connect to find gaps.
- Social Justice: meeting with Rob K is great. General strategy is to not do anything alone, but partner on everything. Big upcoming event is Reeb voting rights project (trip to NC is happening - sign up soon!) One member has signed up to host a call center at home - also see an opportunity in VA: exoffenders in VA. On this we're part of a project to follow up with those folks who received their suffrage again, but who may not have signed up. ADORE project - trainings have been great, but need more strategies for less expensive and intense trainings that will still further goals. Beckner fund now funds in- and ex-ternally. Housing project has won some victories lately. Sunday lunch will be reaching out to committees.

12:50 Announcements

Seeking a WoB leader!!

Need LDNC members - 3 year staggered terms and varied work cycle over the years. We're recruiting! Get in touch!

LDNC leadership course flyer on the table!!

12:55 Closing

Steering Committee Members:

Elyte Baykun, Jen Bolick, Matt Bowen, Wendy Carter, Susan Crim, Carrie Davidson, Pablo de Jesus, Ita Hammond, Anne Herr, Cledwyn Jones (Council Chair), Karen King, Vickie Lindsey, Allison Ralph (Council Secretary), Kenisha Scott, and Lowell Ungar