

## DEACONS

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Attendance:

Yes	No		Yes	No	
■		Peg Birk (2020)	■		Gloria Wallace (2019)
■		Claire Colliander (2021), <i>Treasurer</i>	■		Greg Zoidis (2019)
■		Ed Curtiss (2019)		■	Paula Northwood, <i>Acting Senior Minister</i>
■		Katie Dillon (2021), <i>Clerk</i>	■		Beth Faeth, <i>Minister for Congregational Care</i>
■		David Homans (2020)	■		Seth Patterson, <i>Director of Spiritual Formation and Theater</i>
■		Claire Kolmodin (2020)	■		Dan Wolpert, <i>Interim Minister</i>
■		Brian Siska (2021), <i>Moderator</i>			

GUESTS: none

### ***Actions Taken:***

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Item 1. Minutes of the previous meeting electronically approved.

Item 2. Motion to confirm the four-way covenant with Jenni Eagleman was passed.

Item 3. Motion to take on Christine Ford as a member in discernment was passed.

### ***Agenda and Minutes***

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#### **Meditation (Brian)**

Brian offered a meditation about community and relationships entitled “Why we need each other” from “The Book of Awakening”.

#### **Introductions**

All attendees introduced themselves and shared perspectives on what we bring to and are looking forward to within this work. Many comments included notes of hope and optimism for the future of our church and gratitude for the strong group of Deacons we have as we move forward.

#### **Process Time**

Brian shared that this time will be used as a time to bring up things we have been thinking about, more free-form thinking together.

Some thoughts brought forth:

- How do we lead from a more spiritual grounding as a group? We are not a secular non-profit so how do we shift into being more spiritual and intentional about this?
- How can we speak with one voice as Deacons without losing our own voices?
- People in the congregation want to hear from the Deacons including what we have been thinking about and working on.
- One-on-one conversations can be very helpful to help congregation members feel more informed
- There has been a lot of change very quickly in our organization; this can be an invitation to reinvent but we must be aware that there is a split of wounds and grief along with excitement for the future.
- How do we operate as a group, including our own spiritual development?
- It is important to find our identity including our theology even though we can be so broad in what individuals here believe. We are very united in values.

- What does it mean to be a 21st century church? (it is vastly different than a 20th century church)

## Reports

Ministers:

Paula sent her report to the group electronically since she was not going to be in attendance at this meeting due to vacation.

Dan sent an electronic report prior to the meeting which highlighted some key themes and observations that have arose as he has conversations with Plymouth members. He spoke in more depth about some key themes and also noted that we are uniquely positioned as Plymouth for this new era of religion since we have been having open conversations about spirituality for many decades. Dan also offered to write a white paper regarding thoughts on our process for selection and call of ministers. The group discussed how best to process this important information and how to act on recommendations that may come out of this information. We want to spend time each meeting going through themes. The group discussed how to best share this information with the wider congregation as well as other committees, board and leadership groups in the church so they get to hear what we are hearing; Dan could provide written communication to the broader congregation about the key themes he is hearing and we can communicate with boards and other groups directly.

Much of the nature of Beth's work is pastoral care and confidential, she asked if the group would prefer a written report or a verbal report. The group agreed that a verbal report would be appropriate. Beth has been thinking quite a bit about issues around mental illness and around addiction, she would like to spend some more time thinking about how the church can be a good support for people going through those types of challenges. The Board of Worship has been having great conversations around the vision for worship. With the changes coming in the fall to the Sunday schedule there have been a lot of conversations around where things fit including both worship and spiritual formation as well as other things like artists receptions.

Moderator (Brian):

Brian has been spending time understanding about what we as a group are tasked with (both small and large). This will be discussed in more detail in the annual governance agenda discussion later in the agenda.

Treasurer (Claire C.):

Claire C. shared a draft of the year-end report. Claire C., Brian and Eric Olsen met after the annual meeting regarding how to address issues that seem to come up at annual meetings and how could we address those; topics include the community fund, pledge trends and the programming that happens at Plymouth that is not always reflected within our financial statements. The plan is to address these topics in more depth, potentially through task forces or sub-groups of the Board of Finance and Administration.

Dan spoke about how we are called to spend our money- turning conversations about money into spiritual conversations. This connects economics of the church with our spiritual life. Claire noted that a great example of this is the Community Fund conversation- that topic is really something that deserves a conversation beyond the budget aspect, it should have a group that is tasked with thinking about the spiritual underpinning and the details of giving to outside organizations and could also be about our outreach resources as a whole. A task force like that will need a clear charter.

Seth:

Seth shared about his process toward ordination and his role here, including what ordination and licensing mean. Seth has completed seminary and has a Masters of Divinity; when he left Chicago to move here he had to start the process of discernment over again (within Minnesota Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC)). Between now and being available for ordination he will be completing a paper and some additional process steps (interview and Ecclesiastical Council). According to the UCC guidelines, ordination within the UCC happens when a church calls a

person into ministry who is eligible for ordination, while licensing would mean that a person would be licensed to be clergy at the licensing church, but would not be recognized as ordained within the UCC. Seth also shared that much of his work day-to-day is very similar to a clergy position.

The group talked through the importance of having a thoughtful discussion among our group and with the congregation about the position of the Director of Spiritual Formation and whether that position should be a clergy position in the future. The group noted Seth's role at Plymouth is very positive and he is very valued in the organization.

### **Annual Governance Agenda**

Review agenda for 2018-19 church year:

Brian had sent the annual governance agenda electronically prior to the meeting. The group reviewed the document which includes what will be reviewed each month related to governing policies, tasks that must be completed and avenues for congregational dialogue.

### **Other Matters**

Members in Discernment Committee:

Jenni Eagleman was approved for ordination, she is being called into chaplaincy within Fairview and Plymouth is part of a four-way covenant partnership with her, the conference, and her place of employment. Motion to confirm the four-way covenant with Jenni Eagleman was made by Claire K., seconded by Greg, motion passed.

Christine Ford is a member of Plymouth and ready to begin the discernment process. Motion to take on Christine Ford as a member in discernment was made by Peg, seconded by Ed, motion passed.

Deacons retreat and Leadership day:

We will work to schedule a retreat via electronic poll (the retreat will be in the Fall). Leadership Day is set for Sept. 29th, we will be a part of that.

Communication:

Allison will attend our meetings to facilitate communication with congregation.

*Meeting adjourned at 8:49pm*

### **Next Meeting Preview**

Purposes of the Church

### **Next Meeting**

Tuesday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018, 6:30pm

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*Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Dillon, Clerk*