**Deacon Minutes**

**January 12, 2021**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Present | Absent |  |  | Present | Absent |  |  | Present | Absent |
| Larry Anderson | X |  |  | Mary Lancaster | X |  |  | Pam Parker | X |  |
| Pastor Cable | x |  |  | Wes Langford | x |  |  | Ishi Stackpole | X |  |
| Debbie Ellison |  | X |  | Jim Lorenzetti | X |  |  | Rob Stegeman | X |  |
| Dennis King | x |  |  | Marion Lynn | X |  |  |  |  |  |

Also in Attendance:

Barry Cooper, Debbie Failing, and Diane Fry

* Opening Prayer: 5:45 by Larry Anderson
* Quorum is established.
* The December minutes are approved, and ordered to be submitted to the deacons, Session, and office staff.
* At Mary Lancaster’s suggestion, the deacons decided to delay officer nominations until the February meeting, in order to allow for the installation of the incoming deacons, Barry Cooper, Debbie Failing, and Diane Fry. All deacons are asked to prayerfully consider serving as an officer this year. The deacons will nominate and elect officers and the beginning of next month’s meeting. The newly appointed moderator will run the meeting, and the newly appointed secretary will take the meeting minutes.
* Pastor’s Report:
* The deacons discussed Chapter 9 of From Embers to a Flame, and more specifically our church's mission and vision. Pastor Cable stated that our mission statement is clearly defined by Jesus in Matthew 28:19 – “go therefore make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”
* Pastor Cable had the deacons consider some of the facets of the Great Commission. The first word “Go” is significant, although the word can have more than one meaning. The word “Go” is an imperative that instructs and guides us as Christians. We are not to wait passively for opportunities to come to us to share the gospel with others, but instead, we are to seek out those opportunities. Pastor Cable instructed that, in Greek, the word “Go” can be read “as you are going,” meaning that we are to look for opportunities to make disciples within our normal sphere of influence. The imperative “Go” could also mean that we are to step outside our normal circles in order to share the gospel. Both interpretations are Biblically true. The Great Commission involves action and intention. Deacons are mindful that for us to “Go” often means hanging out with people who aren’t just like ourselves.
* The phrase “all nations” includes everyone. Nobody is to be excluded from our intentions to spread the gospel, and our acts of discipleship.
* The words baptizing and teaching are both key words, and both need to be a significant part of our church’s mission. Discipleship involves how we are to witness to the world. Teaching people to observe the Lord’s commands involves more than telling. Teaching goes beyond telling; it requires time and effort.
* The deacons also discussed why is baptizing included in the imperative of the Great Commission? Baptism is important for a number of reasons. For one, it’s a commitment, oftentimes it’s the first act of profession to faith. Baptism reflects the change in one's heart. Baptism carries with it some powerful pictures. All three types of baptism - [aspersion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aspersion) (sprinkling), [affusion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affusion) (pouring), and immersion (dunking) - symbolize what happens when someone comes to faith. Sprinkling carries with it connotations that, legally, we're free of guilt before God. Pouring relates to God pouring out the Holy Spirit for us. Finally, immersion symbolizes our death to sin and rebirth as new beings. It’s significant that all three forms of baptism involve water, which signifies spiritual cleansing. Pastor Cable reminded the deacons that baptism is not just for the new believer, but it can be a powerful influence on others watching.
* Although our church’s mission is important, for Pastor Cable, the bigger picture is on our church’s vision. For Pastor Cable, the closest he's come to a vision for our church was Gashland MD. He feels as if we could and should do more with that vision, which involved the five types of care we can give to people: initial care, critical care, nourishing care, strengthening care, and future care.
* When asked if there are obvious areas where our church can do more to accomplish its mission, Mary Lancaster observed that we need to do more to reach our neighborhood. Our church is located in its neighborhood for a reason, and the Lord put us "here" in our neighborhood for His purposes. Perhaps we're neglecting our neighbors. Pastor Cable thinks that our church has put energy into neighborhood outreach; some efforts have flared up and then died down, although a few have gained traction. The best traction we've had lately in our community is our partnership with Gashland Elementary. Another recent example of successful neighborhood outreach seems to be the installation of the basketball goals, which have given us some opportunity to interact with our neighbors who use the outdoor basketball court.
* Outreach has been a burden for Pastor Cable, one that we haven't fully figured out. Outreach is definitely an area that calls our prayers. Rob Stegeman commented that in the spirit of reaching out and being more welcoming to our neighbors, we should put the new playground that was recently proposed by the Outreach Team up on the hill by the upper parking lot where it’s more visible, instead of relocating the playground in the former playground area that’s more hidden from view.
* Ishi Stackpole recalled a few Biblical examples of outreach, such as the little girl who showed kindness to Naaman, knowing that she needed to point him to the Lord; and also the woman at the well who didn’t hold back witnessing to others, and telling everyone how Jesus knew everything about her.
* Diane Fry posed the question, how do we get everyone excited to disciple others, and for our members to get involved in the community? Certainly, we must pray for Holy Spirit to stir our hearts and the hearts of those we hope to reach. Pastor Cable shared that he has a desire that, in preaching, people will fall in love with the gospel. The gospel is what changes hearts. When our hearts are properly aligned, then there’s opportunity to present opportunities for members to get involved in outreach efforts.
* Deacons will discuss Chapter 10 next month.
* Pastor Cable had a few words about preparing a letter to the congregation concerning the PPP loan. The purpose of the letter is to inform the members and to explain what decisions were made concerning the PPP loan, and why they were made. The goal is to send the letter to the congregation before the congregational meeting. Although the government has fully approved the church’s application for full forgiveness of the loan, and the church is left with a “surplus” of forgiven funds, the letter is not intended to open up for discussion what will our church do with the “surplus” of funds.
* With regard to online services, Pastor Cable shared that Vimeo has been giving us trouble, both during Sunday morning services and during weekday devotionals. We may transition to a new online streaming service soon. Sermon search has suffered lately, because our pastors have had to divert their attention to fix last minute problems with the online broadcast. Mary Lancaster commented that Pastor Cable should not be spending his time, especially on Sunday mornings, trying to troubleshoot IT problems. Pastor Cable will discuss our church’s IT issues with the IT Team, which meets later this evening.
* Before the deacons resumed with team reports, Mary Lancaster shared a word regarding team assignments. As the deacons are asked to pray about how they may serve on the board, we are reminded that we are all called to mercy. In that regard, while we cannot all serve on the Mercy Team, Mary Lancaster encourages the deacons to consider serving on more than one team, especially if one is not appointed to chair the team of his or her preference.
* Pastor Cable asked the deacons to e-mail him our top three teams, so that team assignments can be made.
* Team Reports:

a. Coordinating:

* Dennis King reported that the Coordinating Team continues to prioritize the safety of those who attend church, and to monitor and adjust our safety protocols. Mayor Lucas announced a press conference for tomorrow afternoon, at which time we expect that a new order related to COVID safety and social distancing guidelines may be announced to replace the current order that expires this Saturday. If necessary, the Coordinating Team will adjust the church’s policy, in order for our church to stay in compliance with the Mayor’s order.
* Dennis King shared that he is ending his service as the Elder liaison to the deacons. The deacons thanked Dennis for his years of service, and prayed for him as he steps away from serving as Elder and President of the church.

b. Finance:

* The December end-of-year financial statement was not prepared in time to share with the deacons. However, the Finance Team offers praise that the church finished 2020 in the “black.” God’ faithful love and provision for our church through all of the hardships of 2020 has been truly amazing.
* Larry Anderson reported that the church’s application for forgiveness of the PPP loan was approved at the end of December.
* The Stewardship Team finished gathering members’ commitments for the 2021 budget. At the end of the stewardship campaign, member pledges fell short of the projected giving by 10%. The Finance Team will present the 2021 budget to the Session later this week.
* The Finance Team recommends that construction of a new playground, if approved by the Session, should go to the next capital campaign.

c. Helps:

* Marion Lynn shared that Linda Reeve worked tirelessly over the holidays to organize 16 volunteers.
* Don Kuenzi will be missed, as he is retiring as a greeter, after many years of service. Beth Schupp is joining the group of volunteers for the Helps Team.
* Debbie Ellison is stepping down as moderator of the Helps Team. Debbie Ellison recently had a minor surgery. Marion Lynn had a carpal tunnel procedure for both of his hands, and will undergo continuing treatment. Please pray for healing for Debbie and Marion, and for their swift recovery.

d. Mercy:

* Mary Lancaster did not have anything to add to the Mercy Team’s written report.

e. Property:

* Rob Stegeman reported that John Wopata has spearheaded many maintenance and repair projects around the church, including elevator inspections, updating the church’s telephone landlines, and making some minor plumbing repairs.
* The church is considering changing its three telephone landlines to a voice over internet protocol (VoIP) system, which would save the church some money.
* The parking lot has been sealed, and the cracks filled.
* Dale Anderson on the Property Team is monitoring the City’s planned drainage project, which is expected to change the flow of water across the east end of the church’s property.
* Property Team will add frosting to the windows of the storage rooms behind the ministry center stage, in order to increase security and visual appeal from the outside of the building. Windows for the hall to the choir room and the reception room are also being considered for similar treatment.
* The exterior door to the fellowship hall will be repaired or replaced, due to corrosion of the bottom edge of the door, caused by salting sidewalks in the winter.
* Mary Lancaster asked if Rob Stegeman is grooming someone to replace him as moderator on Property Team, because 2021 is Rob's final year to serve as a deacon.
* Old Business: None.
* New Business:
* The deacons discussed changing the day of the month and the time for the deacons’ meeting. Larry Anderson moved that the deacons meet on the third Tuesday of the month, and for the meeting to start at 6:30. A vote was taken among the current deacons and the deacons to be installed later this month. Those in favor: Larry Anderson, Barry Cooper, Debbie Failing, Wes Langford, Jim Lorenzetti, Marion Lynn, Rob Stegeman; those opposed: Mary Lancaster and Diane Fry. The motion passed, although the deacons agreed that the change in date and time for the deacons’ meeting would be subject to Pastor Cable’s availability. Jim Lorenzetti will notify Jennifer of the new meeting day and time.
* The next meeting of the deacons is February 16, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. We will set the remaining meeting dates and times for the year at the February meeting.
* WOW reports/Prayer requests
* Ishi Stackpole gave praise that Aviel understands that she needs to pray for God to change her heart.
* Closing Prayer: Diane Fry
* Meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Next Zoom meeting: February 16, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m. (pending Pastor Cable’s availability)

Jim Lorenzetti – Clerk

Mary Lancaster – Moderator