

February 19, 2020

## Moderators' Message

### Mini-Minutes from Church Council Meeting (2/11/20)

In an effort to make the governance of the Hills Church as transparent as possible, the Moderators will begin, with this message, to report back to you from the Church Council Meetings. We hope that these 'mini-minutes' will keep you in the loop about the business of the church.

But first, by way of a reminder, the Church Council consists of 9 voting members: the Office of the Moderator (Current Moderator Chris Stowell, Former Moderator Mary Hill Canavan, and Rising Moderator Sarah Pedersen), the Clerk (Rich Sweeting), the Treasurer (Nancy Simons), and four at-large members who serve as liaisons to the church's four (4) Support Boards (Faith Formation, Tina Andersson; Spiritual Care, Susan Walton; Christian Service, Doug Eisenhart; Stewards, Tia Pinney). Members of the clergy, the Church Administrator (Cynthia Gordan) and CFO (John Dooley) also attend routinely, although they are not voting members.

**Church Council meetings are open to any member of the church.** In addition, Council often invites representatives from the Support Boards, Standing Committees, and Ministry Teams of the church to attend and to provide updates or feedback when issues pertaining to them are to be discussed. Note also that any church member, whether representing a Committee/Board/Ministry Team or not, may request a spot on the Council's agenda by contacting their liaison or one of the Moderators. Church Council meets the second Tuesday of each month, although not usually in August.

**The most recent Church Council meeting was held on past Tuesday, February 11.** As it does at every meeting, Council reviewed updates from the ministers and the four Support Boards about what they and the Church Committees they are affiliated with have been doing. Council also reviewed the financials from the previous month (January 2020) and heard an update on the Capital Campaign which is now into the second phase of soliciting pledges and on track to launch the third phase on March 8.

Some of the **key agenda items** discussed at the meeting were:

- **Update on the Phase 1B Renovation Project** – Chris Stowell provided an update on the planning and design work related to this summer's planned construction work and also pointed out that we have a decision to make about seating in Wallace Chapel. The pews need to come out for the fire protection and HVAC work which will be done there. We can choose to put the old pews back in, or replace them with modular (moveable) seating. Council decided to ask the Spiritual Care Support Board/Deacons (whose purview includes worship) to organize information/discussion sessions for the congregation to help us make a collective decision.
- **Governance Assessment** – Since it has been about four (4) years since the new governance structure was implemented, Council decided last fall that it was a good time to assess the effectiveness of the changes we made in 2016 and so conducted a survey of leadership of the Support Boards, Ministry Teams, and Standing Committees. Council asked Mary Canavan and Susan Walton to review the responses we received from the surveys and present their findings to

the Council at its next meeting on Tuesday, March 10. The point was also raised that the new governance structure is not well understood by a large part of the membership, so that member-education will be an important component of whatever we end up doing (and part of the underlying rationale for this Moderators' Message!)

- **Chronic Budget Deficit** – Over the past twenty (20) years our church endowment has been used annually to make up for chronic budget deficits. Council will ask Stewards to look at past patterns, including previous analyses, to fully understand this problem – with the goal of identifying a long term strategy to reduce our reliance on the church's endowment as a funding source to cover our annual operating expenses.
- **Community Outreach** – Also discussed was our desire to be a welcoming church community, especially for prospective members interested in learning more about our congregation. To this end, we encourage all ministry teams and members to consider ways that they might invite new members of the church or larger community to participate in our collective activities. Oftentimes, this can be accomplished by simply by extending a personal invitation to others to join us.

As always, if you have questions or comments, please contact us individually or at:

[Officeofthemoderator@hillschurch.org](mailto:Officeofthemoderator@hillschurch.org)

Yours in faith and service,

Sarah Pedersen    Christopher Stowell    Mary Hill Canavan