

A Message from the Office of the Moderator

May 21, 2020

Dear Members and Friends of the Hills Church,

RE: Mini-Minutes from Church Council Meeting (5/12/20)

Despite the almost complete absence of Winter this year, Spring is still making its usual unhurried debut in New England. But we have had some beautiful days this month, days perfect for chatting with the neighbors over the fence, or having friends over for a glass of wine on the patio. Unfortunately, our urges to enjoy the outdoors with one another are frustrated by the need to keep ourselves, and the rest of the herd, safe. I can imagine the explosion of barbeques that is bound to occur when the social distancing restrictions are relaxed! It will be like Memorial Day multiplied by the Fourth of July!

In the meantime, however, we continue to do what we must to take care of the Church and one another. Church Council met last week by Zoom (5/12/20), and a brief summary of the meeting follows:

We started the meeting with the usual reports from the ministers and the liaisons to the four Support Boards: Christian Service, Faith Formation, Spiritual Care (a.k.a. Deacons) and Stewards. Some of the items mentioned were:

- Matt Wooster mentioned that we will be inaugurating the first virtual community hour on May 17. He also held the first virtual meeting of the monthly men's group: 30s-50s cohort.
- Anne Marie Holloway reported that in addition to the extensive virtual connections she is maintaining with families, the youth group, and the confirmands, she and the Deacons are working on a way to help parents with kids at home who are feeling the stresses of this time. Their plan calls for connecting them with other people in the church who are a bit older and might have the bandwidth to offer support.
- Judy Swahnberg has had her hands full offering pastoral care, under very challenging circumstances, to several families in the church who have lost loved ones, some to COVID-19 and some to other illnesses. She also was very pleased to announce that Betsy Wooster did an excellent job at her Committee on Ministry meeting, and received a unanimous vote to proceed to her Ecclesiastical Council.
- Christian Service – Doug Eisenhart reported that the Easter Offering which was made online and via email on April 12 brought in \$4,870 which was shared equally between the UCC Puerto Rico earthquake relief fund and Heifer International.

- Faith Formation – Tina Andersson reported that Suzanne Bossert has agreed to co-chair this Support Board, and that they are proposing to add three new members: Maria Davidsson, David Otten and Betsy Wooster. Council voted unanimously to appoint all 4 of these individuals to these positions.
- Spiritual Care – Susan Walton reported that the Deacons participated in a trial run of the “virtual community hour.” At their May meeting, the Deacons also discussed the impact and desirability of a proposal to start the Phase 1B construction project earlier than originally planned and to do the renovations in the Sanctuary building and the Wallace Chapel building simultaneously. This proposal was described in more detail in a message to the congregation from the ministers, the moderators and the co-senior deacons on May 19.
- Stewards – Tia Pinney reported that Birch Hill (our investment advisor) requested that we update the list of people authorized to direct the management of our investment accounts, and also those authorized to make transactions in our accounts at Bank of America and Wellesley Bank. Council voted to authorize Richard Sweeting (Clerk), Nancy Simons (Treasurer), and Chris Stowell (Moderator) to do the former and Jelena Kovrija (Finance Coordinator) and Cynthia Gordan (Church Administrator) to do the latter.

Steven Patrick sent in a report on the Capital Campaign. The plan is to resume the campaign in the Fall with the third phase, which we had just gotten to the point of launching when COVID-19 hit. We still plan to have Commitment Sunday, the phone-a-thon and Celebration Sunday, and Melanie Haddock will remain our consultant.

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

- **Go/No Go Decision on the Phase 1B Renovation Project** – This discussion was described in more detail in a message to the congregation from the ministers, the moderators and the co-senior deacons on May 19.
- **Proposed Review Process for Major Renovation Projects** – Chris Stowell reported on the proposed process which was put together by a group led by him and which included Alex Kolb and Andy Wilson (Co-chairs of the Property Maintenance Committee), Al Persson (Stewards) and Judy Swahnberg. The intent is to develop a process which gathers wide input from the congregation, Property Maintenance, Stewards, Deacons and Council, but is straightforward. Council voted to approve this proposal. Plans for communication with the congregation were discussed as well as more generally how best to manage similar policy/procedure documents. A message describing this review process will be sent to the congregation separately.

We hope you are finding ways to enjoy these Spring days!

As always, if you have questions or comments, please contact us individually or at: Officeofthemoderator@hillschurch.org

In service and faith,

Christopher Stowell Sarah Pedersen Mary Hill Canavan

Wellesley Hills Congregational Church