

Minutes: Pilgrim Council Meeting, Tuesday 19 May 2020 19:15-21:15

Present (via Zoom): Susan Carabbio, Pastor Reebee, Bob Beckwith, Doug Johnson, Jeff Boehm, Ed Bond, Dick Edmiston, Marge S, Mike Stevens, Nick Zorn, and Dave McClave

- Reebee has been (attempting to) attend a homiletics seminar this week - today's sermon was from a Pastor in Chicago
 - "Give permission to mourn" - it is hard to not see one another in person, hard to accept our limitations right now
 - Mourning is something we need to talk about more at this time
 - It is important to have a companion to mourn with, so don't hesitate to call someone
 - We need to remember who else (besides God) is just "outside of our frame"

- Reebee's opening prayer was from Greg Morisse

- Susan C: Mike S. has volunteered to be Asst. Moderator, and Nick has volunteered to be Clerk
 - Nick shared minutes for April after the last meeting, and Susan shared March's minutes after that
 - After a motion, all were in favor to approve

- Treasurer's report
 - The Council is generally surprised about us being "up" on pledge income - Susan thinks it might be because of people donating up-front,
 - Doug asked about the deficit-reduction donation, and whether or not we are still pursuing that
 - Susan offered to re-iterate a message of gratitude to the congregation for their pledges; Reebee suggested that we go "low-key" about that, given that some peoples' salaries may be reducing (i.e. educational institutions)
 - Jeff B. asked about not being able to use all of the SBA loan - why? Dave: it's a strange way of doing things, basing things on 2.5 x the average monthly payroll. The reality is we can only claim 8 weeks of payroll, and we can include utilities, but it's kind of hard to use the entire extra 0.5 x monthly payroll even with that

- Reebee mentioned "Our website is in desperate need of rebuilding, and this will happen this summer." For now, the website will continue to have our entire Zoom services posted under the term "Sermons"

- Reebee's updates on next steps for reopening
 - We have been worshipping online, caring for each other through Zoom, phone, postcards, care packages, ... for 10+ weeks now -- "that's extraordinary"; we have been puzzling through technology, and that conversation is ongoing
 - We have pivoted our interpersonal interactions based on the principle of safety; we've been working so hard to protect the vulnerable and flattening the curve

- Reebee can't think of another time since WW2 when our entire country had a common thrust like this; even though we have already lost more people than were lost in Vietnam, all 50 states are beginning to arc back toward "normal" as of this coming weekend
 - One of the riskiest things we can do is gather in large groups in confined spaces...
 - Gov Baker gave surprisingly more freedom to houses of worship than to other sectors in the first round of opening
 - Pastor Reebee has not heard "we've got to get back into the sanctuary" from *anyone* in the congregation so far
 - Reebee suggests we do NOT change our plans based on the change in MA guidance; continue to follow the SNEUCC guidance: online-only through the summer; pause very cautiously to allow staff in for service and work, while considering the effects of using air-conditioning, etc.
 - Consider appointments for sanctuary time, small (one-on-one) pastoral care sessions OUTDOORS, etc. for the summer
 - Reebee highlighted a comparison list between the MA, SNEUCC, and Pilgrim's
 - "All things are lawful, but not all things are beneficial" - the council of churches quoted 1st Corinthians after the MA guidance was released
 - When we start to allow congregants to gather, we will *continue forever* offering online, streaming of our worship service
 - Even Labor Day resumption of in-person worship is still a **goal**; next few weeks/months will be very telling
 - SNEUCC's website dedicated to this is: <https://www.sneucc.org/phasingforward>
 - Doug asked about Reebee's plans to take time off this summer - Reebee will address that later
 - Dick commented that creatively finding ways to resume some small, safe amount of in-person gathering is important; Reebee has ideas about that, which she will get to later in this meeting
 - Jeff asked about the possibility of opening the sanctuary for walk-in, peaceful prayer time, or time to listen to the musicians practicing, etc.
 - Reebee mentioned some factors with this kind of plan are contact tracing and cleaning
 - Bob re-iterated we are not where we need to be *medically*, and Reebee re-iterated this is a goal, and we are going to do this very carefully
 - Dick asked if we could periodically release (with revisions) our phased re-opening approach - good suggestion
 - Doug is wondering about structural/appliance modifications we could possibly consider (such as ceiling fans etc) to the building
- June 7 or 14: Reebee wants to have a worship service focused on grief, and have small-group worship opportunities
 - Grieve the world we had 3 months ago and may never have again
- Sarah Jane is working on a plan for an online vacation bible school type thing
- Re-envisioning congregational care in this moment
 - Started out this period with a phone tree with small number of volunteers offering to send post-cards, or call and check in, on others -- could we possibly put a tutorial on how to use Zoom on the website?? (Susan's idea, and Reebee knows of a nice concise PDF that demonstrates Zoom basics)
 - Could start some "covenant small groups" now, where those groups would stay in touch and in care for one another
 - * Folks who do not do Zoom

* Crafters group

* Gardeners group

* "Waxy's folks"

- Nick suggested organically nudging people into these small groups via the breakout rooms; perhaps one or more people in those groups could be the "signalers" (Reebee's term) who could, for example, set up a text message group on the side
 - Susan C. suggested perhaps having volunteers organize a call-in to train the not-tech-savvy, if they're interested
 - Dick suggested starting with a small but finite number of opportunities such as Zoom coffee
 - Idea: Drive-by parade for some of the elderly who are definitely not leaving their homes
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- Summer worship as well as potential in-person gatherings this summer (outdoors)
 - Reebee proposal: Make summer worship look like it has in the past, only on Zoom this time. Have at least one staff member present to be the Zoom host, and recruit lay-people to share some sort of reflection
 - Might need a Staff Member, a lay-leader, a Liturgist, and one or more others who can share something (perhaps artwork? poems that are meaningful to them, etc?)
 - Possible title for the ministries "Lean on Me"?
 - Reebee is going to follow up with Susan C. on setting up lay-led services for summer
 - Reebee has used freeconferencecall.com
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- Next Council meeting will be June 16 at 19:15