

Governing Board meeting Minutes May 29, 2024

Check in. Elizabeth, Liz, Kelly, Ross, Jean, Julie, Kelsey

The Board approved the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting by unanimous consent.

Reports

Operations check in

Elizabeth shared that this month's sabbatical pastor is Henry Reitz, who will preach and also be on call for the bulk of pastoral care, along with Judy. Elizabeth did not have anything pressing to report.

Liz will email Lindsey's report to the Governing Board.

Continuing business

Music planning

We had put out ads for a more regular accompanist. We received one application, Eudora, who is a first-year Grinnell student and intended Music major. Eudora played for Elizabeth and Liz, impressing both. In addition to being an accomplished player, she also seems reliable. Eudora will join us in the Fall, picking up Sundays when John Rommerein is off. Finding summer accompanists has been more challenging; we have half of summer Sundays covered. Henry Reitz has two potential leads and will contact Liz. If necessary, we can use recorded music and Kelly Sandquist may be available to play hymns. Al Ricks can also step in periodically.

Financials & Financial planning

We reviewed five of last six years have had an operating loss, using up reserves. We continue to operate at a deficit and cash flow has been an issue. We have postponed some expenditures. So far this year, our expenditures largely match our budget, with giving just slightly behind. If we continue spending as we have, we will continue to draw down the endowment. Jessica Dillon's analysis shows that if we continue on this path we would use up the endowment. At this time, the Board determines a congregational meeting is not appropriate since we do not have something specific to ask. We will share information on June 30. We anticipate challenging conversations. For example, rethinking the 10% tithing to OCWM (focusing more on our *responsibility* rather than standing out so much) and focusing Outreach money more locally (e.g. OWL). We discussed purchasing space in the Grinnell Herald-Register and how to better utilize the building, for example renting out the sanctuary and kitchen.

We continued discussing OCWM, noting that many retired clergy in the congregation strongly support the organization. The OCWM is in a tenuous position; we do not have a community of churches anymore and we might take care to think about our relationship to that problem.

We endowed the Director of Education and Outreach position for one more year, through 2025; we may think about whether that position needs to be full or part time.

New Business

New member of Outreach committee

John Noer would like to step down. The committee has gone from five to four members. We also might consider changing the bylaws from requiring six meetings per year to quarterly. It would be good to be more intentional, for example funding Suds of Love and OWL, to better avoid trying to find ways of spending the money. We discussed more intentionally asking people to serve on open roles. Board members mentioned a few possibilities for new members. Elizabeth will ask the congregation via the e-newsletter, though filling the position will likely require a personal ask.

Compassionate leave plan

The Board confirmed support for extending Pastor Jessica ten working days of additional paid leave time with a maximum of two Sundays, to be used by June 30, 2025. The Board supports Pastor Jessica doing a pilgrimage next year with another five days of paid leave, including one Sunday, anticipated to be used in summer of 2025, with further discussion with the governing board if needed. The motion carried.

Conference guidelines for pulpit supply compensation

In 2023, the Central Association changed the recommended compensation for pulpit compensation, raising it from \$100-\$200/week to \$300-\$350/week in 2024 for leading worship plus travel expenses. We currently pay \$175 for pulpit coverage; we then ask pastors to track their time for pastoral care and mileage. The Board decided to raise the rate in 2025 and commit to checking any changes in the conference guidelines on an annual basis.

Next meeting

Our next meeting will be June 26 at 5:15, with no meeting in July.

Respectfully submitted,

Ross Haenfler, past Moderator