

Newport Covenant Church, Bellevue, WA

June 12, 2022 - Congregational Meeting Minutes – *PENDING APPROVAL*

Opening

- Welcome and Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm by Pastor Merrie Carson, Chair, in person at Newport Covenant Church and online via Zoom. The meeting was recorded. Logistics of the meeting were explained for in-person and online.
- Opening Prayer and Opening Words/Scripture: Pastor Britta Burger and Pastor Paul Burger

Go to <https://newportcov.church/life/> for the meeting agenda, ministry report, and past meeting minutes.

Opening Words and Scripture: Pastor Britta Burger & Pastor Paul Burger

Pastor Britta reflected on Phil. 1:9-11. That 1) we love each other more and 2) that we discern what is best, that 3) we do this through Jesus Christ. Pastor Paul prayed.

- Opening business. A quorum was established. We currently have 191 members. In the last six months, we have been calling people to see who has been attending online and in person. We have some new members and some that are no longer involved.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adopt the agenda.

APPROVED

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to approve the congregational meeting minutes of October 17, 2021.

APPROVED

Pastoral Reports

Co-Pastor Britta Burger and Co-Pastor Paul Burger

- The written reports were shared in the ministry report, so we can celebrate the shared stories. It almost feels like 2020-2021 2.0 as we are still dealing with pandemic masks, etc. We are still in a waiting space. It is complicated. We are ready and we want to 'go'. We talk about the 'sprouts' starting to emerge; the root structure we have is starting to break into the surface. We need to discern what is happening and what sprouts to water and attend to. The pastors want to form a leadership where we notice where God and the Spirit is working, not an 'agenda' that the pastors have in mind.
- The reports were a joy to read, even while in the pandemic, how much God is at work. There is a sense of tenacity in the last year of ministry. Compared to other churches where 'nothing is happening', that is not the case at NCC. People were willing to adjust and that is celebrated.
- The pastors see as their job to come along side congregants so that the congregation can do the ministry of the church. This is what they have sought to do in the ministries; that they trust the Spirit of God within the congregation to see where God is at work. This is a healthy church, and they look forward to doing this more.
- The staff team is where they see this happening. These are wonderful caring people with a variety of gifts. The staff are using their gifts and there are still more gifts that have not been tapped into. They

are entering into a discerning process with the staff to see what God is doing. Calling is the intersect of your abilities and the world's deepest needs.

- Pastor Scott Burnett is really a 'pastor' and has held significant pastoral gifts in our church. He has a broader scope and ability beyond Connections and Worship. He is pursuing his studies to be ordained. The pastors want to affirm his calling. We are looking at adjusting his role to "Spiritual Formation", that would include worship, but also expand and unleash him to hold that space more broadly. For example, congregational care with ways to creatively engage people. Another example is discipleship and leadership development. These are 'draft' conversations which started in staff evaluations and are a work in progress.
- Amanda Moffat has been serving as director of youth ministry but that does not hold all of what she has been doing. She is wonderful at connecting new people and she is administratively gifted. We affirm these gifts so people can return and be engaged with Newport. We also affirm her call to seminary. With a new child and her work, she needed to put a pause on some of this. Her role is in flux so that she can attend to seminary, her role as a mother, and her work at church. We ask for prayers for this.
- Hannah Chung has been serving as children's ministry intern since February. We have more and more children coming. We are looking to expand her role from 'intern' to 'resident'. She is still a college student, but this role will bring more permanence so she can continue to serve on Sundays and Wednesday.
- We want the congregation to be informed about all of this. Our hope is that by the fall, the new roles and titles will take effect. We want to affirm the work that God is doing within our staff. These areas integrate with what God is doing at Newport; more families and children are coming, etc. We will bring this back to the congregation in the fall.
- Questions are welcome, either now or privately later. For those online, please use chat.
- No questions were asked.

Pastor Scott Burnett

- Pastor Scott read his report (to read his report, please go to <https://newportcov.church/life/> and refer to the Ministry Report already posted).
- Participating with the Children's message has been a new area he has enjoyed.

Comment: A member stated how much he was grateful that the kids are welcomed at Newport.

Comment: Makes their heart so full to see the kids go up for the "blessage" each week during the service.

Pastor Scott: We are walking in some of the answers to the prayers of the people who formed the first Sunday School that started this church, now almost a 100 years ago.

Comment: Back to the Co-pastor report, applauded the co-pastors for seeing the gifts in the pastoral staff. Toward the leadership component, what is a leader and who is a leader? What is a leader and how are we growing them up?

Elder Board Report – Pastor Merrie Carson, Chair

- It is a blessing and joy to be part of the Elder Board, to see the discernment going on, what God is doing, and asking 'How can we follow Jesus?'

- Please read the ministry report (<https://newportcov.church/life/>).
- Pastor Merrie has taken a class on Jeremiah and how the prophet was ‘weeping’ and that God was weeping over the unfaithfulness of Israel. Many people bail out of the church and their faith. Israel’s heart was not in their worship, and this grieved God over their lack of belief. We need to be faithful to God, his Work, to love Him, spending time in prayer with God, and through Him with each other. For some people, faithfulness is ‘being stuck here’, but with COVID we have had to be flexible to see where God is moving ‘now’. Flexibility is part of our following His spirit. For example, in Acts, the Spirit said to set apart Paul and Barnabas, but because they were flexible to the Spirit, they were able to do what God wanted. She is seeing this on the Elder Board (EB).
- The book, “Pursuing God’s Will Together” by Ruth Haley Barton has been studied by the EB and we are following this asking the question, “How do we follow God together?” The image of NCC like a farm was given by Pastor Scott last fall at the EB retreat. The fields has been lying dormant (this was in the midst of the COVID pandemic). He said we needed to be aware of new things coming, new shoots, to have the flexibility to respond. There was farm equipment sitting around, some was good, but some things were not going to be useful, and we’d need some new equipment. Now that we are coming out of COVID, we are being challenged to ask: “What is God up to and what new things need to be developed and re-tooled?” It is not us making plans, but discerning what God is up to and how we can respond to that.
- Here are some things that Pastor Merrie challenges the congregation to do: Pray for the Elder Board, that our ears are attuned to the Lord and our hearts want to follow Jesus; Pray for the new things God is doing in our congregation, some we have not seen yet, but there is a lot going on underneath. Thank those who are in leadership. Some are now leaving ministry after having served their terms.
 - Ellen Brenden & Dan Miller – Elder Board
 - Joann Wilson - Missions & Outreach
 - Chris Purrier & Hiromi Fujiwara – Adult Formation/Thrive Groups
 - Sandford Peterson & Phyllis Davis - AFC
 - Jordon Louie - Nominating committee
 - Kathy Anderson - Auditor

Affirmation of New Members – Pastor Britta Burger

The following are new or returning members:

- Dan and Lindsey Laszewski
- Karen Patricelli
- Jenny and Paul Graves
- Kandy and David Losh (returning members)

Next Sunday, the new members will be affirmed in the service.

Financial Report – Heather Niemi, Church Treasurer

[Note: See Addendum A for the PowerPoint slide deck shown during the meeting. The notes below supplement the slide deck.]

- Financial Update, \$847,000 was budgeted and income was \$847,000; actual spend was \$792,000, so we spent \$55,000 less than budgeted. This is thanks to Susan and our Pastors and others have been careful about stewarding our money.

- Income – \$780,000 is projected for Tithes and Offerings (T&O). This is based on the run rate, calculations, and prayer.
- Worship Attendance – Attendance is based on headcount in the sanctuary and a multiplier for those attending online. We are looking at an upward trend. During COVID, our attendance was stable.
- Giving Trends – 96% of our T&O come from 66% of our committed givers (those who attend and make a single gift or attend all the time and give regularly). Transactions: 35% online, 65% cash/check. Total gifts: 24% online, 76% cash/check.
- Expenses: See the graph on expense distribution.
- Reserve Funds: Restricted and Temporary Restricted are funds that: “We know how we are going to spend this money”. For Benevolence, we have an inflow and outflow of about \$9000 per month. For temporary reserves, this decreased from \$134,000 to \$76,000, which is a good thing as we want this money to be spent.
- Repair and Replace – this fund is backfilled with 1% of our income per month. The intention is to support normal maintenance without having to do a special appeal. These balances will decline as we address delayed maintenance.
- Audit Report- no material findings; some small items to address.
- Pre-School: We are managing the budget and doing a few things differently. We will end the year with the pre-school at a loss financially because of the lower student/teacher ratio. This will be about \$10,000-\$15,000 which is much lower than expected. The pre-school will cover their own losses. Last year, with the EB, we discerned that we needed to be financially prepared to support the pre-school, but we do not need to do this. There is a healthy financial outlook for next year with an anticipated ‘profit’ for next year. We are integrating budget decisions between the preschool and the church. Enrollment is great and another class will be added. Slowly, over many years, classes had been dropped and enrollment had been declining. But this seems to be changing. Preschool financials are available to the EB. Going forward, the pre-school will look like a department within the church.

QUESTION: On the temporary restricted funds, there was a question about the CHIC/UNITE line item. There was a starting balance of \$67,000, which was a typo.

ANSWER: Heather will look into this. The \$603 will be spent this week which will be used for our youth.

QUESTION: For the bathroom remodel, when will the final bathroom near the family center be completed?

ANSWER: This has been discussed within the AFC. The remodel was delayed, then COVID happened, then resources and supplies to accomplish the remodel were hard to find. There is a small team that owns this. It is expensive and hard to find contractors right now. There is a slowing in the construction/housing market. We take advantage of this in the next 18 months.

QUESTION: About the Community Service fund.

ANSWER: This is directed by the Mission and Outreach Team and the EB approved the use of this money for a site coach at a Bellevue school. This will be for three years through Jubilee Reach, and it is to fund half of the position of a site coach.

QUESTION: What is the enrollment of the Pre-School?

ANSWER: It was about 116 (an exact number was not available), but it was between 90 and 120.

QUESTION: Do we vote for next years budget?

ANSWER: Yes, here is the summary, which was done at the Townhall meeting. The bottom line is \$867,670 is being budgeted for 2022-2023.

MOTION: Move that the 2022-2023 budget be approved as presented.

APPROVED

Leadership Changes and Blessing (Voting)

Pastor Merrie Carson, Church Chair, commented concerning the open positions to please not be concerned. There is work continuing to go on with these open positions so please allay any concerns.

Dan Miller, EB Member remarked that more and more of us are depending on God to direct them. Several people initially thought 'no' but after prayer, decided that God was calling them and later said 'yes'.

We have two options; we can vote by ballot (in person or online) we can have a motion to approve the ballot as presented.

MOTION: To approve the ballot in its entirety as presented.

APPROVED

Any nominations from the floor?

Yes: Kathy Anderson was nominated, with her permission, for the AFC position.

MOTION: To accept the ballot as presented.

Discussion: None

APPROVED

List of Newly Elected and Re-Elected

- Elder Board Vice Chair: Dave Wirrick (newly elected for Vice-Chair; currently Elder-at-Large)
- Elder-at-Large: Andy Robblee (newly elected)
- Elder-at-Large: Chris Purrier (newly elected)
- Auditor: Bridget Frolich (newly elected)
- Mission & Outreach: Mary & Malcolm (newly elected)
- Adult Formation: Open position.
- AFC: Kathy Anderson (newly elected, added to ballot by voice at the meeting)
- AFC: Open position
- Nominating Committee: Open position

Returning Ministry Leader – Voted on for a second term:

- Elder-at-Large: Janet Batiste
- AFC: John Howard
- Nominating Committee: Jim Tjelle
- Nominating Committee: Priscilla Miller
- Connections & Hospitality: Angie Louie
- Women's Ministry: Jamilie Kheriaty-Lewis

Pastor Merrie prayed for those whose terms have expired, those who are newly elected, and those continuing on in service for second terms.

Congregational Q & A:

No further questions.

Closing Prayer & Adjourn by

Adjourned at 1:23 PM with prayer by Dan Miller.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Giordano, Secretary

Addendum A – PowerPoint Slides from Church Treasurer – Budget 2022-2023



Budget Presentation Townhall 22-23.pdf