

Newport Covenant Church, Bellevue, WA

October 16, 2022 - Congregational Meeting Minutes – *PENDING APPROVAL*

Welcome

- Welcome and Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 12:09 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: Remarks were made about Jeremiah 29:1-13 by Pastor Merrie Carson, Chair. God's promise is that He has been with us and is with us, with this said to people who are in exile and will be for 70 years. Our sense in the Elder Board is that "God is up to something", we have new life at Newport that God is bringing to us. God has not forgotten about us, and God has plans for us.
- Go to <https://newportcov.church/life/> for the meeting agenda, ministry report, and past meeting minutes.

Opening Business

A quorum was established.

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

APPROVED

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to approve the congregational meeting minutes of June 12, 2022.

APPROVED

Pastoral Reports

Co-Pastor Britta Burger and Co-Pastor Paul Burger

- Pastor Britta spoke to how proud and grateful to be pastors here; grateful to have a missionary to make bridges to the Muslim populations, to have Scripture spoken in languages besides English, for all the children here. It can feel a little 'out of hand', but that while it might feel it like a bit much, the body here is ready and responsive. It is a gift to watch and participate in.
- Pastor Britta spoke to how with this growing comes other things involved with, which may involve challenge, some grief, and changes. Pastor Britta spoke that with her pregnancy that there is discomfort, and likewise with growth at Newport can have some grief and discomfort as well. Seeing things done in a new way, it can make us to want to stay in our comfort, but God may be asking us to stretch and to grow. We are encouraged to speak to others that are safe, your small group, the pastors, to share that together. With Bjorn, their son, growing so fast, it can feel funny for him. This is the same for us having growing pains at Newport. Please embrace that and communicate with the pastors about these discomforts.
- It is a joy to be on this journey with all of us.
- Pastor Paul mentioned they have been at Newport a year and a half. Now, for the first-time last week, we had four stations for communion, because we have more people here. But this does mean there is loss with that. It can be good, and it can be hard, because not getting to give communion to everyone is a loss and is hard.

- Pastor Paul spoke concerning their leave as a family when they have a new baby. They want their family to be well in this process. The Elder Board has approved that they will have six weeks together, then Pastor Britta will continue with six more weeks of maternity leave. First, it is important to know that this church 'does not need us' as this is God's church and the church is God's. Pastor Paul has great confidence that God will be at work. Pastor Scott will hold the pastoral spaces, especially congregational care. He will lead the staff meetings and be a pastoral presence. In addition, Pastor Merrie, our church chair, will be there to hold a pastoral presence as well, along with Susan Beck. There will be a variety of guest preachers, Greg Yee, Tim Hedberg, and others will be preaching for us. They are having a girl in mid-February. Pastor Paul will be able to return for Lent and Pastor Britta will be available by Holy Week. There is a degree of being tired and this leave will also provide a change as well.
- Prayer was given by Janet Baptist over Pastor Paul and Pastor Britta.
- Pastor Scott has been in the role of Pastor of Spiritual Formation for a few weeks. He is learning a lot and seeing things in new ways, which he welcomes. It has been great to have conversations with people he has known a long time and to learn the history of Thrive Groups.
- Pastor Scott gave an update on his ordination track. He completed the Covenant orientation, which is a series of four classes. He had the option to pursue ordination, especially in terms of the time it would take to do that. He was encouraged by others at the conference and the denomination to petition the Board of Ordered Ministry for equivalency, which he did. This was granted. He did need to take four more seminary classes and go through the ordination process, which takes a year. This past Thursday he had his ordination interview, which he passed. There will be another step this winter.
- Prayer was given for Pastor Scott by Bill Creel

Vote of Affirmation for Ordination of Rev. Scott Burnett in the ECC

In consultation with the conference, our congregation needs to give a vote of affirmation for Pastor Scott's ordination to move forward.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to affirm the ordination of Pastor Scott Burnett with the Evangelical Covenant Church.

DISCUSSION:

APPROVED

Elder Board Report— Pastor Merrie Carson, Chair

Membership Statistics: According to the church records we currently have 159 active members and are expecting to add a few more this Fall!

Temporary Construction Easement (TCE) and Spending Priorities: review of sprinkler research, completed building plan drawings. Work will be done by King County underground on our property for purposes of pipes and sewer, etc. Our church was paid a considerable amount of money for this. The start date has been delayed and is planned to start in March 2023. There will be four to five years where King County will have access to this property, but it may be as little as two years.

Elder Board Discernment concerning the use of this money from King County. Initially it was thought that we would put in the fire suppression sprinkler system and update the alarm system. Months and months of research was done. A small team spoke to the City of Bellevue, the Fire Department, and

obtained bids. The costs for construction is very expensive, much more than thought. We did not have a complete set of accurate building plans for the entire church, which was needed for the bids. We did get a complete set of accurate plans for the building. This is very helpful for the bid process as well as for the future. Dan Miller, Gary Gervais, and Bill Heppner provided a report: to update only the alarm system would cost \$400,000. An integrated sprinkler and alarm system came in at \$1,300,000. This is much more than the money we received from the TCE. The EB spoke to Rollie Persson from Covenant National Properties who was a good resource. We had a large Zoom call with Rollie, the EB, the AFC, and Dan, Gary and Bill. This did not provide clear guidance so we continued to pray on this and decided that we would put this on hold and wait and see if there is something else that God would have us use this money for. With more people coming, maybe this money will be used for something else. For the time being we will not be doing any sprinklers on the building. We covet your prayers, that when it is time to spend the money, God would make it clear what God would have us use the money for.

Discernment on the Elder Board with regard to Pastor Paul and Pastor Britta having another baby. There is great excitement, that seeds were starting to sprout from things that we knew had been buried in the ground but had not seen yet. A lot of our job with the EB is to listen to God and our congregation. We are not going to make this up, we are going to wait on God to let us know. It's exciting to have a staff and lay team to spend time listening to God to hear what God us would have us do. As a congregational church, your input is very important too. We need everyone to listen to God and give that feedback.

Vote on Adult Formation Ministry Team Leader: Lindsey Laszewski

Pastor Merrie and others spoke to Lindsey about her education in Christian ministry and what her desires were. It was felt that God was orchestrating the bringing of Lindsey to lead us in this area. She was affirmed by the Elder Board and she has been working with Pastor Scott. She started the prayer stations at services.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded that Lindsey Laszewski be the Adult Formation Team Leader.

DISCUSSION:

APPROVED

Financial Report

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

Heather wants to recognize that God moves in us with our own gifts and talents. God is working through our pastors and our EB to do God's work and make it as seamless as possible. Disciples Community Covenant Church is moving onto a new chapter, and we will not have rent from them. But we have a new parking rental that will make up for that loss.

Our fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. We are in the first quarter of our fiscal year.

Financial Update, including benevolence update and brief investment update. Income is about \$15,000 behind budget; she is not worried about that. Based on giving from the past, it has always worked itself out by the end of the fiscal year. Operating expenses are more than projected income, but this is because we are fully staffed. We are spending what we are expecting to spend, we re-opened our doors, so we are spending our money but not more than we committed to spend.

Our Q1 tithes and offering are a little lower than past years.

Attendance – She showed a graph of the average of the last three years. Green dots are current year. We have an upward trend. We are growing, which we can all see when we look around during services.

For our funds, we have two major categories: Restricted Accounts (earmarked for Benevolent, bathroom remodel, etc.) and Budget (general fund)

Total Balance for all Accounts has been stable.

Question: Do we have a stewardship committee (one that encourages congregants in tithing and giving)?

Answer: No

Prayer given by Elder Board member Andy Robblee.

Announcement by Pastor Paul is that DCC (Disciples Community Covenant Church – which meets in the Family Center of Newport each Sunday) is concluding their church. Pastor Derrick met with Pastor Paul and Pastor Britta. Their congregation is spread out and with COVID he decided to step down as a pastor. Then three fourths of the congregation decided to move on and close their church. Next Sunday will be their celebration Sunday and October 30th will be their final Sunday, which may have a more extensive time that Sunday.

Congregational Q&A

Question: Is there an update on the bathrooms?

Answer: They are in the bid process and are working on the appropriate time with the preschool.

Closing Prayer & Adjourn

Adjourned at 1:17 PM with prayer by David Wirrick.

Respectfully submitted,
Brenda Giordano, Secretary

Addendum A – PowerPoint Slides from Church Treasurer – Update October 2022



NCCFallCongMeeting
-2022-Finances v2.pp