

**The Church of Christ at Dartmouth College**  
**Minutes of the Congregational Meeting ~ February 8, 2015**

Moderator David Pierce called the meeting to order at 11:15 by asking Rob Grabill, Director of Religious Education, to lead us in prayer.

David then asked for approval of the minutes from the June 22, 2014 Congregational meeting, which were distributed via email. There was a question regarding the recipients of the Harold C. Ripley scholarship award, who were not named in those minutes. Carla clarified that the two recipients of that award were Peter Bensen and Tristan Smith. This information was added to the current meeting minutes. The minutes of the previous meeting were then approved by the congregation.

David next asked Nancy Marion, Treasurer, to give the 2014 Treasurer's Report. The good news we ended the year \$331 in the black. This was despite a small revenue shortfall (of about \$5K) and a reflection of responsible fiscal management that allowed lower than anticipated expenses. The revenue shortfall was due to the loss of one of the cell phone leases due to consolidation in the cell phone market. This may be a concern going forward, but we have had continuing interest in the cell phone spaces available in the church steeple. Turning to our assets, we ended the year with assets of about \$1.5 million, independent of the value of our building (which is about \$7.5 million). There was a question about the increase in the endowment draw projected for 2015 and how is that calculated. Nancy replied that the amount of endowment draw is determined by a formula that is based on the 3 year weighted average of the value of the endowment. Using a 3 year average prevents sudden changes in the endowment draw. There was a question about what is included under additional assets listed as "Fine Arts Investment (insured)". Nancy clarified that this includes antique silver chalices and art work owned by the church. There was a question about the budget line item under Stewardship called "building capital reserve fund" (\$3K) and what that was used for in 2014. Carla replied that that was used for remodeling the lower level classrooms. In addition, those funds were used to fix a water problem on the lowest level; the repairs were responsible for significant savings on water and sewer costs last year. There was a question about what happened to the \$21k shortfall in the 2013 budget -- has that been paid off? Nancy replied that we haven't been able to pay off that shortfall yet and we don't have a surplus in the 2014 budget to put towards it this year. So far, that shortfall has come out of our operating budget and is being carried forward. The Financial Advisory Committee is well aware of this shortfall and expects that it will take time to cover the deficit over a period of several years.

David next asked Steve Bensen, President of the Board of Elders, to bring to the congregation a motion from the Board of Elders concerning whether to join the United Valley Interfaith Project (UVIP). Steve said that the Board of Elders unanimously approved a recommendation to the congregation to join the UVIP. Therefore, a motion was put forward for the church to join UVIP and the topic was opened for discussion. A member of the congregation commented that the three information sessions lead by Leah Torrey, Director of the UVIP, were very helpful. Many thanks go to Charlotte Quimby and Margaret Jernstedt for arranging those sessions. There was a question about what other churches are members of the UVIP and how they might alter the potential goals of the organization. A member of the congregation clarified that in the information sessions Leah made it clear that this is a democratic organization where decisions are made by consensus. Thus, the intention is to avoid any projects that would cause disagreement amongst member groups. So, for example, we couldn't lobby for gun control via this group because it is too controversial. The essence of the group is as a Christian organization despite the secular nature of their work. Several other members of the congregation also spoke in favor of the motion. By joining with others this gives us more power to work for change. There was a question about who from our congregation

will take part in the UVIP and how that will be organized. Carla said this question hasn't been addressed yet. There are members of our congregation who are already actively involved. In addition, every member organization has one member on the UVIP council. That person will represent us and will need to communicate back to the congregation. A member of the congregation clarified that everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in any of the UVIP projects and there are many ways to be involved. It could be as simple as writing a letter to your legislator regarding an issue that the UVIP is working on. Carla said our financial obligation upon joining the UVIP is included under the Elder's budget and is \$3K per year. The financial contribution required for membership is a certain percent of the church's operating budget up to a cap of \$3K/year. A member of the congregation commented that this is not an organization that tackles all problems at once. Rather they choose a few and focus on those, so that they can hopefully make a real difference. David commented that last year when a bill was proposed in the NH state senate to impose a cap on car title lending, the UVIP participated in every discussion and even brought in victims to testify. He thought this had a great impact on the committee, even though the bill didn't pass. As there were no further comments, David took a voice vote. All present approved the motion to join UVIP and none opposed.

Next, David asked Steve Bensen to present the proposed 2015 budget. Steve first described the membership of the Financial Advisory Committee, which includes, in addition to himself, Evan Smith as chair, Trish Jackson, Nancy Marion, Brian Edwards, Jay Benson, Tom Csatari, and Carla. This committee has been very active and met every other week for period of time. He commented that on the revenue side pledges for 2015 are up 8%. Lease spaces are likely to stay full this coming year. Anticipated increases in expenses include the new UVIP membership fee. Overall, we expect a surplus of \$2K. It is also worth noting that we have initiated a planned giving committee led by Trish. While we haven't made up the 2013 deficient, we don't expect to in any one year.

After a motion to approve the proposed 2015 budget David opened this topic for discussion. There was a question about whether the building expense budget is sufficient given the increasing cost of electricity for example. Carla commented that we hope to install solar panels on the roof to help reduce energy costs going forward. A solar contract has not been signed yet but this is something that the Elders and Stewardship boards will discuss in the future. There was a question about whether the investment income that is generated from the endowment is re-invested in the endowment or if we are using all of the revenue generated as part of the operating budget (endowment draw line item of revenue). Nancy clarified that we are using only some of the revenue generated from the endowment for operating expenses and the rest is re-invested. Our goal is to keep the draw on the endowment returns low and not to deplete the value of the endowment. So, in 2015 we expect the endowment draw to be about \$34K, but the overall return on the endowment is expected to be about \$75K. Notably, the endowment is invested with the UCC in a socially responsible manner. There was a question about whether the policy of Dartmouth College/Medical School to reduce off site leases will negatively impact our lease income. Carla replied that we have been notified recently that one of our leases currently held by a group from the medical school will not be renewed but we are working to replace it. There was a question about the budget line items under Religious Education for campus and youth ministry -- these seem very small. Carla replied that these areas are both very active and the budget doesn't reflect the activity or intent in these areas. The budget line items are only for small things (like snacks) and don't capture the effort of the staff in these areas. Rob added that this is also an "off year" for confirmation, so we expect the budget to increase some next year. As there were no further comments or questions, David took a voice vote. All present approved the 2015 budget as proposed and none opposed it.

David then asked if there was any other business to discuss. One member of the congregation took this opportunity to thank those who volunteer and help out with the organization of the church in various roles and responsibilities.

There being no further business, Carla also thanked those that provide leadership to the church. She especially thanked the members of the Financial Advisory Committee and Steve Bensen for his leadership of the Board of Elders. She also thanked everyone for their 2015 pledges and commented that the jump in pledges this year is the largest she has seen in her time at the church. She noted that she is especially grateful that in this year's budget we were able to add health insurance for one of our employees. Lastly, she expressed her appreciation for the remarkable church staff.

Carla then closed the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Libby Barry, Clerk