

Asbury First United Methodist Church
Church Conference Minutes
January 21, 2018 at 12:30 pm

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Cady called the meeting to order at 12:30 pm.

Stephen introduced District Superintendent Vonda Fossitt, who welcomed those in attendance and brought greetings from the Bishop and the cabinet of the Upper New York Conference. The theme for this year is Reclaim – faith in God, hope, joy, and our power, as children of God. DS Vonda lead us in prayer.

Electing a Recording Secretary: DS Vonda opened the floor for other nominations for the role of Recording Secretary; there were none. Those present voted to elect Deb Bullock-Smith as Recording Secretary.

Approval of Previous Minutes: Minutes from the last three Church Conferences (Jan. 22, Jun 25 and Sep. 24, 2017) were presented for approval. Those present voted to accept the minutes with no corrections or additions.

Trustee Ballot: Ballots were distributed to vote on the Trustees for the classes of 2018, 2019 and 2020. After the ballots were collected and tallied, Stephen announced that all of the Trustees presented were elected.

Compensation Report: Pam Reynolds, Chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee was introduced and she presented information about the staff compensation package.

- Staff additions: Deb Bullock-Smith as Administrative Assistant to the Senior Minister, David Strong as Church Administrator
- Pastoral changes: Rev. Jackie Nelson (replacing Rev. Katie O’Hern), Rev. Mike Mullin (position changed from part-time to full-time), Rev. Kathy Thiel, who’s title has changed to Minister for Congregational Care.

The total compensation package, which includes salaries and benefits for all staff is \$1,154,026. This includes maintaining all current positions and a 2% cost-of-living increase.

- Dave Kennedy asked for more information about this compensation package, as it hasn’t been included in past years’ Church Conferences.
- Stephen clarified that in past years, the compensation package has been reviewed and approved by the Church Council (in a Charge Conference).
- Valerie Benjamin offered that the industry standard for cost-of-living increases is 2.5%, so Asbury is right in line with the standard.

The Compensation Package was approved by the majority, with one person voting against.

Continuation of Candidates for Ministry: Mike Mullin, Ian Urriola and Kathy Thiel were introduced and presented as candidates for ministry. Until each is commissioned, we vote annually to approve continued support for their candidacy. The congregation voted to approve continued candidacy for each of the three candidates.

Reception of the Safe Sanctuaries Report: The report was provided to DS Vonda.

Reception of the Audit Report: The report was provided to DS Vonda. The auditors review our books annually and make suggestions for improvements. They found no major issues/concerns this year, and made a few suggestions.

2018 Nominations Report and Vote: Stephen presented the 2018 Nominations Report for approval. He mentioned that, while we make every attempt for the report to be correct, some errors occur. If you find incorrect information, please let Melody Guadagnino know. While the Discipline does not require it, we choose to include as many committees as possible in the Nominations Report. Those present voted to approve the Nominations Report.

2018 Budget and Vote: Morgan Dornsife, Director of Development, presented the budget, which is rooted in the Dreamscape. We use the mission, vision and values as decision-making tools.

In 2017, 97% of those who pledged fulfilled their pledges. There was an increase in new member giving and an increase in unpledged donations. Our expenses came within 1% of a balanced budget. Morgan expressed appreciation to Dick Moncrief, Financial Administrator, and David Strong, Church Administrator for their work.

Our projected income for 2018 is \$2,159,500. The bulk of the income comes from member pledges and gifts, with other income coming from leasing space on campus to tenants (Asbury Day Care, Epilspy-Pralid, District Superintendent's Office, etc.). Our expenses are projected to be slightly higher than last year as a result of 2 added staff positions, and a 2% cost of living increase. Those present voted to approve the budget.

Better Together Update: Paula Keumbel, Co-Chair of the Better Together Campaign presented an update. To date, we have raised 50% of the goal: \$3,012,105 has been pledged by 320 households. The changes to the tax laws resulted in increased end of year giving, and we have received \$700,000 in advance payments on pledges. This will help us to reduce the finance charges we pay for borrowing capital to complete projects. Thank you to all who have pledged so far! If you have not pledged, please consider a sacrificial pledge to support outreach, infrastructure and accessibility for Asbury First.

Building Committee Update: Chuck Hanrahan, Chair of the Building Committee, presented updates. The front steps on 1050 (East Avenue side of the building) will be replaced with granite. The samples that were selected and approved by the Preservation Board are in the Gathering Center, for those who would like to see them. Depending on the weather, work is expected to start at the beginning of April, and should finish in June. The contractor for this

project is Cantenary Construction, the same contractor who did the masonry work in the Gathering Center and on the steeple.

Chuck has had several meetings with Outreach ministries regarding the 1010 renovations. They completed some borings 18' down near the foundation of 1010 to determine if there is bedrock underneath that would prevent us from digging down and lowering a portion of the Dining and Caring Center floor (a portion of the floor in the Dining Room is 17" higher than the kitchen). They didn't find bedrock, so it looks like lowering the floor is possible. In addition, they're working to reduce the number of columns. After suggestions from Outreach ministries, we're increasing the size of the elevator to better handle deliveries of food, supplies and donated clothing. We expect to meet with the Preservation Board several times, but if all goes well, we expect to start digging in late fall of 2018.

New Business: Paperless Conferences. David Berg presented a motion to reduce the amount of paper used at the Church Conference. He suggested an "Opt-out", so those who are able can receive reports electronically, to be less wasteful and better use our resources and money. The reports are available online today, and printed reports will still be available – there will just be fewer of them. In the future, the links to reports will be available several days in advance, so people will have a chance to download and review them before meetings. Those present voted to approve the motion.

The meeting was adjourned by Stephen at 1:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Bullock-Smith

Recording Secretary