

## Notes from our Church Council Mtg. Dec. 8, 2024

Present: guests Alice Barrett, Jeannine Haas, Roberta Wilmore. Also Nancy M., Rev. David, Annie C., Ann G., Richard P., Bruce B., Virginia W., Randy G., and Wendy P.

Following an opening prayer led by Rev. David, our moderator Nancy began the meeting by inviting **Alice Barrett** to speak about her proposal: **“The Spiritual gifts of Elders.”**

Alice proposes to invite church friends and members (60yr old and up) to attend 1 or 2 introductory afternoon sessions to a “Gathering of Elders to Explore our Spiritual Lives and Gifts.” During these first couple of meetings Alice will guide the discussion and help those present figure out if they’d like to continue exploring this rich topic. If folks wish to continue gathering with this format, it is envisioned as an ongoing group (and not a “drop in” type of offering), which could last a specific amount of time (say meet twice a month for X months), or go on for an undetermined length of time. The discussion will center on these “elderly” participants' personal experiences of spirituality and aging, and allow an opportunity to share in a deeper discussion than we often have at church. Bruce notes that we don’t want to duplicate what Bubble Up offers. Alice states that she will work with the Communications Team and return to the CC if needs any money for this initiative. (Randy mentions that M&SJ is another area that could provide funds.) The Church Council unanimously approves this initiative. We applaud Alice for this initiative.

**Roberta Wilmore** then presented her proposal for working with our Youth entitled **“Every Teen Matters: Keeping our Hilltown Teens Supported,”** which would be part of our Young Voices initiative. She proposes opening this up to a maximum of 10 youth, ages 13-18, where they’d gather at Elmers for dinner and discussion (Elmers has OK’d this) once a week for 6 weeks, beginning in the end of March. She says that “they will come out with a different level of confidence” at the conclusion of this program. There are many details which she and Annie C. have worked out and are included in her proposal. In summary, Roberta will provide posters/flyers, will write up a description of the offering for the parents and a separate one for the young people. She has worked with another Ashfield resident in an “interview” type article for January’s Ashfield News. It will be made clear that the church is the one sponsoring this program. We need marketing ready to go soon, with the deadline for January’s *Ashfield News* being Dec. 26th. She would develop a basic application and be the contact person for any questions, including from parents and youth. She emphasizes the importance of all being on the same page (all have the same info.), offering mentors to these youth, and the importance of the final presentation where kids talk about who they want to be.

The Church Council unanimously approves this proposal. Of note: Roberta will be on 2 month sabbatical for two months beginning the end of January - and will be available for emails and phone calls during that time.

## Reports from our various committees:

**Trustees:** Have started working on the 2025 budget. Have received 35 pledges (\$78,290) and hope to receive 30 more. Pledge goal: \$100,000; realistically @ \$95,000.

As the budget is currently figured, even if we received pledges totaling \$100,000 we'll still be short \$20,000. What to do? We do have money in a reserve account, which could cover this shortfall this year, but would leave a very minimal amount in this account. Much good, deep discussion. Church Revitalization and church budget go together so likely this will be included in next year's revitalization discussions. How can we do all that we want to do and still cover our expenses, pay our staff well, and give to those in need? How do we present the budget in a narrative form, noting that "the budget encapsulates our vision." Also discussed the importance of keeping the congregation informed, perhaps quarterly, on how we're doing with our budget. Suggested that Ted, Bert, and David meet to work out how to go forward, educate the congregation.... Rev. David to write something budget related for *Weekly Update*.

Deacons: Hope to restart some sort of childcare/Sunday School program. Also wish CC approval to reach out to the wider community in an effort to increase the amount of money in our Pastor's Discretionary Fund. The needs are greater and the fund has been depleted. (The Christmas Eve offering will go to this Fund.) CC gave unanimous approval for the church to reach out to the wider community in an appeal for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. (Wendy, etc. to write something for January's *Ashfield News*)

M&SJ: Meeting this week. Still have a bit of money.

Food Pantry: Randy notes that the Food Pantry has received a significant donation from an Ashfield neighbor; also that the monthly visits by a Visiting Nurse, Meg R, are greatly appreciated.

Adult Ed: Will soon be offering a 4 session program on Israel and Palestine, based on the book *The Wall Between*.

Nancy led us in a closing prayer, and the meeting was dismissed.

Wendy Prée, note taker (\*Please see meeting schedule below for first half of 2025)

## **\*2025 Meeting Schedule**

Jan. 26 Annual Congregational Meeting with potluck preceding

Feb. 9: CC (Leslie preaching)

March 9: Cong. Mtg. (Alice preaching)

April 6: CC (Ann H. or Nancy S. preaching)

May 4: Cong. Mtg. (Ann H. or Nancy S. preaching)

June 8: CC (\_\_\_\_ preaching)