

GPC Governing Board  
Meeting Minutes  
February 23, 2021

*Via Zoom conference call: Rev. Dr. Douglas Cederberg, Dennis Christo, Robert Converse, Kim Paré, David Raphael, Charles Whittall, Richard Grayson*

This Zoom conference meeting commenced at 7:04 p.m.

Dennis welcomed newly elected members of the GB, Dick Grayson, Charlie Whittall, and Bob Converse. We have a lot to do this year.

Dennis offered a prayer for this day and the church, all the GB members, and God's watchfulness as we deliberate the issues and matters before us. Amen.

**VOTE:** The GB interim meeting minutes from 2/9/21 had been previously distributed and reviewed. Dave moved to approve the minutes as presented. Bob seconded. Unanimously approved. No opposition and no abstentions.

Treasurer's report: Charlie said we're in the hole and failing badly. There's a lot of red and it's dire. Last Sunday's collection was under \$1k which is the lowest it's been all year. We only brought in less than \$20k and spent \$42k. Some of the expense was the snowplowing for January and February. The gas bill also went up 50% for February. It was a comparison from this January to last January. Kim asked if it was from Food Hub usage. Charlie said the cost of natural gas went up. There was a very small amount increase in usage year over year.

Dennis said Karen sent her numbers for stewardship that are very discouraging. Dennis said he'll put a plea in the bulletin. Charlie said the average pledge is up \$220. per person. We had 64 pledges last year and 39 received this year. Bob said that non-pledges was 21% and this year is up to 44%. Dave said some people may be deciding not to pledge to see what direction we're going as a church and that we've remained closed while other churches are open. Dave suggested that Doug and the Chair to craft a letter defining the importance of pledging and the financial commitment to the church and sending it out to all GPC members. Dennis will emphasize this information in this week's bulletin.

Dave said Russ Vickstrom contacted him to set up a meeting with the Grey Group. He thinks the profits from the investments should be moved before the stock market tanks.

Charlie said we need a new key for the mailbox. The mailman broke his key in the key slot. Charlie had a new one made at Jerry's Hardware. Jerry didn't charge a fee because he knew it was for GPC. Charlie gave a new copy to the mailman. The second is hanging where the other keys are in the inner office.

The officer positions were voted and unanimously approved:

Dennis Christo, Chair, liaison for the Pastor

Richard Grayson, Vice Chair, liaison for Facility Use Task Force & Selah

Charles Whittall, Treasurer, liaison for Finance & Stewardship

Kim Paré, Clerk, liaison for Deacons and Hunger Action

Robert Converse liaison for Membership & 125<sup>th</sup> Committee

David Raphael liaison for GPC Facility

There was a discussion about the teams and the two currently working: Facilities and Finance. The Pastoral Search Team completed their work. Team TLC worked diligently for three years and completed their objectives as well.

Doug shared that the PST there was an expectation that he would seek credentialing with the United Church of Christ. His primary credentialing is through the Evangelical Covenant Church. He currently holds dual credentialing with the Evangelical Covenant Church as the primary and the UCC as secondary. The edict at hire was to change the credentialing so that UCC is primary and the Covenant Church as secondary. This would be necessary for Doug to be able to marry people in same sex weddings. Doug said he committed to the process during the search but the UCC panel has been mean, insulting and demeaning about his credentials. Dennis asked if this was because of his philosophy and stance on religion.

Dave said we belong to ICCC and whether this is part of UCC. Doug said he flawlessly served in the UCC for 7 years. Dave said we don't belong to the UCC and don't pay them any dues.

Kim asked if there was only the one conversation with the panel. Doug said it was two conversations. The follow-up question was whether the PST explained the necessity of making this credentialing change. Doug said there wasn't a clear explanation other than the covenant. Dennis asked if it was defined in the covenant as such. Dennis said we don't need to make this an issue. Doug's primary and secondary credentialing are secure. He'll need to reregister with the Central MA Association which is a different affiliation than in New Bedford.

Dick found a copy of the covenant contract. There was a discussion about the privilege of call. Doug explained that means he's able to come and go in affiliated churches. Dick said this was never an issue in the history of GPC. Dennis said as long as the pastor keeps his credentialing in good standing, the demand to switch primary to secondary is not necessary. As long as Doug is not under pressure by UCC to change for us, we're all good with how he's currently credentialed.

Dennis said the next agenda item is the process of reopening. Facility Team, in conjunction with the Deacons, to develop a procedure for reopening. Dennis said he asked Joyce Smith about crafting a written policy and procedures but she's reluctant to chair that responsibility. She's on the mend from cancer treatments.

There was a discussion about the numbers in enclosed spaces as well as how to ensure the sanitization process. Doug said it's more than the 25 individuals, but 40% of the capacity. Dennis said there needs to be specific protocol. Kim said there were barriers to the Deacons owning the responsibility for protocols and sanitization. She thinks it should be brought back to the Diaconate Team. Dick said he'll ask a friend on the cape about whether they have a written description of their entry and service protocols.

Kim said she'll email Bill Hackett to have a Diaconate team meeting next Tuesday, 3/2 at 6 p.m. to discuss this sole agenda item: policy, procedure, and protocols for reopening in-person service.

Dick asked what happened with the Boy Scouts. Dennis explained that because we didn't open, they went to St. Christopher's to have their meetings. Dennis told John Atlas that he has until the end of April to move all of the Boy Scouts' supplies from the attic, closet, and any storage areas.

Dick asked about the 125 active members. That doesn't equate to the pledges. Karen Allen has a roster. Dennis said the 64 pledges could be couples as opposed to individual members. Dick said he got involved with the GB to rouse the parishioners for greater membership and participation.

Dennis said he had a concern about the Food Pantry. Distribution has been way down to 4 families impacting 8 people in those families. There was a discussion about whether an alternate day of the week may be better than Wednesday. Kim will contact Joyce Smith about a day other than Wednesday and promoting that information on the Greendale Face Book page.

Dennis had received a letter from an attorney regarding the Selah property. The issue is that there's a neighbor who has filed a suit that the contested property is theirs and not GPC's. The hospital is no longer interested in pursuing the property but the neighbor is standing firm.

Dick said the contested portion is a swamp. In the property appraisal, it's a wetland. There's no way to get to it, no right of way. There's a lot that runs into the road for that piece Dennis said this is why Russ Vickstrom thinks we need an attorney, Ken Larson of Holden. Dennis left Mr. Larson a message but he hasn't replied. Dick said if the neighbor wants to pursue it and compensate GPC for it, then we should get rid of it. Dave said the neighbor has filed all of the necessary documents. We have no choice and need to follow through with it. If we don't, the property court will award it to him if we don't fight it. Dennis said the property deed filed with the town says the contested wetland is our property.

**VOTE:** Dave made a motion to allow Dennis to speak to Attorney Larson regarding this issue. Dick seconded the motion. Unanimous agreement. No discussion. No abstentions.

Dennis reviewed the three core questions. How do we determine our future and how do we go from here? We need to get some input and brainstorm with people. Doug asked for the demographics. Bob said Karen Allen may have that information. It's an aging church but the question is how many of the active 125 members are elderly? We need more than us 6. Dave suggested an open letter to the congregation from Doug and Dennis. We know God is going to lead us as Doug has preached. The answer(s) may not be a popular answer but it will be an answer just the same.

Dick asked about the two rental churches, CANA and WIMS. No one has heard from them. Dave thought Russ Vickstrom had spoken to David Gentlemen. That was a while ago.

Dick asked who's updating the bylaws with the new information approved by ballot. Dick will work with Dennis to formulate the language for the revised quorum and virtual platform approved by congregational vote.

Dennis said he and Doug signed a certificate of appreciation for Lyn and he purchased a gift certificate to Val's Restaurant in Holden. He brought it by her work today and she said to tell everyone, "Thank You!"

Dave made a motion to adjourn. Bob seconded. Unanimous agreement. The meeting ended at 9:04 p.m.

The next Governing Board meeting will be an interim meeting over Zoom scheduled for Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 7 p.m. The next Governing Board meeting is also a Zoom conference call scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, 2021 at 7 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Kim Paré, Clerk*