

## **Union Avenue Christian Church Board Meeting Minutes**

**Sunday, Dec. 18, 2022**

**Attendees:** (those present highlighted)

Rev. David Woodard, Pastor, Affton Christian Church

Rev. Dr. Paul Koch, Regional Minister, Christian Church of Mid-America

### **Executive Committee**

Kathy Davis, President of the Congregation

Frank Proctor, President of the Board

Michelle Mueller, Vice-President of the Board

Anya Weber, Secretary of the Board

Rev. Michael Riggs, Sr. Minister Ex Officio

Doug Rademaker, Finance & Stewardship

### **Ministry Team Leads**

Outreach & Social Justice: Jacque Foster

Plant & Property: Neil McNeil

Investments: Richard Jones

AGUA: Carla Duncan

New Media: William Brickhouse

### **Call to Order / Opening**

Frank opened at 12:56 PM and offered a word of prayer.

### **Verification of Quorum / Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting**

Anya verified that we have a quorum. Michelle moved and Kathy seconded approval of minutes from our most recent Board meeting on 12/4/22.

### **Presentation by Rev. Paul Koch About Finding an Interim Minister**

Paul talked about this as a **liminal time** for our church, which is when deep, meaningful change can occur. He urged us not to think of it as simply a task with protocols.

He described the process by which ministers can be listed by the denomination's Office of Search and Call (for US and Canada).

They gather references and create profiles for these ministers, talking about what they're looking for. Also includes criminal background check. **These ministers are well vetted.**

We may see candidates from outside our denomination. In particular, Disciples of Christ has a close relationship with United Church of Christ and has faith in their vetting process.

**David and Paul will be sending candidates our way to consider.** We will not hurt their feelings if we say no thank you to a candidate. If we know people interested in serving as interim minister, we should refer them to David and Paul.

Paul explained the **difference between an “intentional interim” and a “transitional minister”**. Intentional interims are NOT looking to become the named pastor at a church; they are only looking to serve as interim. A transitional minister would be open to potentially being hired on as settled minister/named pastor after an interim period.

Paul pointed out that the advantage to an intentional interim is that they are more like a consultant who has our best interest at heart and no self-interested motive. This makes it easier for them to tell a congregation difficult truths.

**Contract for an interim might typically be 1-2 years;** sometimes it will include language such as, “for 2 years with the privilege to extend 3/6 months” if all parties agree to this.

In terms of **salary**, we should plan to offer something in the neighborhood of what Rev. Michael has been earning, but there may be flexibility around that. That would not be discussed until we have identified an interim candidate that we want, who also is interested in moving forward with us.

Michelle asked if there are churches in our area who recently have been through the process of selecting an interim minister; Paul confirmed that there are and they might be open to talking with us about their experiences.

Several people present discussed **how the interim minister will help Union Avenue:** by helping those in the congregation grieving the retirement and subsequent death of former pastor Suzanne; for those grieving Rev. Michael's transition away; and for those still processing bereavement and pain from the early COVID era. Interims also can help congregations trust a pastor if they have lost trust.

Several participants expressed that the transition from Rev. Suzanne to Rev. Michael was rushed for various reasons. A desire was expressed to have a **longer interim time (perhaps 2 years)** to avoid rushing such a crucial process. This interim period will also be a time for UACC to address some deep issues currently facing us (organizational structure, fiscal challenges).

Paul clarified that the interim minister will **help guide us through the search process for the named pastor** when that time is right (and we should not rush that). They can also help us move our Epiphany process forward. It is NOT their role to review specific applications when the time comes to interview candidates for our next permanent pastor.

Frank and Paul clarified the **process for selecting an interim**:

- By 12/19, Paul will send Frank a manual and a template for creating our church's profile on the website where potential interim ministers can search for us.
- Frank will draft a "welcome letter" we can post there as well.
- By the first week of January, the executive team will have finalized the welcome letter and our congregational profile and shared this with Paul for posting online.
- Paul and David will then start calling people who express interest in UACC via the website to learn more about them and tell them more about UACC.
- After names have been gathered, maybe by late January, exec team will choose 1-2 candidates that the Board will interview.

In any **"gap" time** between when Michael leaves and when our interim starts, we will tap into our large network of local ministers to come preach, and will tap into the many skills of our congregation to meet needs that arise (calling on those in our congregation who are retired ministers, social workers, lawyers, nurses, etc.). We will all have to work a bit harder for the church during this transition time, and this hard work must not all fall on 1-2 people.

David shared that the **interim isn't here to fix us; instead they can help us reflect and grow.**

Kathy agreed, framing this as "a **time to regroup**" as a congregation.

David concluded at 2:15 PM with words of prayer and hope.