

The following are highlights from the 12/2/2024 Governance Board (GB) meeting:

- **Call to order/devotional – Mr. Quinn**

Members Attending: Jim Quinn (Chair), Wendy Featherstone (Vice-Chair), Jonathan Carroll-Nellenbach, Cory Tylenda (Secretary), Christy Leshner, Tim Mahan (Treasurer), Ike Jordan, Michelle Bogue-Trost, Sr. Minister and by invitation for portions of the meeting David Strong, Church Administrator, Beth Wilkens – Ex officio

Absent: None

Guests: Dawn Riedy, Diana Carter, Bob Castle, John Ormsbee, Mark Wright

- **Reviewed/Approved Consent Agenda**

Mr. Tylenda

- Review/Approval of Governing Board Minutes of October 9, 2024
- Review/Approval of PPRC Minutes of October 7 **Confidential**
- Review/Approval of PPRC Minutes of November 18, 2024, **Confidential**
- Review/Approval of Finance Committee Minutes of October 14, 2024
- Review/Approval of Finance Committee Minutes of November 25, 2024
- Review/Approval of PSC Minutes of July 10, 2024
- Review/Approval of Corrected PSC Minutes of September 11, 2024
- Review/Approval of Investment Committee Minutes of November 7, 2024

- **Ratification of the Investment Committee’s recommendations to change Investment Managers**

Ms. Wilkens

The GB adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, that the decisions of the Investment Committee at its November 18, 2024, meeting regarding the investment manager changes set forth below be, and the same hereby are, ratified.

- **Ratification of an Amendment to the Investment Committee Charter to include a Paragraph 13.**

Ms. Wilkens

The GB adopted the following resolution:

Resolved, that the November 18, 2024 approval by the Investment Committee of an amendment to its Charter, through the addition of a Paragraph 13, as set forth below, be, and the same hereby is, ratified.

13. Due Diligence. The key components of this policy shall be thoroughly reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the IPS still meets the needs of Asbury First. The Advisor make-up should be thoughtfully & comprehensively reviewed every 7 to 10 years to ensure that the committee has selected the best potential partners to ensure portfolio growth at an acceptable level of risk. The committee should use a process that includes an RFP submission from all appropriate candidates and live/zoom videos with follow up Q&A.

- **Bequest from David Petherbridge**

An Investment Committee request, forwarded to the Governing Board by Ms. Wilkens, to add to the board designated funds in the General Endowment a \$156,156.12 bequest from David Petherbridge was withdrawn, it is having been determined that the bequest was unrestricted and that a portion of it could best be used in 2025 to cover certain operating expenses that were deemed essential to assure that the Church continued to thrive. The Board will consider addition of the remaining funds to the General Endowment at a meeting in 2025.

- **Ratification of the Governing Board's Prior E-mail Vote to Establish a Social Concerns Committee**

The Following Resolution was adopted by the Governing Board:

Resolved: the following resolution, approved in November 2024 by an email vote of the Governing Board, be and the same hereby is, ratified.

Motion to Establish a Social Concerns Committee

Whereas the church is called to live out the gospel in both word and deed, addressing social justice concerns in our community and beyond, and members of the congregation have expressed a strong interest in focusing on key areas of social justice and equity, specifically: racial equity, housing equity, anti-poverty initiatives, LGBTQIA+ rights and equity, ecological justice and conservation, mental health awareness, and anti-war efforts;

Be it resolved that:

1. **Creation of a Social Concerns Committee**

A Social Concerns Committee shall be established with the purpose of addressing, advocating for, and leading the congregation in engagement with key social justice areas. This committee will also be tasked with recommending a 'voice' for AFUMC in these areas to the Governing Board. These areas will be initially identified as, but not ultimately limited to:

- Racial Equity
- Housing Equity
- Anti-Poverty Initiatives
- LGBTQIA+ Rights and Equity
- Ecological Justice and Conservation
- Mental Health Awareness
- Anti-war issues

2. **Organization of the Social Concerns Committee**

In the first six months, the work of the Social Concerns Committee will be led by a transitional group, which may or may not continue past the first six months. This group will consist of a diverse group of members recruited by the Senior Minister, representing different perspectives and experiences in social justice work. The Steering Committee will be tasked with:

- Developing the mission, goals, and structure for the Social Concerns Committee.
- Gathering input from the congregation to refine focus areas and initiatives.

- Establishing guidelines for member representation based on the identified social concerns.
- Establishing a proposed process for the Governing Board to use when considering statements to be made on behalf of the congregation.
- Recruiting and supporting initial leadership for each focus area.

3. **Member Representation**

After the Committee's initial work, teams shall be formed for each of the identified social concern focus areas, with members from the congregation representing each area. These teams will:

- Create and implement action plans that align with the mission of the church and the strategic framework.
- Collaborate with local and national organizations for advocacy and support.
- Provide regular reports to the Social Concerns Committee (and by extension) the Governing Board on progress, initiatives, and suggested "voice" for Asbury First on each issue.

4. **Evaluation and Accountability**

The Social Concerns Committee will report to the Governing Board, outlining the ongoing progress of its work, proposed structure, policy recommendations for developing/determining Asbury First's public "voice," and a recommendation for a new member of Governing Board when that individual is identified in collaboration with the Nominations Committee.

5. Let this motion be adopted to guide our congregation's ongoing commitment to justice, equity, and compassion in all areas of concern, that we may supplement our works of mercy with works of justice. **Effective Date:** This motion shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

- **Update on the creation of a Worship and the Arts Team – Pastor Michelle**

Pastor Michelle noted this team is a super team of individuals from the Altar Guild, Music and the Arts, the Ushers, the pastors, and others, and includes the addition of two new volunteer Coordinators of Worship Logistics. This will bring cohesiveness to the management and coordination of all the different components of Worship.

- **Amendment to Section 1.3.2 of the Board Policy Book Regarding the Pastor Parish Relations Committee – Pastor Michelle** At Pastor Michelle's suggestion, this motion was tabled until the January 2025 meeting.

- **Report from the Property Stewardship Committee About Upcoming Large Projects, and a Response – Ms. Featherstone**

The Property Stewardship Committee has determined that capital projects potentially needed in 2025 include repairs to, or replacement of, the flat roof of the Education Wing and to the flat 5-foot perimeter of the sanctuary roof. This might necessitate a Capital Campaign in 2025. Mr. Quinn advocated for an elevator to permit full accessibility for 1050 East Avenue as a part of any capital campaign. Ms. Featherstone stated that to avoid surprises in the future, when we present the 2025 budget at the December 8 Annual Church Conference, we should make it clear that we have no operating reserves and that several property projects are looming.

- **Discuss Agenda for December 8, 2024, Town Hall Meeting** - Mr. Quinn / All
The draft provided will still undergo some minor changes, but the GB agreed the discussion topics and agenda were well done.
- **Nominations Committee Report** – Pastor Michelle
The Nominations Committee Report is still a work-in-progress. However, the most up to date version was provided to the GB.
- **2025 Operating Budget (Fund1 for the AOP and Fund 2 for COC)**
Mr. Wright noted the budget that Mr. Ormsbee circulated is the same budget the Finance Committee recommended in its November 25th meeting.
There are four concerns about this budget:
 1. The amount of unpledged donations is down from expectations this year.
 2. Two categories of expenses are up: utility bills from RG&E and maintenance.
 3. The proposed budget does not provide for any operating reserves.
 4. It would require fundamentally unpalatable cuts.

Ms. Wilkens stated the PPRC received from the pastoral staff an inventory of all job duties and time spent on each, noting that that each pastor operates on a greater than full-time basis. Are there elements of their work that can be done by volunteers? Reducing the number of pastors is not feasible.

After much deliberation, the Governing Board, with input from the members of the Finance Committee and representatives of the Community Outreach Center, agreed on an essentially balanced budget for 2025. The balanced budget relies upon use of funds from two bequests. It was noted that use of bequests for current needs is not a sustainable longer-term strategy, but is appropriate in this transition year. This updated budget will be presented to the GB for approval via email on Tuesday December 3, 2024. Pastor Michelle would like to send out the proposed budget and Church Conference materials by Wednesday, so congregants have enough time to review the materials in advance.

- **Senior Pastor’s Annual Report** - Pastor Michelle
Pastor Michelle noted there is a lot of great work taking place at Asbury First, but due to time restrictions did not discuss her written report in detail.
- **Special GB Meeting to address Hospitality Issues?** - Mr. Quinn
There has been much discussion among congregants regarding neighbors who are sleeping on the campus at night, and occasionally behaving inappropriately. David Strong noted the Safety Committee is researching this issue and will bring forth proposed solutions. It was determined that a special GB meeting on the subject later in December would be unnecessary.
- **New Business** - All

Mr. Mahan and Mr. Tylenda noted that many congregants are asking about the changes to the Welcoming Hall and Gathering Center on Sunday mornings. For example, coffee is no longer served between Sunday morning services. Mr. Tylenda stated this change discourages socializing and sends the wrong message to new guests. It was noted that over ten people have expressed concerns. Mr. Tylenda stated he was advised this change occurred because of people bringing coffee cups into the sanctuary, but apparently that is not the reason. The consensus of the GB was that this change needs to be reviewed. Mr. Strong and Pastor Michelle stated this issue would be brought up for discussion at the staff meeting on December 3rd.

- **Closing Prayer** Pastor Michelle

Meeting Adjourned at 8:05pm

Next GB Meeting: TBD

Church Conference: after the 11 am service on 12/8/2024

Next Town Hall Meeting: after the 11 am service on 1/19/2025

Respectfully submitted, Cory Tylenda