

MINUTES of the Board of Directors
Spirit of Grace (formerly AORP)
Sunday, September 11, 2016

PRESENT: Pastor David King, Board Members Debby Chenoweth, Donna Fitch, Alden Gendreau, Rick McBee and Pat Pettit **ABSENT:** Jim Anderson

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 noon. **OPENING PRAYER** was offered by Pastor David King who also led a **Biblical reflection based on Ezekiel 34:11-12**. As part of our Weekly Reflection practice, each small group that meets during the week is asked to read the assigned scripture and think about that week's question. Those present spent a few minutes responding to this week's question: *When have you needed God to come searching for you?*

AGENDA ADDITIONS: Finance and the **parsonage final update** (shower) were added.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to approve the following sets of minutes: **Congregational Meeting of Sunday, June 5, 2016** and **regular minutes of the Board meeting of Sunday, May 14, 2016**.

DENOMINATIONAL UPDATES: Pastor David reported on the **UMC General Conference** held in Portland in April. There were many topics of importance discussed but the big one centered on sexuality: homosexual pastors, same sex weddings, etc. Nothing changed during this session but the Council of Bishops will lead a process over the next four years to work out a way to approach these challenging differences in our denomination. **Jurisdictional Conference** was also held recently. A new married lesbian clergywoman has been appointed Bishop to serve Colorado, Wyoming and Montana. Bishop Elaine Stanovski was appointed to our conference.

Chair Debby Chenoweth attended the **national ELCA meeting** in New Orleans this summer. She reported that one of the biggest changes there allowed non-rostered members to now be considered rostered. This passed unanimously with strong support. There has also been a partnering process with the Catholic Church whereby the ELCA and Rome have agreed on 32 points of theology. This may encourage us to open discussion with the Catholic Church locally on possible areas of cooperation. Debby also reported that the ELCA (through a group called AMPARO) is working with undocumented unaccompanied minors who are coming into the United States from Central America.

SPIRIT OF GRACE big picture discussion: Pastor David asked the Board to break into pairs to discuss the following questions: *Where have we been? Where are we now? Where is God calling us?*

After a short time, the groups reported back the following general answers and observations:

We've been on a long journey. We've been homeless. We've wandered "40 years" in the desert-- searching, seeking, struggling, trying to be faithful. We have been clinging to the Rock!

Right now we are still, quiet, and happy--but ready to focus. We are needing a fresh mission or ministry. We're ready to burst forth!

We are called to mission in our community in many ways. We need to continue to answer the call to the following areas of need:

- hunger, through the Fish Food Bank ministry and the FISH/church garden
- children and schools
- being a safe haven
- radical compassion
- healing
- spiritual formation
- being people of faith

On the topic of new mission possibilities, attention was given to a letter submitted by Audrey Bentz of our congregation asking that the Board consider sponsoring a refugee family in the future. Debby Chenoweth spoke about the extensive work being done by the larger ELCA in this area. They would be a great resource and source of guidance for us. Debby will follow up.

UPDATES/AGENDA ADDITIONS: There was a brief report on giving. Pastor David reported that the Finance Committee will convene soon so discuss several issues. Rick McBee reported that the new church directory is at the printer and will be available soon and also that parsonage improvements are pretty well done. Pastor David reported that the Nominating Committee is at work preparing for the election of officers at the January meeting. Upcoming events, including the annual CROP Walk, a CROP Talk in the garden, and a new small group study on "Jesus' Way of Radical Compassion" were noted.

NEXT BOARD MEETINGS: Two more Board meetings were scheduled, one for ***Sunday, October 9 following second service*** (for the purpose of setting budget priorities and mission focus) and a second for ***Sunday, November 6 following second service***. It was noted that UMC Charge Conference is tentatively scheduled for Sunday afternoon, October 16 in Troutdale. Board members are invited to attend along with Pastor David.

CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT: The meeting concluded with prayer and was adjourned at 1:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Fitch, Secretary
Board of Directors