

KVCC Church Council Meeting Minutes
December 12, 2024 – Combined November and December Meeting

Present: Pastor John Sampson, Susie Allen, Fritz Sabbow, Shawn Lamarche, Linda Bogardus, Annie Scavo, Katharine Preston, Robert Rokos, Elizabeth Davidson Derr, Pam Gothner, and Deborah Mitchell.

Fritz opened the meeting at 5:02 PM. This meeting was held via Zoom.

Opening Prayer: Pastor John led us in an opening prayer.

Determination of Quorum: We had a quorum at today's meeting.

Approval of last month's KVCC Council Minutes: Linda made a motion to approve last month's KVCC Council meeting minutes, and Robert seconded the motion. The Council voted, and the motion passed.

Meeting Updates/Focus:

AMS Request for funds for equipment for Zoom Church: Fritz provided the Council with an update on the management of Zoom services. Based on the experiences of the three individuals managing Zoom service, they are recommending there be enhancements to the computer and audioboard. Fritz informed the Council that he will be applying for funding for these enhancements through the AMS fund process, and this will likely be submitted in January 2025.

Nominating Committee 2025 – Pastor John: Pastor John thanked the Council members for their years of service and provided an update on the Nominating Committee process.

Building – Heating system and insurance requirements: Pastor John let the Council know the heating system has been replaced by Hyde Fuel. He also let the Council know that there has been progress toward the building changes needed to meet the requirements mandated by our insurance carrier. Thanks to Howard for all of his efforts in addressing this much needed project.

Pastor's Report – December 12, 2024

Worship and Spiritual Development

- December 21 – Winter solstice celebration. Working with Susie Allen, Bob Andrews, Lorraine Duvall and Pam Gothner to develop this offering.
- December 24 - Christmas Eve services will be held at 5 and 8 PM.
- Friday morning prayer group meets weekly in the VSR, sharing prayers, concerns, and joys of the community.
- The Centering Prayer Group (CPG) meets mornings @ 7 AM via Zoom.

Worship Attendance

2025 Average Attendance per Week:

- 48 in person
- 15 online
- 15 views of the recording

Neighborhood House

- Leading weekly worship at the Neighborhood House. Worship includes: introductions, hymn singing, group reflection on sacred scripture, and prayer.
- Weekly attendance average: 7 people
- Members of the Neighborhood House have been attending Sunday morning worship at KVCC.

Open and Affirming

- Working with KDAC to create offerings for Keene Pride, scheduled for the weekend of June 13.

Web Site

- Meeting with Jimm on a weekly basis to create the website.
- Reviewed content requirements, and updates to site.

Confirmed Memorial Services and Weddings

- Memorial service for Dan Moore scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 2025.

Pastoral Support

- Weekly office hours scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 – 3 PM. Other times by request.
- Provide ongoing pastoral support to the church community via Zoom, telephone, in-person meetings, and email.

Tuesday Book Discussion Group

- The group is reading *Messiah: The Gospel According to Handel's Oratorio* by Roger A. Bullard. A field trip to the Messiah Sing in Middlebury, VT is scheduled for Sunday, December 22.

Community Support

- Working with members of the congregation on identifying neighbors in need and supporting them through pastoral support and financial grants.
- Member of Keene Diversity Advisory Committee. Meet monthly with the group.

New York Conference

- Member of the Conference Nominating Committee for a three-year term beginning on June 1.

North Country Association

- Member of the new Association’s Committee on Ministry. Group meets first Tuesday of each month.

Training/Education

- The new North Country Association has mandated that ministers take 25 hours of Continuing Education per year.
- 100% of CE requirement completed.

Scheduled Vacation

- Will be away December 25 – 28 and December 30 – January 1.

Other Items

- Contributed input into staff reviews.
- Prepare content for weekly emails to church community.
- Congregational review of AFRI covenant statement scheduled for Sunday, January 19.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee

Fritz informed the Council that the 2025 proposed KVCC budget has been drafted and people can contact Nancy McArthur should they have any questions. The budget will be a focus of the January 2025 Council meeting.

**Keene Valley Congregational Church
Profit and Loss
November 2024**

	<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Nov 2024</u>	<u>Nov 2023 (PY)</u>
Income		
Income & Transferred Funds		
Endowment Draw	6,230.00	12,500.00
Open		962.00
Pledges	6,872.17	15,272.58
Rental Income	2,855.60	1,276.60
Special Collection		
Mission-Food Pantry	500.00	
Total Special Collection	\$ 500.00	\$ 0.00
Total Income & Transferred Funds	\$ 16,457.77	\$ 30,011.18

Uncategorized Income			100,000.00
Total Income	\$	16,457.77	\$ 130,011.18
Gross Profit	\$	16,457.77	\$ 130,011.18
Expenses			
Building & Grounds		250.00	
Building Expenses		210.00	
Custodian		1,250.00	1,509.51
Lawn Care			70.00
Manse			93.08
Trash Removal		50.00	48.00
Total Building Expenses	\$	1,510.00	\$ 1,720.59
Total Building & Grounds	\$	1,760.00	\$ 1,720.59
General Expenses			
Supplies			
Office Copier Lease			218.64
Office Copier Overages			
other		283.04	36.27
Office Supplies			33.79
Postage			224.40
Subscriptions		336.68	287.60
Total Supplies	\$	619.72	\$ 800.70
Total General Expenses	\$	619.72	\$ 800.70
Ministry			
Hygiene Kit Expenses		206.00	
Mission & Soc. Action Int.			
Grp.			200.00
Music Dept. Expenses			142.99
Worship Int. Grp.			
(Diaconate)			12.90
Total Ministry	\$	206.00	\$ 355.89
Missions/Acct. Transfers		780.00	
Essex Assoc			1,122.00
Total Missions/Acct.			
Transfers	\$	780.00	\$ 1,122.00
Pastoral Expenses			
Pastor - Life Insurance		93.34	168.22
Pastor - Vision		110.00	
Pastor Salary		4,938.58	4,253.01
Pastor-Dental		46.00	88.50
Pastor-Health Ins.		905.00	1,756.00
Pastor-Housing		1,799.20	1,730.00
Pastor-Pension/FPP		871.12	1,569.94
Pastor-Social Security			495.61
Substitute Pastor Fee		200.00	200.00

Total Pastoral Expenses	\$ 8,963.24	\$ 10,261.28
Prior Year Clean up	-5,449.32	
Staff Payroll		
Bookkeeper	300.00	600.00
Music Director	755.18	733.18
Musician	200.00	
Organist	755.18	733.18
Organist /Music Dir. Sub	150.00	225.00
Payroll Taxes	254.32	367.67
Secretary	1,097.91	965.56
Video and Zoom		
Management		787.50
Total Staff Payroll	\$ 3,512.59	\$ 4,412.09
Utilities		
Electric - Manse	82.91	
Electric - Church	332.28	91.92
Heat - Church		250.28
Heat - Manse		426.69
Internet Service		92.00
Propane-Church-Kitchen	385.67	
Telephone - Church	0.16	86.97
Total Utilities	\$ 801.02	\$ 947.86
Total Expenses	\$ 11,193.25	\$ 19,620.41
Net Operating Income	\$ 5,264.52	\$ 110,390.77
Other Income		
Investment gains & losses	730.00	
Total Other Income	\$ 730.00	\$ 0.00
Net Other Income	\$ 730.00	\$ 0.00
Net Income	\$ 5,994.52	\$ 110,390.77

Thursday, Dec 05, 2024 03:09:42 PM GMT-8 - Cash Basis

MISSION AND SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

We have four agencies that been selected to receive support over Advent. Kristy Deyo's Christmas fund that purchases gifts for youth of modest means. In this case we did not make a financial contribution, but invited Kristy to speak and provide "Ornaments" that indicated a youth's wishes. As of last Sunday, all but one had been selected. The next three will all receive \$600, the first being the Food Pantry (Deborah Mitchell provided an update). Coming up are the Adk North Country Gender Alliance, they effort to support trans youth and AFRI. In addition, we provided \$200 for Families First and people donate 20 turkeys, this for FF Thanksgiving Dinner drive. For 2025, Katharine Preston is stepping down as the co-chair of M&SA and Andre d'Avignon has agreed to step up as co-chair. Naj Wikoff

KEENE FOOD MISSION – NOVEMBER

ATTENDANCE: Nancy McArthur, Pastor John Sampson, Deborah Mitchell, and Frit Sabbow

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Develop mission statement for Keene Food Mission – DRAFT: The KFM provides immediate, short-term monetary support for food insecure families in the Town of Keene. The KFM supports families in accessing other means of local support such as food banks, DSS, etc. The steering committee will work together toward following the KFM's principals and being fair and equitable when assessing an individual's food insecurity needs.

Criteria for Beneficiaries: We have been open to support families in need. We will develop criteria and guidelines for the KFM. Some areas of concern include: 1) how long will the family need help, and 2) is the family aware of other resources to offset their food insecurity. We can help to access those resources if needed. At the end of the 3 months, we will reassess the need, such as a short-term need (surgery) vs. long-term need (chronic medical condition). These guidelines will include both existing and potential KFM families.

KFM Steering Committee: The following individuals have volunteered to be a part of the KFM Steering Committee: Pastor John Sampson, Cindy Ayres, Nancy McArthur, Fritz Sabbow, and Deborah Mitchell.

Potential individuals to ask to be a part of the KFM Steering Committee: Patience Whitman, Melissa Lavallo (Keene Central School), Father John or another person from St. Bernard's parishioner (Kathy Wiegand?)

Next Steps: Allocation of responsibilities for execution of KFM in areas of recordkeeping, fundraising and acknowledgments, client contact and approval, product disbursement/bills, outside interactions, i.e. agencies to support us, DSS Benefits advisory.

Planned Fundraising:

Souper Bowl: February 9, 2025 –Begin 1/12 through 2/9/25

Grant Applications: Adirondack Foundation, consulting with Karen Glass about other grants

Midyear Campaign: Mailing in May/June

Bazaar: August 1st and 2nd

Holiday Appeal: First week in November 2025

Questions: Do we request a line of credit from AMS for short term deficits? How do we establish a partnership with the Elizabethtown Food Shelf and Lake Placid Food Pantry?

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 7th, 2025, at 3 PM at the manse.

Worship Committee - November 15, 2024

Present: John Sampson, Linda Bogardus, Naj Wikoff, Susie Allen, Anne Hurd, Annie Scavo, Jo Husslein, Martha Gallagher, Fritz Sabbow

Linda corrected the minutes to say that Annie believes that we are part of the Communion of Saints. John was reminded that it is time to nominate someone from this committee to represent us on the Council.

Last year Christmas Eve service was unusual because Christmas Eve fell on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Since there is no conflict this year, we decided to return to the traditional two services: a 5pm service, with bells and choir, that is more family oriented, and a 10pm service that is more contemplative and has only a soloist or just Lynn. Only the 5pm will be recorded for Zoom. John will present this plan to Rob before making the final decision.

At the request of two members, we discussed congregants' clapping after music during the worship service. They felt that this turns worship into a concert performance and takes them out of the service. During the discussion there were no strong opinions on stopping what was a genuine expression of appreciation. The final word was John's deciding that he does not want to be the police and say that clapping cannot happen, especially if the reaction is spontaneous from a depth of feeling.

John explained the meaning and purpose of the Doxology: the term "doxology" comes from the word for "praise", acknowledging the greatness of God, the Spirit, Christ. This section of a service is supposed to be energetic and robust, praising the gifts and all that has come before in the service. Churches vary as to where in the service they have the doxology, as well as what text and music they use. Susie, Martha, and John will set up a meeting with Lynn to explore these differences and discuss the possibility of a musical bridge to go from the quiet parts of the service to robust thankful praise.

The Lord's Prayer also has different versions, such as "trespasses" versus "debts"/ "debtors", such that our text is not exactly from any Bible. Some people have a problem with the patriarchal language ("Our Father"), which is not how they understand their relationship with God. There is a lot to think about, so this conversation will be taken up in the next meeting.

Next meeting: TBA

Submitted by Linda Bogardus

FLOWER COMMITTEE

The poinsettias are now in our sanctuary windows. Members of the flower group (Ingrid Carmen and Susie Doolittle) helped me pick up and place these Christmas flowers. Charlotte Lichtenberg

GROUNDS REPORT DECEMBER 2024

In late October the second teak sidewalk into the church office was put down with the help of Andre Davignon. Peter Slocum took all of the discarded stone pavers away. The planned raking day on Thursday, November 7 was cancelled due to rain. On a Sunday later in November after all the leaves had fallen, Pam and Paul quickly finished the raking. Leaves were left in the pollinator gardens as mulch for the winter. Crocus bulbs were planted on either side of the stairway from the street sidewalk.

Task List:

Move gravel from edge of the parking lot - this is a job that requires a plow or other equipment

Put up more stakes along the driveway - December

Speak with Howard about the plowing/shoveling – December

BUILDINGS REPORT

Thursday, God willing, Mountain Electric (Fonzie Smith) will be installing the Emergency Light Fixtures in the Church and just above the AV room door. The kitchen GFCI receptacles will also be installed. We will also be having Hyde Fuel replace both of the furnaces for the church and the VSR. A bit of history here...a few years ago the Oil furnace fell into disrepair. Nick Pepe could not get an equally sized furnace, so he bought two Propane units to handle the load. He installed the largest one he could get, and then added a second, small, one to give off enough heat. Unfortunately, when the big unit caught fire a few weeks ago it reduced the heating capability, thus the alliterative chilly church. The cost of repairing the large one was almost as much as replacing both with equally sized units. So, in the future, if there is a furnace problem, we will still have half the capacity. Long story, more money than expected, but that's where we are. Hopefully this Sunday will be in a warm church. Howard

KVCC PERSONNEL GROUP - NOV - DEC 2024

Members: Nancy McArthur, Fritz Sabbow, Debby Rice, John Sampson

KVCC Performance Evaluation: Process and Status Update (Note blue for new items)

All Church Roles are nuanced and complex, involving not only structure and responsibilities but multiple interfaces with individual congregants, groups and the community at large. A performance evaluation is a process used to assess an employee's job performance. It is typically conducted every two years, and it involves the Personnel Group representative providing feedback on the employee's performance. The employee may also be asked to provide a self-assessment. The goal of a performance evaluation is to identify the employee's strengths and opportunities for improvement, develop a plan to address their performance, and confirm goals to be pursued. The performance evaluation process typically involves the following:

1. KVCC Personnel Group prepares a list of criteria that will be used to evaluate the employee's performance. Employee input and agreement is key. This is a collaborative approach.
2. The employee completes a self-assessment, rating their own performance on the criteria listed by the Personnel Group.
3. The employee provides a list of 3 names for persons who know their performance. The Personnel group adds up to 3 names for a total of 6 persons.
4. Input from the 4-6 names is summarized by the Personnel Group.
5. The employee and Personnel Group rep (and/or or John Sampson) meet to discuss the employee's performance.
6. The Personnel Group rep (and/or John Sampson) provides feedback to the employee on their performance.
7. The employee and personnel Group rep (and//or or John Sampson) develop a plan to improve the employee's performance, as needed, and identify goals.
8. A personnel book is underway that will include the process, job descriptions and some details and filed in the Church Office. .
9. The performance reviews will be kept separately (privately) by the KVCC Pastor.
- 10. Recommendation from John Sampson: church develop goals for the coming year.**

EMPLOYEE	Personnel Group Contact	Status (Sept 2024)	Next
David Craig	Fritz Sabbow	Job Description final. Dave is leaving to move.	recruiting is an on going challenge. Grateful for Fritz Sabbow, Jimm Collin filling in temporarily
Liz Jaques	Debby Rice	Job Description final	Discussion with Liz completed (John, Debby)
Lynn Dewalt	Nancy McArthur	Job Desc. final	Discussion with Lynn completed (John, Debby)
Rob Hastings	Nancy McArthur	Job Desc. final	Discussion with Rob completed (John, Debby)
John Sampson	Fritz and Debby	Job Description exists.	Discussion with John completed (Debby, Fritz)

Other Items:

Pastor John provided the Council with an update on church attendance to include the number of Zoom participants/engagements. In 2024, we had an average of 48 in person attendees, 15 on-line Zoom attendees, and 15 views on the recordings for a total of 78 participants/engagements.

As part of his role on the KDAC, Pastor John informed the Council of a proposed agenda for a weekend Keene Pride event, some of which would be co-sponsored by the KVCC. We talked about those events, and Pastor John will provide more information as the plans for this event unfold.

What's Next: Important Dates

On or **before mid-January 2025**: Please send your Year-End 2024 Reports to Liz.

January 19: AFRI Information session following the Church service. This session will provide an opportunity for the Council to support AFRI and for members to ask questions ahead of the Annual Congregational Meeting vote on whether or not to include AFRI as part of our Church mission.

January 21: Council meeting to finalize the agenda for the Annual Meeting. Please note that this is not the routine meeting date.

February 2 Annual Congregational Meeting following the service.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 21, 2025, at 5 PM

Elizabeth made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Mitchell, Clerk