

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church
Helping Everyone Meet, Know, and Serve Jesus
Church Council Meeting
February 23, 2015 – 7:00 PM

Attendees:

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| Doreen Alvarez (Church Council Chairperson) | Scott Folsom | Jo Ann Hopkins | Linda Starck |
| Rev. Dr. Bill Fisackerly | John Furtado | Joan Priest | Rick Starck |
| Alfred Current | Betty Hansell | Ken Priest | Donna Wallace |
| Sandy Doty | Mary Hilton | Jeanne Shrout | Dana Hanson |
| | Irv Hopkins | Shirley Smith | |

The meeting was opened with the lighting of the candle representing Jesus Christ, followed by a prayer by Doreen Alvarez.

Corrections To Previous Minutes – The recording secretary was not notified of any necessary corrections to the minutes of the January 26, 2015, meeting.

NURTURE

Education: Jo Ann Hopkins advised that things are going well, although more teachers would be helpful. Joan Priest is now staying with the older children all the time to provide continuity. Holly Woods has asked if the bounce house which was used during the Fall Festival can be purchased. The “Do YOU Know What You Need?” seminar is scheduled for March 15; guest speaker Attorney Matt Rheingans will discuss things such as DNRs, living wills, and trusts; if it is successful, the seminar may be offered again.

Thrive: This annual training conducted by the District was last weekend. Jo Ann Hopkins told the group about the “Mystery Guest Worshipper Experience” survey. It is given to *one of your friends* who does not attend GCUMC. That person then comes to one of the services of his or her choice. Afterwards, they complete the survey, providing us with accurate information as to how our congregation really treats people.

Jo Ann also mentioned a second handout which analyzes all the church’s outreach programs. Specifically, does each program fit into one of the criteria for meeting our mission of *helping everyone meet, know, and serve Jesus*? The handout asks what the ministry is; what it services; is it inward, outward or both; and what the next step of that committee or ministry is.

Irv Hopkins told about the Fresh Expressions segment of the training. The home page of the “mother” website (<http://freshexpressionsus.org/>) says, “A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.” Irv pointed out that one recent survey indicated that 60% of the American people indicate they are Christians, yet only 20% actually attend church. One example of a church established under the Fresh Expression program involved a man who completed seminary, but then decided not to join an established church. Instead, he purchased a kayak and every joined a group of kayakers who paddled the rivers every Sunday but did not attend church. Eventually some discussions revolved around Christianity, and eight months later, three of those

individuals were baptized. An off-site outreach such as that proposed by Fresh Expressions is exactly the type of outreach that Shirley Smith, John Dorotics, and our 2014 Vision Retreat previously envisioned.

One other session attended by several individuals was Reach. Several examples of successful programs at other churches were mentioned.

- Oil changes on Saturdays gave time for discussion of Christian topics.
- A worm-farm business was established for youth with disabilities which enabled them to raise money.
- A program was created under which individuals could obtain their GED.
- Some individuals volunteered to meet with and listen to juveniles who are in custody in some manner.

Alpha: Sandy Doty reported that there are 31 *new* individuals involved in taking or helping the program; 10 more individuals who attended last fall are assisting; and 6 people are on the meal team. The Day Away will be Saturday, March 7. The last session of Alpha will be March 26, with a celebration dinner the next day.

Small Groups: Sandy Doty said she is gathering information on the current small groups. She and Rev. Bill would like to meet with the group leaders in the near future.

OUTREACH

Hospitality: Linda Starck advised that in the three years since the Welcome Booth was started, she has decided that a separate room in which to meet with new individuals would be counter-productive. Instead, she prefers the openness of the narthex or a larger entryway. Linda has also been approached by three couples who want to help with the Sunday morning needs of coffee, snack trays, clean-up, welcoming, and picking up the bread on Saturday evening.

Nicaró Sister Church: Betty Hansell covered a wide range of Nicaro-related information:

- Dan Christopherson will be speaking at all three services on March 8 to help celebrate the one-year anniversary of GCUMC's adoption of its sister church in Nicaro, Cuba. Most plans for that morning are finalized already.
- Many beads have been collected for the prayer bracelets which will be taken to Nicaro in November. Unfortunately Susie Morrow cannot be at church that day (making the prayer bracelets was her idea), so Charles Hilton will lead that charge.
- The verse from Galatians 5:1 and a reference to GCUMC will be on a label which can be placed inside a Bible. That verse says, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yolk of slavery."
- Since every two or three months someone is traveling to Cuba, whatever is donated by our congregation can be delivered to Nicaro on a fairly regular basis. If there is too much for one trip, some things can be held until the next trip is made.

- Jeanne Shroul happily informed us that the Dollars for Bibles plea was mentioned on February 15 and explained yesterday, February 22. Already, \$575.10 has been received for the Bibles. Although it was hoped that we could provide enough money for 100 Bibles, enough has been received which enables the Nicaro church to purchase 287 Bibles.
- Mary Costello has finished the banner honoring Nicaro, and it was shown to those present. Many ooh's and ahhh's followed its unveiling. It will be on display for our congregation to see on March 8. Until then, they'll just have to hold their breath! {One of the advantages of coming to Church Council meetings...} Mary will make a duplicate banner which will be taken to Nicaro and delivered to the church in November when the GCUMC contingent travels there. *Thank you, Mary! It's beautiful!*

Myakka: Two people have contacted John Furtado about volunteering at Myakka River Elementary School. Alfred Current has the required application should others be interested in assisting there in some way.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts: Alfred Current reported that Boy Scout Troop 776 started meeting at GCUMC about seven months ago with four boys. Over the past two weeks, six boys joined the troop and tonight another six joined. Irv advised that in order for the boys to receive one of their merit badges, they are required to perform eight hours of community service (over a year), which includes work they do around the church and things such as weeding a flower bed. During the meeting, the Boy Scouts in Troop 776 joined us for a few minutes to say hello and introduce themselves.

Easter Egg Hunt: This year the hunt will be more of a family affair instead of just for the children. Current plans include:

- Each child will receive an empty basket in which to place eggs, and a small Easter book will be in each basket.
- Rev. Bill will break the Easter story into verses which will be inserted into four special eggs. Children who find those eggs will read the verse to the group.
- Shirley Smith will take charge of snacks.
- Parent-child relay race comprised of a hula-hoop rolling lap, a three-legged lap, and a burlap-sack lap.
- Parent-child egg toss using real eggs.
- Family towel race.
- Bounce house.
- Shhh... don't tell Oak and Marsha that we're going to ask them if they would be willing to put out their games.
- The church's cornhole boards.
- A plastic-egg egg toss into a basket.
- Ten Bible trivia questions will be placed around the area.
- We will ask small groups to make church-oriented baskets for large prizes.
- Oriental Trading trinkets and excess crafts will also be given out as prizes.

Needless to say, we need people to man some of the games. The area will be treated for fire ants.

Pig Pickin' & Imagine No Malaria: A suggestion was made that either the price be raised for the Cookie Dash, or a smaller box be used, as people were able to squeeze up to three dozen cookies into one box for just \$5. As a result, only \$510 in net proceeds resulted from the Cookie Dash – as compared to the \$716 in sales last year. However, like last year, the cookies ran out before the end of the day arrived.

Alfred Current said that 1,000 food containers were purchased and at least 100 were not used. He believes about 850 meals were purchased. They ran out of chips after purchasing 800 packages.

Jeanne Shroul advised that all necessary paperwork has now been received, and the dollars from the event are just now being finalized. The cost of goods has been paid; all other expenses have been taken into consideration; the start-up amount for next year has been set aside; and 10% of proceeds will be given to the church. The bottom line net proceeds are \$5,095.

Alfred Current said that \$2,500 of the net proceeds will be used to purchase the Boy Scouts an equipment trailer which will have GCUMC's name and logo on the side as the troop's sponsor.

GCUMC has pledged \$2,500 to the Imagine No Malaria program. Although there is sufficient income in the outreach fund to pay this pledge, Irv Hopkins has some activities planned for raising the funds. Jo Ann Hopkins advised that in addition, she plans to talk with the Sunday School children about supporting the Imagine No Malaria program after the children's current donations reach their goal for water for Heifer International. Pig Pickin' proceeds will be used to cover the portion of the Imagine No Malaria pledge which is not raised.

There was discussion as to how the Pig Pickin' proceeds are being distributed. Rev. Bill advised that, if the Church Council made the decision regarding the allocation of Pig Pickin' proceeds (or regarding any other matter), then that decision can be changed by the Church Council. However, if a Committee or Work Area made the decision, it is not a good idea for the Church Council to override Work Areas or Committees who have been charged with the work. In the end, the Charge Conference has ultimate authority, but it has conveyed that authority to the Church Council for regular monthly business meetings. In addition, if the congregation was told that funds would be divided or distributed in a certain way, we cannot go back later and change that. On the other hand, if the congregation was not informed of any planned distribution, then the Church Council can decide what the allocation of the funds should be. It's a matter of integrity: if we receive gifts for a certain project after telling people how they are going to be disbursed, we cannot change the disbursements without getting their permission.

WITNESS

Worship: Donna Wallace is still learning and discovering things in her new position as Chairman of the Worship Committee. In fact, she is still trying to figure out who is on her committee.

Her biggest “happening” so far was the Ash Wednesday services and noon meal. Although there were some glitches, everything ultimately went okay. After the Church Council meeting on February 23, Dawn Tesauro checked Mike Lackney’s contract. It does NOT include Mike assisting with set up or takedown of the sanctuary for the church or anyone else. He will, however, assist for an additional fee over and above the contract. [This is contrary to what was told to Donna at the Church Council meeting.]

On Ash Wednesday, although no donation boxes were set out, several people asked where they could put donations. After a short discussion, it was felt that boxes should be set out regardless, and let the individual decide whether or not to make a donation.

Holy Week: On Maundy Thursday, April 2, at 7pm, a Tenebrae service will be conducted and the church will be stripped. On Good Friday, April 3, Stephen Ministers will be on hand from 9am to 3pm for those who come to the chapel to pray. That evening at 7pm, Kim Fisackerly will perform her “Mary” monologue. Also on Friday evening, individuals will nail their sins and brokenness to the cross.

SUPPORT

Finance: Rev. Bill reminded all that on-line donations to GCUMC are possible through the church website, and QR codes inserted in the bulletins will take smartphone users directly to the website. Many young adults no longer carry cash, but know how to make use of their smartphones.

A lengthy discussion was held on setting aside \$1,450 each month to the Facility Up Keep account. This amount represents the mortgage payment which is no longer being paid. Part of our cash-flow problem is that an additional \$36,487 is required this year, primarily due to lay staff salary increases and the new A/V position. In fact, the monthly average requirement for 2015 *based on the budget* is now \$38,115. When the “mortgage” payment is included, that required amount rises to \$39,565. Spendable contributions received in January were only \$32,669 and in February were \$34,947 (\$26,647 thru 2/15, and about \$8,300 on 2/22, the last Sunday of the month).

Rev. Bill requested that we pray on the subject of what to do with the “mortgage” payment (put it into the Facility Up Keep fund or Reserve Fund, or use it for general expenses) and that the issue be revisited at our next Church Council meeting. He reminded us that the compromise

reached with the air conditioner fund was to set aside half of the realized savings after the new AC units were installed.

Trustees: Regarding the “dogs & animals on church property” topic of last month, Jo Ann Hopkins spoke with the District about the issue and was advised as follows. If we are having a church event and see someone with an animal, either on or off a leash, they recommend we ask the person to remove the animal from the property because we prefer they not be on church property. Unfortunately, we cannot force the issue, and if the animal bites someone, it will be the church’s pockets that pay if sued. Similar results hold true if a sign is present that says “no animals”; the issue cannot be forced.

On the other hand, we are not allowed to ask therapy or service dogs to leave the premises. Linda Starck advised that therapy dogs are required to be insured. If a therapy dog bites anyone, their insurance should cover whatever is necessary. Therapy dogs usually have a special vest or scarf which identifies them as such.

Other trustee happenings include:

- Some outside doors which are rusting – the electrical room, Rev. Bill’s office, and the kitchen door – are being replaced. The cost will be covered by the trustees’ account.
- The oven is being checked tomorrow as to why it is heating unevenly.
- Trees around the portables were trimmed, with the cost being covered by the trustees’ account.
- Mike Lackney is checking into the outside and parking lot lights to ensure they are working properly.
- The light switches in the restrooms near the office are being replaced with automatic switches which will turn on when someone walks into the restroom. They will turn off after a period of time.
- The restrooms close to the office are having the sinks and countertops replaced.
- The need to have a fire drill was discussed at Thrive training. Parents need to know where to meet their children *outside*, and not attempt to get to them before leaving the building. Currently, our plan requires that children be led to the playground should they have to exit the building.
- Several items (such as the bounce house and water slide) are being stored in the electrical room. Because of the need for quick and uncluttered access to the electrical equipment in that room, those items need to be moved to the Barn for storage.

Rev. Bill informed us on the status of changing the lights in the sanctuary. One recommendation was not to replace the fluorescent lights, but instead install LED pendant lights which hang from the ceiling over the pew area. [Do a Google search for “images for pendant lighting in church” to see what it could look like.] Colored lighting would be used over the altar area and may extend over the pew area. The spotlights need to be moved back; their brightness can be softened. More information is being obtained.

Jo Ann expressed concern about the Education Wing door being left unlocked on Sunday mornings. She felt the safety of the children and teachers might be in question, as someone with bad intentions could enter through that door, and those of us in the sanctuary might not be aware of what was happening. It was pointed out that too many people enter through that door, many of whom are involved with preparing things for the next worship service. After discussion, it was decided that the door should remain unlocked. All should, however, be alert to the possibility of something happening.

Mike Lackney requested that we ask the AA group not to dump their grinds and coffee in the bathroom, especially after the sinks and countertops are replaced. The only solution, however, is to give them the code to the kitchen. The consensus was that, if they can be trusted with a key to the building, we should be able to trust them with the code to the kitchen. If things start disappearing, then the code can be changed and they would lose their kitchen privileges.

Staff Parish: Joan Priest advised that during the youth session at the Thrive training, it was emphasized that churches which do not annually review, renew, and follow their policy statements are usually the churches that get hurt the worst. Our child/youth protection policy was just, or is in the process of being, renewed.

Anyone who works with the children, whether a member or not, must be a regular attendee and active in church activities for at least six months. It was brought to Joan's attention that a Worker's Application should be completed by everyone who works with the children. This form is only good for five years. It was suggested that this form be completed by everyone during the annual child protection training.

All were reminded that we need to accompany any children in grades K-5 who leave the classroom to go to the bathroom and wait for them in the hallway. More leeway is allowed to those in grades 6-12, but we still need to be aware of where they are at all times.

Further, there are "rules" which apply to counseling sessions and when there is out-of-town travel, and forms which cover medical authorizations and emergency contact information.

OLD BUSINESS

Vision Retreat: Rev. Bill Fisackerly: It was decided that this year's retreat will be held on Saturday, April 11, but because of a conflict it cannot be held at Placida Harbour Club. Those present agreed it should be held at GCUMC instead of off-site. The District has hired a woman specifically to help churches with their vitality and visioning process, and she has already been invited to attend our Vision Retreat. Doreen asked that we send her (Doreen) an email with any ideas for discussion topics at the retreat.

NEW BUSINESS

Welcome Booth: Linda Starck addressed the group about the current welcome stand in the narthex, which is three years old and on its last legs. She asked about purchasing a new one. However, after discussion, she will check out the two-drawer portion of the back counter in the sanctuary as the new welcome booth. That counter is a six-drawer sectional on wheels which breaks into a four-drawer part and a two-drawer part. Most agreed that purchase of a new stand or breakfront would be warranted if the back counter does not work.

AA Group: Jeanne ShROUT informed us that the Wednesday evening AA Group is no longer meeting at GCUMC. That frees up room 109/110 at 8pm for other uses.

Ministry Candidate: Shirley Smith advised that she recently received word that she will be going to licensing school in May. Then on May 29, she will be a licensed pastor, able to serve communion and baptize in an assigned church. *Congratulations, Shirley!*

ADJOURNING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm with communion and a prayer by Rev. Bill. The next Church Council meeting will be on Monday, March 23, 2015, at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary