

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

Attendees:

Doreen Alvarez (Church Council Chairman)	John Furtado	John McGuire	Donna Wallace
Rev. Dr. Bill Fisackerly	Betty Hansell	Renee McVety	Dana Hanson
Sandy Doty	Mary Hilton	Joan Priest	
Scott Folsom	Jo Ann Hopkins	Ken Priest	
	Carol McGuire	Judy Spurgeon	

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

Corrections to Previous Minutes: A correction is necessary to the Witness section of the 2/23/2015 minutes (page 5). The last portion of the second paragraph under the Worship subcategory currently states:

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.]

When she so advised, Dawn was looking at a previous job description which did not provide for set up or takedown. However, the current Contract of Service does provide that Mike will assist with takedown and setup of the sanctuary as needed. As a result, the portion of the Church Council minutes quoted above is replaced with the following:

It is in Mike Lackney's contract to help tear down and set up the sanctuary chairs and tables for church activities. This applies to all church events, not just those falling under Worship.

In General: At one point during the meeting, Rev. Dr. Bill reminded us that we do not have to do everything here at Gulf Cove UMC. The basics, of course, need to be done, but some types of nurture and outreach might be done better by another church. GCUMC should do and continue with what we do well. If another church offers a program, we should feel free to attend it there and not feel the need to establish the same program at GCUMC. The fellowship with other churches is also helpful in the sharing of ideas and learning new ones. Attending a program at another church might eventually lead to the same program being offered here, but then again, it might not.

NURTURE

Education: As of this morning over \$260 was received for the Easter Festival on March 28. Jo Ann Hopkins reported that about 40 people attended the Need to Know seminar on March 15; she heard nothing but good comments about it and suggested we consider offering it again. Jo

Ann advised she spoke with Joan Priest and recommended that Scott Folsom prepare the Sunday School lessons and that Holly Woods prepare the crafts.

Alpha: Sandy Doty reported that the last Alpha session will be this Thursday, with a celebration dinner on Friday, March 27. There were 30 participants, 2 special guests, and 17 others who assisted in various capacities. The Day Away held on March 7 was a spiritual day for all who attended.

She and Rev. Bill are talking about offering another Alpha session, but because of the toll on resources, are considering whether to hold it several times a year or just once a year. One suggestion was that area churches be contacted to see if they might be interested in establishing an Alpha program at their church. If so, their representatives could attend our sessions, learn Alpha from us, and take it back to their churches.

Small Groups: Sandy Doty has gathered information (name of group, where, when and time they meet) regarding nine of our current small groups. Two new small groups are forming: a Book Club and an Emmaus Men's Group. Several have talked about creating a second Emmaus Women's Group. Sandy would like to see a knitting/crocheting group which would make prayer shawls and lap robes for Wounded Warriors (or anyone else who needs one) and baby/children's afghans and blankets for those in the hospital or for "child rescue homes." The child would receive something that is "their own" which they can take with them wherever they go. Sandy asked that we advise her of other ideas for small group activities. She and Rev. Bill. plan to meet with the small group leaders after Easter. A suggestion was made to consult with the church's representative to the Florida United Methodist Children's Home (Susie CVC) to ascertain whether afghans or blankets might be needed there.

OUTREACH

Nicaró Sister Church: Betty Hansell reported that the Dollars for Bibles for Nicaro effort was hugely successful, resulting in \$964 being collected as of today. Those who attended the Beads for Bracelets event enjoyed their afternoon. Just over 100 bracelets were made. They are thinking about having another Beads for Bracelets afternoon sometime this summer. Scott Folsom advised that Pastor Isel Acanda will be visiting the United States, but the exact dates are not yet known. It is hoped he will visit GCUMC while he is here.

WITNESS

Worship: Donna Wallace reported that plans are being finalized for Holy Week. She currently needs two ushers for Holy Thursday's Tenebrae service (April 2 at 7pm) and two ushers for Good Friday's "Mary: Portrait of a Mother" service (April 3 at 7pm). She still needs to finalize plans for Thursday's communion offering and the stripping of the church. Rev. Bill advised that Kim is looking for readers for Thursday; immediately Sandy Doty, John Furtado, and Joan Priest

said they'd help. Kim is having a meeting for those interested in assisting with the Thursday service on Sunday, March 29, at noon.

Everyone was reminded that on Palm Sunday, individuals will be asked to put their palm on the outside cross. On Easter, we are encouraged to bring flowers for the outside cross and take family photographs. Renee McVety indicated she would be available to take pictures.

If there are new announcements which do not make it into the bulletin, the Sunday morning Liturgist should be notified so that either the Liturgist or another individual can announce it.

SUPPORT

Finance: John Furtado advised that with one week remaining, March spendable donations total about \$35,000. As of last week, the Reserve Fund totaled \$23,200. Regarding the Facility Up Keep account, he said starting in November 2014, the amount of \$1,450 a month was added to that account; effective March 2015, the amount is increasing to \$1,500 a month.

John recently learned that no money was being set aside for real estate taxes on the main church property, which total about \$4,300. Those taxes were never escrowed into the mortgage payment. In the past, because we usually did not have the funds readily available, real estate taxes were not paid until January or February when donations increased. This means that the church was always paying higher amounts than if the taxes had been paid in October or November. As a result, starting this month, Dawn has been asked to set aside \$350 each month for real estate taxes on the main church property. John also asked Dawn to set aside this month an additional \$1,050 toward the property taxes to cover past months.

Each month the amount of \$200 is being set aside for air conditioners, \$350 for real estate tax on the main church property (starting this month), \$225 for real estate tax on the parsonage, and \$50 for real estate tax on Oak's Cove. We have the Reserve Fund which is designed to pick up the slack on our ability to pay bills during the summer months, but obviously the more it is used, the faster it depletes. The following table reflects withdrawals from the Reserve Fund for the years 2010 through 2014; no withdrawals have been made so far in 2015:

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
January	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	July	\$0	\$7,500	\$1,000	\$8,500	\$5,000	
February	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	August	\$0	\$7,500	\$8,000	\$9,200	\$0	
March	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	September	\$0	\$10,000	\$4,500	\$0	\$8,500	
April	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	October	\$0	\$0	\$4,000	\$3,500	\$5,000	
May	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	November	\$0	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$0	\$0	
June	\$0	\$7,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	December	\$10,000	\$0	\$1,000	\$0	\$0	
TOTAL								\$10,000	\$33,000	\$21,500	\$21,200	\$18,500

John addressed the gathering about the previous “mortgage payment.” He mentioned that Dave Ramsey’s advice to set aside funds each month is predicated on a set, known monthly income. Yet during January, February, and March of the years 2009 through 2014, our spendable income has vacillated between \$30,422 and \$43,350. In addition, from 2008 to 2013, the highest total spendable income received during the year occurred during 2009 when the country was in the midst of the economic “collapse” of September 2008. The bottom line is that the timing of highs and lows is extremely uncertain and sometimes makes no sense.

John’s ultimate request was for flexibility during the summer months when we are unable to set aside \$1,500 because of other “must-pay” bills (electricity, salaries, etc.). A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the setting aside of \$1,500 each and every month for major capital expenditures. As was pointed out, if the flexibility was granted, we would not be reversing the “will” to set aside \$1,500, only the “mandate” to set it aside each month without regard to essential bills. Some suggestion made were: if we do not have enough to set aside \$1,500 one month, set aside a smaller amount that particular month; take up a special offering; during the fall months, try to set aside an amount to make up for the shortfall in summer months.

It was also mentioned that if Finance (or any other committee) has come to a consensus about a particular matter, Church Council should generally not second-guess or change Finance’s solution. If that happens, it could be perceived that there is no trust in the people on the committee and they should be replaced, or that there is really no need for the committee in the first place.

Ultimately, a consensus was reached whereby Finance would be allowed the flexibility of not setting aside the \$1,500 “mortgage payment” in the months when spendable income has dropped so much that it is difficult to pay bills. A request was made for monthly reports (by email if there is no Council meeting scheduled) on the status of this setoff. John agreed that would be done.

Trustees: Jo Ann Hopkins requested that everybody be aware of the necessity for advising the Trustees about all major purchases for the church. We are asked to place a note in the Trustee mail-slot in the conference room which contains information as to what was purchased, the price of the item, the serial number, the date of purchase, and the item being replaced (if applicable). With this information, the inventory can be kept up-to-date in case of fire, theft, etc. Two years ago when items were stolen from the barn, we had to best-guess on some information when the claim was submitted to the insurance company. In addition, it enables an accurate Intangible Tax form to be prepared and submitted to the county on a yearly basis; nothing is paid, but the information must still be reported.

Since Jo Ann is stepping down as Chairman of the Trustees, Renee McVety has accepted the position until a new Chairman is elected by the Trustees.

Staff Parish: Joan Priest advised that we are still looking for an individual to fill the new, part-time, audio-visual technician position.

Nominations: Rev. Bill indicated the need to find one or two more trustees, an education chairman, and individual(s) for the endowment committee.

OLD BUSINESS

Welcome Booth: After discussions at the last Council meeting, a portion of the sanctuary back counter was moved into the narthex, and the former welcome booth moved into the sanctuary. However, several individuals have noted their displeasure with the new look in the back of the sanctuary. It appears that the purchase of a new welcome booth for the narthex might be in order, so that the portion of the back counter can be returned to its former position.

Lay Servant Classes: Seven individuals have completed the advanced lay servant classes which were recently offered.

Vision Retreat: Rev. Bill reminded everyone that this year's Vision Retreat will be held on Saturday, April 11, from 9am-3pm at GCUMC instead of off-site. Lynn Ball, Church Growth and Vitality Director from the District, will be attending. Rev. Bill would like our major focus at the retreat to be on how we can get people more involved -- more than just attending worship on Sundays. He asked that more ideas for topics of discussion be sent to Rev. Bill or Doreen.

NEW BUSINESS

United Methodist Women: Judy Spurgeon reported on her weekend at the Florida Conference Annual Women's Retreat in Leesburg. She spent time with women from Englewood UMC, out of which Gulf Cove UMC was born. One thing mentioned was Englewood and Gulf Cove joining to take groups of women to next year's retreats. The president of Englewood's United Methodist Women's group also spoke with Judy about inviting women from our church to attend their UM Women's meetings.

It was pointed out that we established a UM Women's group on three different occasions, but each group eventually disbanded. Since Englewood does the program well, perhaps it is something our women might enjoy attending, especially in light of Rev. Bill's comments that we should pursue what we do well and let other churches do what they do well. We don't have to offer the same programs. All agreed that no one should be upset with a bulletin announcement inviting the women of our church to attend UM Women meetings at Englewood UMC.

Short-Term Task Force for Facility Expansion: All present agree that Gulf Cove UMC needs to consider expanding its facilities. A needs analysis and feasibility study should be completed initially, and a task force should be created for this purpose. It is anticipated that the task force will be short-term and not "drag on for years." Some things to consider and questions to be answered include:

- The portables are on their last legs. If we construct anything in the location of the portables, we will lose the use of those rooms until the new structure is built. Where would we meet?
- Where do we build?
- What do we build?
- Do we need a new sanctuary?
- Do we need a new fellowship hall?
- Do we need more education rooms?
- Do we need all of the above?

One of the largest struggles we currently have is breaking down the sanctuary and putting it back up with very few people. Admittedly, the Boy Scouts and their parents have been a blessing in this regard, but we should not rely on just them.

A study was made about ten years ago by church members which can form a starting point for the new task force, realizing, however, that the old report is completely outdated as to demographics. At the time, ideas were received from the congregation and taken into consideration while the report was being written.

It was recommended that volunteers for the task force be sought from the congregation, including the youth. The suggestion was made that a meeting after church one Sunday be scheduled, asking that individuals attend the meeting if they are interested in the future of GCUMC and want to help us dream about where we can go from here. Individuals are available at the District level who can assist and counsel us in the process.

Church Council Membership: Should we expand the official “voting” membership of Church Council? The 2012 Book of Discipline ¶ 252.5 discusses the membership. A copy of 252.5 is at the end of these minutes, along with a list of current Council members. Other chairmen (such as Education, Outreach, and Worship) and individuals (such as those representing Alpha, Small Groups, and Crafty Ladies) also attend Council meetings to provide input and feedback regarding their specific programs. The following points were made:

- The goal of meetings is to be inclusive, not exclusive.
- Anyone may attend a Council meeting and has a right to be heard and participate in any discussion.
- Our Church Council uses the decision-making process as suggested in the Book of Discipline ¶ 252.3.b: “It is recommended that the council use a consensus/discernment model of decision-making.”
- If more people start attending, would we reach a consensus of *everybody* at the meeting, or just those *officially* on the Council?
- Minutes of the 11/9/2014 Annual Church Conference state:

Lay Leadership: Rev. Bill announced several pen-and-ink changes to the 2015 Leadership Roster which was distributed to those present, and indicated it will be reprinted. He confirmed that no two individuals listed in the SPR committee were related. The Leadership Roster contained in the Conference package also has corrections which need to be made. All present indicated acceptance of the 2015 Leadership Roster as changed by Rev. Bill.

- Perhaps all we need to do is change the website to reflect “Leadership” instead of “Church Council” and include everybody on the current Leadership Roster.

It was suggested that a new Leadership Team be created to reconsider who should be members of the Church Council. Last year, four teams were officially created: Education Subcommittees; Non-Sunday/Off-Site Worship Service; Live-Streaming On-Line, YouTube, etc.; and Cuba Sister Church. Although there have been mixed results from these Leadership Teams, the concept seems to be well suited to determining Council members.

QR Codes: Doreen advised that there are free smartphone applications to create QR Codes, the small, pixelated boxes which appear in many printed advertisements. In most cases, scanning the QR Code will take the smartphone user to a webpage. The QR Code can be included in our bulletins and newsletters to take users directly to one of GCUMC’s webpages, such as the donation page, the Team Cuba page, Relay for Life page, Myakka Elementary School page, etc. Right now, donations can be made online only if the user has or creates a PayPal account, and PayPal receives 3% of any donation. We should consult with the church’s bank about establishing some type of direct deposit instead of having to go through a third party. The people who will be coming to GCUMC 20 or 30 years in the future are those who are or will be using QR Codes and similar technological advances.

ADJOURNING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50pm with communion and a prayer by Rev. Bill. The next Church Council meeting will be held on Monday, April 27, 2015 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary

(continued on next page)

Book of Discipline ¶ 252.5 Membership in the Church Council

5. *Membership*—The charge conference will determine the size of the church council. Members of the church council shall be involved in the mission and ministry of the congregation as defined in ¶ 252.2. The membership of the council may consist of as few as eleven persons or as many as the charge conference deems appropriate. The council shall include persons who represent the program ministries of the church as outlined in ¶ 243. The membership shall include but not be limited to the following:

- a) the chairperson of the church council;
- b) the lay leader;
- c) the chairperson and/or a representative of the pastor-parish relations committee;
- d) the chairperson and/or a representative of the committee on finance;
- e) the chairperson and/or a representative of the board of trustees;
- f) the church treasurer;
- g) a lay member to annual conference;
- h) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Men;
- i) the president and/or a representative of the United Methodist Women;
- j) a young adult representative
- k) a representative of the United Methodist Youth;
- l) the pastor(s).

CURRENT CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS:

a	Church Council Chairperson	Doreen
b	Lay Leader	Ken Priest
c	SPR Chairperson/Rep	Joan Priest
d	Finance Chairperson/Rep	John Furtado
e	Trustee Chairperson/Rep	Renee McVety
f	Church Treasurer	Dawn Tesauro
g	Lay Member to Annual Conf	* Doreen Alvarez or Joan Frizzell alternate
h	UM Men President/Rep	Ralph Calladine
i	UM Women President/Rep	*
j	Young Adult Rep	*
k	UM Youth Rep	*
l	Pastor(s)	Rev. Dr. Bill Fisackerly
--	At large (3)	Mary Hilton, Bonnie Wollmacher, Rick Starck

*= **NOT** identified on our website as a Council member; we currently have no UM Women's group, no young adult representative, and no UM Youth representative.