

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church
Helping Everyone Meet, Know, and Serve Jesus
Church Council Meeting
April 27, 2015 – 7:00 PM

Attendees:

Doreen Alvarez (Church Council Chairman)	John Furtado	Rick Starck
Rev. Dr. Bill Fisackerly	Mary Hilton	Donna Wallace
Sandy Doty	Gretchen Leppla	Dana Hanson
Scott Folsom	Jeanne Shrout	
	Linda Starck	

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

Corrections to Previous Minutes: No corrections were proposed to the minutes of the March 23, 2015 meeting.

NOMINATIONS

Rev. Bill advised that the Nominations Committee has met and is pleased to announce that the following individuals have accepted the indicated positions. An asterisk indicates an individual is considering that position:

Scholarship Team

George Beatty

Education Chairman

Gretchen Leppla

Trustee

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Endowment Team

Betty Hansell

John McGuire

John Furtado

Rev. Dr. Bill Fisackerly

Facilities Expansion Team

Vic Costello

Helen Boyce

Carol McGuire

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After a short discussion, all the individuals were approved by the Church Council, including a conditional approval of the two who are considering the positions.

Group Magazine has an on-line [Spiritual Gifts Discovery program](#) which is available for a one-time activation fee. The spiritual gift survey can be taken through a link which can be placed on our church website. The results are analyzed and compiled by Group's program.

NURTURE

Education: Welcome, Gretchen Leppla, as our new Education Chairman! Since she is brand new to our Education ministry, Doreen gave the Education report. She advised that she has prepared the April and May Sunday School lessons for the children, but because her plate is so

full, someone else will need to prepare future lessons. Holly Woods has requested that an education meeting be held.

Alpha: Sandy reported that the celebration dinner was held on March 27, with 48 individuals attending. A team of volunteers, under the direction of Susie Morrow, prepared and served the meal, and cleaned up after the dinner. A special “Thank You” to all those who helped make the evening a success. The next Alpha program is currently planned for January 2016.

Small Groups: Sandy advised that she and Rev. Bill met with the small group leaders after church on April 26. Major points of the meeting include:

- Some are study groups, some are social groups, and others mixed groups, but devotions and prayer are a part of all the groups.
- All are willing to help with service and mission projects.
- They discussed ways to form new small groups and possible purposes behind them (crocheting, reading, slow-cookers?).
- Finding facilitators of new groups is important.
- Sandy would like to see all the leaders meet every two or three months to share ideas.
- Before the meeting closed, Vic Costello thanked Rev. Bill for being so open and supportive to having many small groups at GCUMC. Many pastors do not want them for a variety of reasons.
- Rev. Bill would like to see people involved in two small groups: one which they are facilitating and one by which they are being fed.

OUTREACH

Nicaró Sister Church: Jeanne, Linda, and Rick reported that Team Cuba recently met with Pastor Isel (District Superintendent of the Holguin Norte District, over the Nicaro Church), his translator, and Dan Christopherson (the SW Florida District’s Cuba Coordinator). Our Nicaro sister church was the sole topic of discussion. Two immediate concerns that Pastor Isel mentioned were that Pastor Reinaldo (pastor of the Nicaro church) needed a bicycle and a phone. Team Cuba immediately provided the money needed for these two items.

In the near future, Pastor Reinaldo will be going to seminary and needs a laptop in order to do his lessons. In addition, right now church is held in Pastor Reinaldo’s house at the bottom of a steep hill, and is fairly secluded. They have capacity for about 50 people to sit inside, but there are more than 60 in attendance on days of worship; the meeting area is less than half the size of one of GCUMC’s portable buildings. A sound system and musical instruments are also on their future wish list.

They are hoping to purchase property for a church which is more centrally-located. They have found one property which they particularly like. Part of the building would be used for Pastor Reinaldo’s residence and the rest for the church. In addition, there is enough land that there is

room to expand. It was mentioned to Pastor Isel that we would like to see pictures of the building and answers to several questions. He responded, however, that as soon as someone starts taking pictures, or if the seller thinks that Americans are behind the purchase in any way, the price will skyrocket. As a result, it will be necessary to rely fully on Pastor Isel to make the best decision.

Another problem being addressed involves their water system. It is hoped that filters for the cistern will be received in May or June. If they are installed at Pastor Reinaldo's current location, they would be so remote that they would likely not be of any great help to the community. However, if the other, centrally-located property was obtained, their chance of receiving governmental approval would increase greatly, and the entire community would benefit from the water system.

Rev. Bill recently received a letter from Pastor Reinaldo. He transcribed it with Google's help, and the contents of the letter are reproduced at the end of these minutes. The group was reminded of how excited the children were when Scott handed out crayons to the church's children last year. They had never seen crayons before then!

Team Cuba would like to inform the congregation about all these possibilities and obtain approval before proceeding further. Their primary concern is providing an amount for a laptop plus about \$2,500 for the new property. It is possible that Scott could take money to Nicaro when he goes to Cuba in July. All present agreed that Council would support Team Cuba in these endeavors.

Myakka River Elementary School: Doreen advised that eight from our congregation plus the Boy Scouts assisted at the recent Myakka festival. She pointed out that next week is National Teacher Appreciation Week, and suggested that we ask for donations of home-baked cookies which can be delivered to the school next week. All agreed that would be a good idea. If we received an over-abundance of cookies, some might be taken to other schools as well.

WITNESS

Worship: Donna advised that a meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12. She said she is still learning, but everything is going well.

SUPPORT

Finance: John reported that we received spendable donations of almost \$47,000 this month! About \$24,500 is in the Reserve Fund. The Facility Up Keep account has a balance of \$8,417, not including the \$1,500 which will be added this month. There is \$7,610 in the Facility Expansion account, and \$5,600 in the Air Conditioning account. Over \$1,100 has been received to help pay for our ECHO youth's travel expenses to Cuba. In addition, a sizable donation was received which was used to purchase more Welcome Bags.

Trustees: Doreen asked that everyone remember to fill out a work order if they see anything around the church that requires custodial work. The work order should be placed in the Trustees mail bin in room 109 (above the wooden mail slots). They will prioritize all work orders to make sure everything gets done in a timely manner, or if necessary, make arrangements for an outside contractor to perform the work.

Metal shelving was purchased and installed in the FACP/storage room. Organizing everything in that room greatly improves its appearance and functionality.

Until a full-time trustee chairman is selected, the chairmanship will rotate monthly.

Staff Parish: Doreen advised that our ministerial candidate, Shirley Smith, has become certified and begins licensing school in Lakeland on May 11. After she completes the school, she will likely be assigned to a church as a Licensed Local Pastor – able to perform functions such as baptisms, funerals, weddings, and communion at that church only. She will be acting under the supervision of the District Superintendent. A celebratory pot-luck dinner is planned at GCUMC on Sunday, June 14, two days after her licensing. SPR is sponsoring the celebration, but is asking everyone to bring a dish, to share their favorite stories about Shirley, and to make a love offering for her.

An individual has been tentatively selected to fill the new Audio/Visual Technician position. Assuming background and reference checks are successfully completed, Nick Rodriguez will probably start in mid-May.

OLD BUSINESS

Vision Retreat Review: Several comments were made:

- People liked having it at GCUMC instead of off-site. We knew where everything was, and the office staff was able to partake of more of the conference instead of having to spend so much time getting things ready.
- We reviewed last year's goals, and were surprised how God answered some of the goals in ways we never expected. He was blessing what we were doing. We ultimately decided that no new goals were needed, as there was still work to be done on last year's goals which were falling into place.
- This retreat seemed more focused and organized. There were less break-out or table sessions, and one speaker who kept us on-topic.
- Lynn Ball, our guest speaker, was pleased at how we could disagree with each other, yet not be angry with each other. She also mentioned how so many of us said we needed to get outside of the church's walls – we're not stuck on making things better for us.

The following Council discussion revolved around one of the goals – creating a safe venue off-site for disconnected people to experience a trusting relationship with God – specifically, reaching out to the American Legion and establishing a coffee house.

American Legion: Rev. Bill presented a proposed flyer which he and John Dorotics developed for promoting this outreach – initially named “At Ease.” At a recent meeting attended by Rev. Bill and John, the leadership at the American Legion on Harbor Boulevard in Port Charlotte indicated that they felt this outreach should be supported by their organization, and said they would provide the room in which the meetings could take place. They said they also have women veterans who go there who might be interested in the outreach sessions.

Now we need a large team to create and run the program. Ideally several GCUMC veterans will be included on the team. The American Legion folks indicated there would be no problem bringing in snacks other than pretzels and beer. John also likes the Nooma videos and feels they would promote discussion. Three individuals indicated they would join the team: John Furtado, Sandy Doty, and Linda Starck. The initial hope is that this outreach will tell those veterans that God loves them – something they’ve heard before, but maybe aren’t sure about.

Coffee House: Rev. Bill indicated he doesn’t have too many details on this. However, there is an apparent change of venue for the envisioned coffee house. Shirley Smith has said that the ownership of Lakeview restaurant (across from Publix at the intersection of 776 & Gasparilla Road) is amenable to providing space for this outreach.

On-Line Presence/Video Streaming: The new A/V Technician has indicated he can get it set up fairly quickly. However, before that is done, it is necessary to upgrade the lighting in the sanctuary. Rev. Bill said two bids have been received, one for white LED lighting, and the other for colored LED lighting. He is contacting the first bidder to obtain their bid on colored lights. Although it is expensive to make the initial switch, LED lights are much more efficient than fluorescent lights and last much longer. It appears that the money is available, without touching the lighting money that was received as part of the mortgage that was paid off last year. As was said at the recent Finance meeting, recording with bad lighting makes for a bad recording. In addition, when fluorescent lights start to go out and begin to flicker, the constant buzzing interferes with the hearing-assist devices which we provide to some of our congregation.

Meet, Know, & Serve: Rev. Bill asked the group which of these three we believe we do best. Several said they felt we “meet” the best (including Gretchen and Sandy who only recently joined the church), but there is no data collected or available to support the assertion. With regard to “know,” this can partially be determined by how many people attend church and small groups. “Serve” is calculated in part based on the number of Salty Service cards which are turned in on Sundays. Unfortunately, many individuals still have a tendency not to turn in the cards, because they feel they are “patting themselves on the back.” In addition, many are unsure as to what qualifies as a Salty Service. Rev. Bill is planning another review of the five Missional

Vital Signs during May: Passionate Worship, Radical Hospitality, Intentional Discipling, Salty Service, and Extravagant Generosity.

Farmers' Market: Rick advised that he is suspending further work on establishing the Farmers' Market. It was learned that we would need to pay Charlotte County \$2,500 to \$3,000 to have the church property rezoned as commercial. Then, after the property is rezoned commercial, we are not allowed to have anyone living on the property, as we currently do in Oak's Cove. His inquiry so far indicates that we do not have enough parking to accommodate the crowds that would come. In addition, he has not felt a great deal of support from other individuals. Because we are currently zoned as residential, we are allowed to do arts & crafts shows and barn sales up to six times a year. Because the Farmers' Market would occur weekly over half the year or more, the rezoning would be required.

NEW BUSINESS

Imagine No Malaria: Rev. Bill made several points about malaria. It was eradicated from the United States because of funding and our effective means of educating the public about malaria. The malaria parasite goes through seven distinct stages during its lifetime, and stopping any one of those stages stops malaria as a whole. In areas where malaria was prevalent, stopping malaria enables other diseases to be controlled because malaria was always the first disease treated whenever someone was hospitalized, whether the person had malaria or not.

Another benefit to stopping malaria is that the general overall economy improves. Children and pregnant women usually die from malaria. Men, however, usually just get sick, but that makes them unable to work, which causes them and their family to live in poverty.

Several years ago the fight against malaria in Africa started with Nothing But Nets. While using mosquito nets can stop malaria (or at least decrease it substantially), the problem arose when people took the nets but never opened the package. They were not properly educated in their use.

Rev. Bill included an informative article in the church's May newsletter about eradicating malaria, which is one of the goals of the United Methodist Church.

September Sermon Series: Doreen said we need to start thinking now about a theme for the series. One possibility involves the levels of our faith (exploring, beginning, growing or deepening, Christ-centered).

ADJOURNING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45pm with communion and a prayer by Rev. Bill. The next Church Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 26, 2015 at 7:00pm. (Monday is Memorial Day.)

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary

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PASTOR REINALDO'S LETTER
(Translation through Google)

Beloved Pastor Bill Fisackerly and his wife, brother and friend Scott Folsom and other brothers of his church, my wife Eglis, our friends of the church, and our sisters and brothers of myself, I welcome you in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ask many blessings from God for your lives and ministries.

We want to express much gratitude for what you are doing for us. We are grateful and appreciate very much the washing machine. On the disk we have sent with this letter we have included many photos and videos, some activities and celebrations of our church. We ask forgiveness for the poor quality of the photos and videos; we don't have the necessary equipment. We are sincerely sorry.

Also the pastor is very happy and grateful with the sisters there for including the cards and the letters for Christmas. Many thanks.

Thanks to your support and assistance, we are working in the church, offering snacks and lunch in Sunday school. We are working with children and elders of the community project, and we extend ourselves to achieve all this territory Nicaro. Many people are coming to Christ. The church is growing, and God is doing great things in this place.

We pray to God that one day we can meet in person and share together the blessings of God, not only in Cuba, but also in your country. Pray that our Lord continues to bless and strengthen this relationship between us. God bless you all richly and abundantly. We regret that we do not have here in Nicaro the facility to have a translator so that we could understand better.

Reinaldo Eloi Laguna Laguna
Pastor, Iglesia Metodista Nicaro