

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church
Helping Everyone Meet, Know, and Serve Jesus
Minutes of Church Council Meeting
November 23, 2015

Attending: Donna Wallace, Gretchen Leppla, Doreen Alvarez, Scott Folsom, Jeanne Shrout, Alfred Current, Sandy Doty, Rev. Bill Fisackerly, Joan Priest, Betty Hansell.

The meeting was opened with the lighting of the Christ candle and a prayer by Doreen.

Doreen began by saying how much she appreciates Dana Hanson. She said, "Without her, I would not have been able to get through this year."

Education - Gretchen is preparing for Advent and is excited about the children's response to planned activities. She said she brings her keyboard and each Sunday morning they begin by singing Christmas hymns, which the kids did not seem to know. She told them that they sound really good and maybe they should think about starting a children's choir. She reported that new kids are coming every week, and sometimes there are 15 in attendance.

Small Groups - Sandy is visiting each small group to get some idea of what goes on, so that she can direct people who are interested in being part of a group. She hopes some of the people who are ringing bells for the Salvation Army will form small groups. So far, 64 people have signed up to volunteer as bell ringers. Rev. Bill reminded her that volunteers should turn in Salty Service cards. He also mentioned the possibility of prayer request cards being available for folks to complete. Sandy indicated that the ringers do not have time to handle that responsibility. There was discussion about some kind of sign that could be displayed which would let people know that volunteers represent GCUMC. Alfred stated that after the first of the year, the plan is to have a meal for all the volunteers and present the idea of forming a small group, or groups, from the participants. The groups might be called "The Ringers."

Team Cuba - Rev. Bill announced that he will be traveling with a group to Cuba in February. Jeanne said that we were able to pack all the medical supplies which were sent with the Starcks. Betty stated that a Team Cuba meeting is scheduled for December 1. One topic of discussion will be the possibility of starting scholarships for those who would like to visit our sister church but do not have the funds to do so. Rick and Linda will report on their trip, and we will decide what supplies need to be gathered for the February trip.

Trunk or Treat - Doreen said that Holly has indicated there were fewer cars than last year. However, we had a good turnout and folks lingered to play the trivia game.

Family Fall Festival - There were more families from outside the church than within and fewer volunteers. It was suggested that maybe next year we do something different.

Perhaps a lunch after Sunday services followed by activities, would inspire more participation.

Barn and Crafts Sale - Sandy reported that the Crafty Ladies bazaar was well attended and lots of items were sold. The sales amounted to about \$5,000. Jeanne said the men took in \$2,047 at the barn sale. Organizers feel that lunch does not need to be available at this function. Apparently, more workers were fed than visitors. Alfred feels the food should be outside near the barn sale. He suggested grilling hot dogs and hamburgers might appeal to folks rather than soup and sandwiches.

Thanksgiving Community Dinner - Preparations are underway, but Don Teague will need lots of help getting everything ready over the next few days. Rev. Bill has asked our A/V tech to put together a slide show of the year's activities, which will run during the dinner.

Hanging of the Greens - Donna felt the service went well, though not many people attended (about 20). Jeanne said that in looking at the attendance in previous years, it appears we get better attendance when the service is held later in the day.

Finance - Doreen reported that the year's spendable income was slightly behind, but we have transferred only \$6,000 from the reserve fund. Contributions to the reserve fund are steady, and John Furtado believes that by summer we will have enough money in that fund to pay a full month's expenses. We also have designated contributions for the 1% Club still coming in. The amount of \$1,500 is placed in the Facilities Expansion fund if enough is left after monthly expenses are paid. It was noted that we need to get the Facilities Expansion team to start researching options, as we cannot continue to spend money to repair the portables. Doreen asked for approval of the 2016 budget which totals \$477,147. *All those present were in agreement and approved the proposed budget for next year.*

Nominations - Rev. Bill said that there are a few openings that could be filled, but we can function with the roster we have.

Trustees - Rev. Bill is pleased that the dehumidifiers are working. Doreen said that at the Trustees meeting, Skip stated that the sanctuary temperature setting was fine. However, she pointed out that several people were uncomfortable and complaining about the warm condition of the room during the last few weeks. At the meeting, the Trustees took a walk to the sanctuary. Skip had to open some vents and doesn't know why someone keeps closing them.

Charge Conference - Rev. Bill was glad to see so much participation from different people, with a variety of ideas presented.

At Ease Veterans - Energy will be focused on the participants at the Rotonda location.

New Business

Facility Expansion - Where do we go from here? We are using the portables as best we can, but we are growing and seriously need to discuss other possibilities. Do we replace the portables and build a fellowship hall, or use the current sanctuary as a fellowship hall and build a new sanctuary? Doreen talked to John Furtado about the seating capacity in the sanctuary. His calculations indicate that at 80% capacity, 292 seats are needed; our maximum seating arrangements would accommodate 366 people. Rev. Bill said that we have 2-3 people interested in being part of the expansion process.

Annual Vision Retreat - Doreen feels we need to define or "brand" ourselves; i.e., determine what kinds of experiences people will find that give a sense of "community." In conversations with others, she has found that the term "small groups" puts some people off. Perhaps something like "community groups" would sound more inviting. People are looking for connections and closeness with others, so we need to let them know they can find that here. As a springboard for the retreat, Doreen would like for us to use a book Rini Hernandez mentioned at Charge Conference [The Class Meeting: Reclaiming a Forgotten (and Essential) Small Group Experience by Kevin M. Watson]. February 13 has been set as the date for our retreat, pending confirmation with the office calendar.

Christmas Parade - Alfred wondered whether we had ever participated in the Christmas Parade in Englewood. He proposed the idea of having a float with children on it, singing Christmas carols. Since it is too late to enter this year's event, the idea can be discussed for next Christmas. Betty added that in the past, we have talked about participating in the Rotonda parade but have never followed through with that idea.

Christmas Caroling - We reviewed the list of upcoming events, and Rev. Bill stressed that he will need help with organizing the Christmas caroling event. Scott reminded everyone that there are song booklets left from last year that he put together.

It was decided that our next Church Council meeting will be January 25, 2016.

The meeting was closed with the serving of communion.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Hansell