

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church
Helping Everyone Meet, Know, and Serve Jesus
Church Council Meeting
February 22, 2016 – 7:00 PM

Attendees:

Doreen Alvarez, Chairman
Alfred Current
Sandy Doty
Scott Folsom

John Furtado
Mary Hilton
Gretchen Leppla
Joan Priest

Ken Priest
Jeanne Shrout
Donna Wallace
Dana Hanson

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

Corrections to Previous Minutes: The recording secretary was not notified of any necessary corrections to the minutes of the 1/25/2016 meeting.

NURTURE

Education: Gretchen advised that the number of children who attend Sunday school still fluctuates greatly from week to week. The new bulletin boards in the hallway are up. Gretchen asked specifically that Room 109/110 not be used as a dumping ground. (Jeanne added the same request for Room 114, the conference room next to the office.) Another cleaning of 109/110 will be conducted, hopefully in the near future. The picture frames that came off the walls will be pitched, as most were left-overs from a barn sale. It was mentioned that if any of the frames are in good condition, they could be sent with the library books to the Salvation Army for their resale store.

Dana reported that for VBS, it was decided that the Egypt theme would be used. Holly was going to contact Dawn to order the starter kit. Another meeting will be held after it is received.

Regarding the Easter egg hunt and festival, the date of Saturday, March 19, from 10am-noon, has been selected. The eggs have been ordered and received. The hunt (toddlers thru age 12) will be at 10am, followed by snacks and games. Holly plans to have the donation board in the back of the sanctuary this Sunday. Volunteers will be asked to report on March 19 at 8am to fill the baskets with grass and an Easter book and get organized for the children to arrive by 10am. Holly does not think a meeting prior to then is necessary, as long as at least 12 individuals volunteer to help. The bounce house will be readied that morning, and hopefully retrieved from the barn the prior Thursday. Several small groups have been contacted about preparing prize baskets in the \$25-range for the family games.

Small Groups: Sandy advised that two new members contacted her about joining a small group. She suggested that they consider starting their own small group. The major concern is that people who are in a small group don't want to leave their current group. Sandy pointed out that it is hoped people would stay and be fed by their current group, but *also* start a new group.

OUTREACH

Team Cuba: Jeanne advised that things are going well. Rev. Bill is still in Cuba, but will be returning tomorrow (Tuesday Feb. 23). Sunday night he was very excited to be preaching at Pastor Reinaldo's church. Pastor Reinaldo and his family moved into their new home on

December 20. He is getting his email working and sends an occasional email. The speakers at Englewood UMC yesterday afternoon, including Rick & Linda Starck, passed on fantastic stories and information. At the District's request, Scott is returning to Cuba in July for a week, and John and Carol McGuire are going in November. So far, no one has signed up to go next year. Scott is happy to provide Dan Christopherson's information to anyone who asks; Dan is the District's Cuba Coordinator.

Pig Pickin' & Cookie Dash: Alfred thanked everyone who helped in any way with the event three days ago. He purchased 1,000 containers for serving the meal, and after it was all done, put about 300 into the pantry for future use. So 700 meals were served. On Saturday, Alfred and Charles Hilton took a large portion of the leftovers to the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition; the rest is being sold for \$5 a bag. The number of tickets sold was 600. Proceeds from the cookie dash plus contributions was about \$800. Between Myakka River and Vineland Elementary Schools, about 180 meals were provided for the teachers and staff. Unfortunately, not enough "teacher meals" were purchased, so proceeds are reduced by an amount to purchase those meals. Alfred's best guess is that we should have about \$4,000 to \$5,000 in proceeds from the Pig Pickin'.

It was noted that there were a few individuals who did not participate because of Lent or some other personal reason. Next year it is planned that the Pig Pickin' and Arts & Crafts Fair will be switching months; i.e., the Pig Pickin' will be held in January and the Arts & Crafts Fair will be held in February. In doing so, the Pig Pickin' should avoid Lent, and the Arts & Crafts Fair will hopefully have better weather than they have had the last couple of years. Jeanne mentioned that it would be most helpful to have someone (other than staff) sitting in the office for a period of time before the Pig Pickin' to sell tickets.

Elementary Schools: Alfred read a letter that he had already received from Myakka River thanking us for the lunches from the Pig Pickin'. He also read a letter regarding the help we have provided at some of their school functions. They asked if some of our members could attend two assemblies on Thursday, February 25 (at 9am and 10am) to acknowledge our assistance. Alfred will solicit individuals to go.

Scouts: Alfred commended the Boy Scouts for their assistance in setting up the sanctuary after the Pig Pickin'. A couple boys are on track to becoming Eagle Scouts.

WITNESS

Worship & Lenten Season: Donna said plans are underway for Holy Week. On Easter Sunday, a continental breakfast will be available from 7:30 to 11:00. Maundy Thursday will be a dramatic reading of "Passion Parallel," which compares people from Biblical times to today. On Good Friday, Kim Fisackerly is doing the "Mary: Portrait of a Mother" monologue, and the chapel will be open from 9am to 3pm for prayer. The Stephen Minister banner has been hung in the sanctuary, as previously requested.

SUPPORT

Finance: John said all is going well. One thing he suggested during his short presentation at each service on Sunday involved alternative giving, such as donation of stocks, the mandatory age-70½ distribution from 401(k) plans, and using <https://smile.amazon.com> or <https://umcmarket.org> to make online purchases. Alfred offered his services if anyone had questions about the 401(k) plans. John would like to offer another Financial Peace University session, but we need the participants.

Trustees: Doreen reported that anti-slip treads are still needed on the ramps to the portables, but we have to wait for drier weather that is above 50° before they can be installed. Skip is getting cost estimates to put vinyl siding on the portables, since they have to last until new facilities are here. Vic Costello and Skip are determining how much pipe is needed to use reclaimed water. The dehumidifiers are making huge differences in the sanctuary and Closet of Hope; it is anticipated that more will be purchased, at least for the other portables. A little bit of work remains to be done in repairing the walkway to the memorial gardens on the other side of the pond.

Ken conveyed information about Conway Road, which is the south entrance road off of 776 which leads to the church. It turns out that GCUMC's property line goes almost to the other side of Conway Road. Although legally it is a private access to the church, we would have a difficult time closing it off because of the traffic going back to private property and homes. This was discovered as a result of the January Arts & Crafts Fair. Although the area in back where all the cars park is "high and dry," they had to drive through a drainage-swale area getting to it. Because of the rain, each car that parked made the drainage area worse. The trustees want to put in a drainage pipe (a culvert) at the entrance to the back acreage. They feel this should be done as soon as possible to accommodate any large events which require the parking, yet not make the solution so permanent that it causes problems with future facilities expansion.

The Men's Group is willing to donate 10% of the Craft Fair proceeds toward the purchase of an electronic sign for out front. In addition, there is a special donation which will be received in a few months that will go toward that purchase. Randy Moore had done some research on this project a few years ago, and will be delivering the information he has to John.

Dana asked if the trustees could check into installing guttering on the Music Room (203) because if it rains, it drips on people who walk in and out.

Staff Parish: Joan reported that SPR is having a meeting on March 7. One thing they will be addressing is the vacant AV position and a possible need to revise the job description for that paid employee. In addition, they will be assembling a list of job descriptions for all volunteer positions. Gretchen asked that it be a part of Council minutes that she would like a job description for her volunteer position as Education Chairperson. Betty Hansell had put substantial work into this project in late 2012, but no further action was taken; she is reconstructing the information she had and will give it to Joan. Obviously, many volunteer positions have changed since then, but whatever Betty has is a good starting point.

Joan pointed out that we have to determine whether we are a staff-led church or a laity-led church. In other words, does the staff lead our church and they are supported by the laity (and to whom do the laity positions report), or does the laity lead the church and they are supported by the staff (and to whom does each staff member report). Joan advised that in the past, we have been a staff-led church.

OLD BUSINESS

Facility Expansion: No meeting has been scheduled for this new team. The current members are Vic Costello, Helen Boyce, Carol McGuire, John Furtado, Skip Messenger, Ralph Calladine, Randy Moore, Ray Dunfee, and Rick Starck.

Annual Vision Retreat: Most of those present were at the retreat. Discussion related to the retreat is addressed later in these minutes.

Youth: Scott advised that Colton and Zac will be graduating from high school this year. Bea Penszki and Jackie Guerin will be graduating from college.

Scott and Colton were at Chrysalis last weekend. (Chrysalis is the youth version of the Walk to Emmaus for adults.) Colton stepped up and became the Assistant Lay Director while there. Scott was very impressed with the way he impacted the lives of the other youth. Colton will be speaking at all three services on Sunday, May 15, in Rev. Bill's absence.

Scott said the pink flamingo flocking program which raised funds for the youth was very successful. Although the program is officially on hiatus, he said if someone has a very special, truly monumental, occasion to flock another individual, he and the youth will consider it.

NEW BUSINESS

New-to-Us Sanctuary Chairs: The First United Methodist Church in Punta Gorda is purchasing new chairs for their sanctuary. They are offering to sell their current chairs for \$1 each; they are interlocking, can be stacked, and are wider and more comfortable than our current sanctuary chairs. However, they must be removed from FUMC by March 1st. After discussions among Rick Starck, John Furtado, and Skip Messenger (Trustee chairman) last week, it was decided to purchase up to 300 chairs, but we "get to choose" which chairs we take. John does not know if they are scotch-guarded. One negative is that they do not have a pocket or basket for hymnals, but John said ready-made racks could be purchased. It was noted that since we are trying to have all hymns and other readings on the overhead screen, the need for the actual hymnals is almost nonexistent. Because the chairs are cloth, John proposes that they never be used for dinners. Currently there are 316 chairs in our sanctuary, and another 98 in storage in the shed; a portion of those chairs could be sold, retaining enough for dinners. After discussion, it was decided that, IF we can house and use more than 300 in the sanctuary, enough should be purchased to fill the sanctuary with the same chair and maybe even have some in the chapel or other locations.

Church Council Format: Doreen pointed out that much of what was discussed in the first hour of this meeting is contained in the minutes of the various committees. All minutes which Dana

receives are emailed to about 70 individuals (those who have requested to receive them). In addition, they are posted on the GCUMC website. Doreen would like them to be reviewed in depth by Church Council members prior to their meeting, so that only the items of concern are discussed. She would like to spend much more time on how we are creating our Discipleship Path, what we are doing toward Fresh Expressions, and how we are moving toward Evangelism – the three cornerstones discussed at the Vision Retreat. Such discussions would include:

- Many of the things Rev. Harold Lewis talked about in the videos we watched are already covered by Rev. Bill in the new member class, but what can we improve?
- How are we plugging people in once the spiritual gift inventory is completed?
- Do we want to consider a one-year Bible 101 class, or something less time-consuming?
- Are there materials, or do we have to create them from the ground up?
- How do we keep new members interested, involved, and active? (“Salvation doesn’t mean keeping a seat warm in the sanctuary.” – Harold Lewis)
- What can Council do to promote the needed changes?

In order to make the time to address the above concerns, two questions were asked: Do Council members take on the responsibility of reviewing all minutes so that there is time to address other things? Whenever there is a formal meeting of any committee, are minutes prepared and emailed to the Recording Secretary for further distribution (and possible posting on the website)? It was decided that both answers should be yes. Therefore, in the future:

- ✚ All Church Council members should review all minutes they receive by email.
- ✚ At Council meetings, only items which mandate consideration, or about which there are any questions, will be discussed.
- ✚ Whenever any committee, team, or group schedules a formal meeting, it is requested that someone take minutes and forward them to the Recording Secretary (currently Dana Hanson at danahanson@comcast.net) for further distribution.

First-Time Guests, Fresh Expressions, & Evangelism: Joan recommended that we institute the Vision Retreat discussion on visiting our first-time guests at their home. We should:

- NOT go inside;
- welcome them;
- give them information on the church and a small, lasting gift;
- tell them you hope to see them again; and
- remember their names the next time they come to church. This would, of necessity, require that one individual from each service be available for these initial home visitations.

Jeanne advised that maybe only one out of eight blue, first-time-guest cards carries a full local address. Regardless, most individuals present felt reaching out to just one was better than none. When time permits and assuming she has a full address, Jeanne sends out a welcome card. Several felt that responding to the blue cards should be moved to a volunteer position. In addition, the contents of the blue bag which is given to first-time guests needs to be reviewed, updated if necessary, and possibly expanded.

More emphasis needs to be made on the various memberships which are available. The full membership is for Methodists who are members of GCUMC only. Affiliate members are Methodists who are also members of a Methodist church elsewhere. Associate members are people who belong to a church of another denomination. Either of the last two membership categories is appropriate for our congregants who are here only part of the year.

Alfred brought up the possibility of us going out to a coffee shop or other location to hold a small group meeting. This has been discussed periodically over the last two years, but nothing has come of the suggestion.

There is no one currently at GCUMC who handles things like this, and we need to get a coordinator for these great ideas. It was decided that locating an individual to do so should be handled by the Lay Nominations committee under an evangelism ministry. The Evangelism Coordinator's duties would include:

- Coordinate acknowledgment of first-time guests,
- Organize visitation of first-time guests, and
- Develop Fresh Expressions plans and send people out.

Paid Advertising: Dana talked about the recently publicity she put out for the Pig Pickin' event. She made the usual submissions to several area newspapers, internet sites, and radio stations. Noting that the only papers she has access to are the Charlotte Sun, Englewood Sun, and North Port Sun, she saw the short, 120-character free entry on three or four occasions in those papers. However, she never saw the four-paragraph article she submitted in any of them. She questioned whether this might be because we never take out any paid advertising with the Sun, not even the weekly listing which used to be included with the paper's list of churches every weekend. (We do pay for advertising a few major events – the Arts & Crafts Fair and the Bazaars.) It was suggested that we pay for advertising some of our other large events, possibly a three-day add on the weekend before the event.

Jeanne reiterated what she said when we were buying the weekly church-listing advertisement. When blue cards are received and people answer the question "how did you learn about us," the top three responses are: they drove by and saw us; they saw us on the internet; and someone brought them. She seldom, if ever, saw "newspaper" checked. Doreen said we will address this issue further at a future meeting.

Children's Home Representative: It was asked whether Lay Nominations could also consider, in addition to the new Evangelism Coordinator position, a new individual to coordinate the Children's Home ministry.

ADJOURNING

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm with communion and a prayer by Joan. The next Church Council meeting will be held on Monday, March 28, 2016 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary