

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church
Experience. Embrace. Engage.
Church Council Meeting
October 23, 2017 – 7:00pm

Attendees:

Doreen Alvarez (Church Council Chairman), Pastor Mike Weaver,
Jeanne Shrout, Linda Starck, Rick Starck

The meeting was opened with the lighting of the candle representing Jesus Christ.

Corrections to Previous Minutes: The recording secretary was not notified of any necessary corrections to the minutes of the 9/25/2017 meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Team Cuba: Jeanne Shrout advised that our sister churches have reported that they lost some roofs and things got wet, but they are Cuban and they will survive. The two churches themselves in both Nicaro and Frank Pais survived Hurricane Irma well with little or no damage. The pastors and their congregations were more concerned with us than they were with themselves.

Rick Starck mentioned that Lisly, Pastor Isel's wife, was overwhelmed when she visited the United States for the first time in May. She took back with her a dream and prayers to start a day care center. They have already taken the first step in obtaining the approval of the Bishop to start such a program, but there are many things to be done before it can come to fruition. Phill Kolbe and Ray & Barbie Dunfee are going on the next trip to Cuba early next year.

A problem has arisen with the Agape Flights out of Venice which was supposed to take our donations to Cuba. When it came time for their most recent trip, they backed out at the very last minute from taking items we wanted to send, other than water systems and some hurricane supplies. They were afraid of Customs in Cuba. However, some of our items could have been used for hurricane victims.

It appears that if we don't have people from our congregation going to Cuba, we now have no way to get our donations there. Cash can be sent at any time with Dan Christopherson, and Pastor Isel will deliver it to the proper church. Some supplies can be purchased with the money, but many medications and supplements cannot be obtained in Cuba. Rick pointed out that it might be necessary for more people to go down to assist with the things that Dan is overwhelmed with doing.

Finance: Attendance and offerings are down. This is briefly addressed later.

Trustees: Rick Starck advised that he has obtained bids for the air conditioning maintenance contract for next year. The trustees are deciding which company to hire. Currently, Boyd Brothers performs the maintenance at about \$2,300 a year for 16 units. Although they were to show up four times during the year, the trustees are aware of only one visit. Grande Aire and AC/DC Air Conditioning have submitted bids. Both companies charge less than Boyd Brothers.

Rick is also in the process of obtaining a bid for hurricane shutters for the main church building. The shutters should be able to open and close from the inside, and one door must be available

through which people can exit the building. Several options are being considered. The ability of light coming through the windows is not a necessity since the church cannot be used as a shelter.

All the hallway lights have been replaced with LED lighting. Most of the lights in portable 201 have also been replaced with LEDs, but there are problems with ballasts. As has been mentioned previously, when we get to the point that the portables will be torn down, the LED bulbs will be retrieved and saved for the new building. Rick anticipates replacing the side-wall, fluorescent lighting in the sanctuary with LEDs. Pastor Mike asked if the lighting in his office could also be changed, since it takes so long for the lights to actually turn on – if they ever do.

SPR: Pastor Mike said self-evaluations and reviews are on-going.

Lay Nominations: Pastor Mike reported that just about everybody who was asked to consider a leadership position at GCUMC next year accepted the offer. Since we are over the minimum required number of people in all committees, and under the maximum where imposed, we are not having to beg people to help run their church.

NEW BUSINESS

Stewardship Promotion: There were not enough people at the Church Council meeting to effectively discuss this. It was suggested that perhaps ideas should come from Finance and then be presented to the Church Council.

Membership/Attendance: Most of our downturn in attendance is a result of seasonal members who have decided to stay north and not return to Florida. The good news is that there were many full-time Florida residents of all ages who visited GCUMC for the first time this past summer. A major problem is getting new families used to coming to church every Sunday. The top three “life categories” used to be home → work → church. It is now more along the lines of home → work → social clubs and school activities → church.

Linda said she feels good about the changes that are happening. Although our attendance and donations may be down, she believes things will take care of themselves because she really likes what she sees on Sunday mornings. As John Furtado said, bills always get paid even if we have to pull from the Reserve Fund, but that fund always gets replenished. Doreen agreed, saying that God may provide, but we still have to do our part.

EXPERIENCE. EMBRACE. ENGAGE.

Pastor Mike summarized “Experience. Embrace. Engage.”

- The theology behind **Experience** relates to the Emmaus Road experience, where the men involved had an opportunity to experience Jesus in a way they never did before. We can “meet,” but “experience” has a deeper breadth.
- **Embrace** is embodied in Jeremiah 24:7, which says, “I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.” By embracing Jesus, you grow deeper in your relationship with Him.

- **Engage** is symbolized in Matthew 4:19, which tells us to follow Jesus and He will make us fishers of people. It's not just charity, but it also takes you deeper in your faith.

Pastor Mike reviewed the bottom half of a flow-chart which he presented to the group. You start with the Church Council for leadership, and under that we have a Board of Trustees, a Finance Committee, and Staff-Parish Relations Committee.

Under the Book of Discipline, you have Witness, Discipleship & Nurture, and Outreach. Our three E's break into those three categories. The tag line is at the very top of the flow-chart page. It gives us our discipleship path. We needed the names and the people behind that. Where can that outreach element come from? What people are already in place in our church? We need a chart with the names on the positions, so we know what is coming up, what positions/ministries we have and whether they are short-term or long-term. Each of the three top-line categories would have one person to represent everybody in their leg. Those under the top-line would report to their representative every month, and their rep would make a short report to the Church Council.

The flow-chart could be posted somewhere in the church so all could see it to quickly find out who they need to speak with about a particular topic. Depending on the ministry, the contact person could be more along the lines of a coordinator than a creator.

ENGAGE: OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

Looking at the far right on the chart, you have Engage which includes Outreach and Evangelism. Outreach would include areas that are not necessarily long-term. Evangelism includes Stephen Ministries, Emmaus, and Cancer Care. Fresh Expressions (which currently includes At Ease Veterans, Friend to Friend, and VBS) is where you go deeper into theology instead of just providing food or a short-term fix, but it can lead to a long-term relationship. Looking at the chart, a name indicates we already have that contact person. For example, for Girl Scouts, the contact is Sue Charbonneau.

SCHOOL – CHURCH RELATIONSHIP: Alfred Current is now our actual contact person with the Conference when the matter involves our school ministries. For school events and on-going programs with which we are involved, again it would be Alfred in charge.

Pastor Mike reminded us that Myakka River Elementary still needs volunteers to be there and to work with the children over lunch time and for early morning reading programs. He has spoken with Donna Wallace about being this contact person.

COMMUNITY – CHURCH RELATIONSHIP: This would include our programs such as the Harry Chapin Food Bank Mobile Pantry, the Charlotte County Health Department, Englewood Helping Hands, and Closet of Hope. We have contact names for all these programs. We have had numerous prayer requests from the Health Department and its clients.

OUTREACH EVENTS: These would be either short-term or seasonal, such as Trunk or Treat, Easter Egg Hunt, Thanksgiving, etc. These events help our people learn how to become the hands and feet of Christ – how to *Engage* with others. The Craft Fairs/Bazaars, Pig Pickin', and

Crafty Ladies are more along the lines of fundraisers to support church ministries; they are not an "outreach" in and of themselves, although there are cross-over areas.

EMMAUS: JoAnn Hopkins is the treasurer of the Gulf Coast Emmaus group. She is our current contact for most things Emmaus.

STEPHEN MINISTRIES: We have two Leaders, Ula Christopher and Ken Priest.

EMBRACE: DISCIPLESHIP-NURTURE

SMALL GROUPS: It is a smaller leg of the chart because it is more in-house. But our chart also has areas in which we need to grow. We have small groups (also known as life groups or growth groups), in which Sandy Doty is our contact person (as a coordinator, not a creator). We can find out from her what is going on in our various groups. The Genesis Small Group contact is Jeanne Shrout. The After Dinner Small Group contact is John Furtado. The Pastor Bible Study Small Group contact is Pastor Mike.

SUNDAY SCHOOL: We have several of these groups covering all ages.

COVENANT GROUPS: These are accountability groups which tend to be long-term relationships, and members of the group usually have similar challenges. Pastor Mike is the contact person.

JESUS ROCKS: Holly Tozer is the contact.

YOUTH GROUP: Sarah Taylor is the contact.

FRIEND TO FRIEND: This group overlaps between both Discipleship and Outreach.

ADJOURNING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm with a prayer by Pastor Mike. The next Church Council meeting will be held on Monday, November 27, 2017 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary