

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church
Experience. Embrace. Engage.
Church Council Meeting
January 22, 2018 – 7:00pm

Attendees: Pastor Mike Weaver, Judy Boyer, John Furtado, JoAnn Hopkins, Chuck Russell, Jeanne Shrout, Linda Starck, Rick Starck, Donna Wallace, Dana Hanson

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

Corrections to Previous Minutes: The recording secretary was not notified of any necessary corrections to the minutes of the 11/27/2017 meeting. There was no meeting in December 2017.

The meeting started with a request that we each pray over the next month regarding the selection of an individual to serve as Church Council Chairman.

EXPERIENCE. EMBRACE. ENGAGE.

Flow Chart of Church Ministries: The flow chart created by Pastor Mike was reviewed. The flow chart follows our discipleship track. One of the purposes of the flow sheet is to identify the person who can answer questions about a particular program or ministry. That person might not be in charge of the program itself, but can lead to you in the right direction.

- We start with Experience (Witness) and its components of worship & praise, Sunday services, and community events. How do we initially meet and get to know Jesus Christ?
- The next step is Embrace (Discipleship/Nurture) and its components of small groups, life groups, and growth groups. How do we grow deeper in our faith?
- The third step is Engage (Outreach/Evangelism) and its components of school/church, community/church, outreach events, and evangelism. Alfred Current is our Outreach Coordinator.

The primary committees of Gulf Cove UMC were discussed – worship, outreach, team Cuba, finance, trustees, and SPR. Since concerns within one committee are in reality concerns for the whole church, Church Council consider their red and yellow items: red items are serious issues with cause for concern; yellows are those which have the potential to turn into major problems. Committees also identify in the minutes of their meetings their green items -- the good things that are cause for praise.

Worship: On Christmas Eve, we held five services, two in the morning, two in the evening, and one near midnight. Many individuals attended more than one service. At the end of the candlelight services, people carried either their lit candles or their glow sticks out into the world and gathered around the flagpoles. A few people had a little difficulty walking outside but still participated in that aspect of the service. The glow sticks started being used specifically for children and for the adults who request them.

The overhead screen was a topic of discussion. Many in the congregation have found it confusing when the words people should be saying or singing do not match what appears on the screen. Pastor Mike pointed out that when it comes to scripture, often times there are more

than one version, and if the correct one isn't identified, the words are different. For instance, NIV has the original 1978 version, a 1984 version, and a 2011 version. Admittedly, although the differences in wording might be small, they can still be disconcerting.

Another problem mentioned regarding the overhead was white lettering on light backgrounds. A light/dark contrast is best. According to the [American Foundation for the Blind](#), "Contrast is one of the most critical factors in enhancing visual functioning, for printed materials as well as in environmental design. Text should be printed with the best possible contrast. For many older people light lettering—either white or light yellow—on a dark background, usually black, is easier to read than black lettering on a white or light yellow background." [Prevent Blindness](#) advises, "People with macular degeneration gradually lose their color perception. ...Weakened cone cells first lose their sensitivity to the lower-intensity wavelengths, such as yellow, purple, and pastels. When this happens, the brain will see only black and shades of grey." Pastor Mike reminded us that when pre-generated materials are used, we generally cannot control the color.

The topic of identifying first-time visitors was also discussed. We used to ask them to stand up, if they were willing. In this way others could see who the visitors were and introduce themselves after the service. However, many want to be "just a fly on the wall" and don't want any attention. By simply welcoming, but not identifying, them it puts the onus on our members (and Linda Starck) to be our welcoming committee. Because Linda is at the entry door every Sunday morning, she immediately sees who is new to our church. Linda said she often says, "I don't think we've met before. I'm...." By introducing herself, it opens the door for someone to admit that this is their first time here. Our greeters are hopefully doing this same thing.

Ash Wednesday is on February 14. We will be offering Ashes to Go from 7-9am, a light dinner (simple soup and bread) at 5:30pm, and an Ash Wednesday service at 6pm.

Team Cuba: Jeanne advised that Betty Hansell has stepped down as their chairman. *Thank you, Betty, for getting us through the first few years of this ministry.* John and Carol McGuire have graciously stepped up to chair the team. A meeting is scheduled for this Thursday at 7pm in #114. They are fervently trying to reach 66 pounds of OTC medical items/drugs to divide among our three members who will be going to Cuba next month (Roy & Barbie Dunfee, and Phill Kolbe).

Finance: John Furtado advised that 2017 surprisingly turned out to be a great year. This happened despite the fact that because of Hurricane Irma we had no services and received no income on September 10. The highlight was the five Christmas Eve services when we received over \$13,000. The total received in December was \$51,214 which resulted in spendable donations for the year 2017 of \$19,300 more than we received in 2016. *God provides!* Pastor Mike mentioned that another surprise happened during 2017 -- our summer attendance went up, while our seasonal attendance went down.

John advised that Gulf Cove UMC is not unique in its financial situation. Church Council and the Finance Committee have both had discussions about conducting a pledge campaign which incorporates a thorough explanation being provided to the congregation. Pastor Mike explained that a pledge is not a binding contract and does not lock in the donor to a stated amount regardless of his or her situation. A pledge drive generally accounts for about 66% of a church's budget.

Many individuals do not even understand what a tithe is, or how the church keeps running on a day-to-day basis. It is beneficial to compare the spendable income of the church to the income of your own home. If you don't get enough money to keep the church or your home running, then a ministry cannot be expanded or created, or something you want to buy cannot be bought. If the church doesn't keep operating, it is forced to close, and there is no need for money for any ministry. Bills that occur monthly have to be paid first. The pledge is our covenant with God to help his church grow.

With regard to the 2018 budget, it was finalized a few days after the Church Council meeting. Because of several changes that needed to be made based on new information, there were both increases and decreases to the previous, proposed budget. As a result, our 2018 budget is only \$281 more than our 2017 budget. The total budget is \$486,487. The average spendable income needed each month is \$40,541, or \$9,352 each week.

Trustees: Rick Starck advised that, despite our money situation, the first concerns of the Trustees are always safety and security. Since their last meeting, JoAnn Hopkins accepted the position of Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees. A meeting was held this afternoon (January 22) with one of the camera-security vendors, and the Trustees are finalizing their selection of a provider to upgrade our system. The need for a family bathroom has been resolved, in that signs are available in each of the Narthex bathrooms which can be placed outside the bathroom door whenever it is in use by a caretaker. The switch to LEDs from fluorescent light fixtures is almost complete. An anti-slip paint will be applied to the wooden walkways outside the portables. Pastor Mike added that a dividing curtain has been obtained for the Chapel and AV storage room to separate the two purposes.

Because of space constraints, the lending library (#101) is being closed. The plan is to turn the room into a meeting room which will accommodate more than four or five people. The congregation has been invited to take home whatever books, DVDs, VHS tapes, and CDs they wish. Available books include the fiction section and all those between the fiction section and the door leading into the sanctuary. Reference books (those next to the Bibles on the outside wall) should not be taken, as they will be retained by the church.

A question was posed whether, since portable #206 is in such bad shape, the youth could move from #206 into the library; it will be mentioned to Sarah. John asked about the library fund (account 320.037) which contains a balance of \$329.97; it was agreed that the balance should be moved elsewhere. Regarding the shelving, Dana said she had already spoken with one couple who wished to purchase the two darker units close to the door leading into the narthex; however, those two units were memorial purchases, and it is felt that it would not be right to sell them; they should stay in the church.

SPR: Pastor Mike explained how SPR is similar to a company's Human Resources Department. He said that a meeting is scheduled for Tuesday evening (January 23) to go over the church profile. Jessie Choate is our new SPR Chairman. Sarah Taylor, our youth director hired in 2017, is doing exceedingly well. The youth program (grades 6 thru 12) is expanding significantly, and Sarah is also talking with some young adults. The children's program is also expanding under Holly Tozer's guidance.

NEW BUSINESS

Journey in Faith Bible Study: A second session of this study started on January 19 and is being conducted by Pastor Becky Stephenson. Feedback from those who are attending the first session has been phenomenal, with many reporting that they are learning something new every night. Becky developed the program and has tweaked it over the years. Both Becky and her husband Jack, who has an extensive musical background, have proved to be blessings for our church.

Ever After Small Group: This group started meeting January 10 and is being facilitated by Kelly Weaver, Liza McDaniel, and Anna Welch. They are even facetimeing during the meeting with a woman who lives in Naples.

Other Small Groups: Several people have contacted Pastor Mike about creating a small group of one sort or another.

Emmaus: JoAnn reported that our church is not represented well in Emmaus. Several of us have attended the Walk, but few are sponsoring new attendees, usually because they are involved with so many other activities. The men's and women's Emmaus groups within our church that had been meeting several years ago have been disbanded. With regard to the March Walks, there currently are only 5 men and only a few more than that women who are signed up to attend. Much prayer is needed to reach the minimum of 24 individuals attending each Walk. An in-house Emmaus gathering was discussed.

OLD BUSINESS

Harry Chapin Food Bank Mobile Pantry: One condition for obtaining the grants received by HCFBMP mandates that a minimum of 125 families (not 125 individuals) come to the pantry each time. Although we generally had 125 people come to GCUMC, we did not have 125 families. Therefore, because of a lack of clientele, Harry Chapin had to stop bringing its pantry to GCUMC. Despite that, they were extremely pleased with the number of volunteers from our congregation who showed up to help when the pantry was here. In fact, we sometimes sent people home because their help was not needed. Jeanne said we received 12 calls on the first day that the pantry was not here (January 2) from people who said they were sorry to see it stop. Dana is compiling a list of other nearby locations where people can go for similar assistance.

Vision Retreat Follow-Up: This meeting was originally scheduled for September 24. However, it was cancelled because of its proximity to Hurricane Irma.

ADJOURNING

The meeting was adjourned at 8:17pm with a prayer by Pastor Mike. The next Church Council meeting will be held on Monday, February 26, 2018 at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary