

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Experience – Embrace – Engage

Church Council Meeting

March 26, 2018 – 7:00pm

Attendees:

Chuck Russell (Council Chair)	Carol McGuire	Sarah Taylor
Pastor Mike Weaver	John McGuire	Donna Wallace
Judy Boyer	Jeanne Shrout	Dana Hanson
Jessie Choate	Linda Starck	
Jo Ann Hopkins	Rick Starck	

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

Corrections to Previous Minutes: The recording secretary was not notified of any necessary corrections to the minutes of the 2/26/2018 meeting.

EXPERIENCE. EMBRACE. ENGAGE.

Experience: Donna Wallace advised that on Wednesday the sanctuary will be prepared for our Maundy Thursday communion service which will start at 5pm. On Friday, the sanctuary will be darkened, and the cross draped in preparation for the Good Friday Tenebrae service at 2pm. On Saturday at 1pm, the sanctuary will be decorated for Easter. The congregation is invited to bring flowers from their garden for the outside cross on Easter Sunday and to have pictures taken in front of the cross. In addition to our usual 8, 9:30, and 11 services, a sunrise service will be held at 6:45am.

Donna informed us that in addition to herself and Pastor Mike, the active people on the Worship Committee are John & Joyce Furtado, Bev Ernest, Betty Hansell, and MaryEllen Eisele. At Linda Starck's suggestion, it was decided that a new worship leader should be chosen as our Director of Children's Praise. The Worship Committee is glad to announce the selection of Hazel Charbonneau! Hazel has been active and instrumental for a long time in getting all the children up during worship and showing them all the dance moves. **Thank you for all your efforts and Congratulations, Hazel!**

Donna also advised that Myakka River Elementary School is seeking volunteers who can help where they are needed. Volunteers must be registered in the school's security system.

Embrace: Jo Ann Hopkins advised that individuals who take the Emmaus walk are asked to pay a bed tax of \$150 for the three-day weekend. The maximum number of individuals who can attend a walk is 24, not counting Emmaus team members who also pay the bed tax. Jo Ann is currently the treasurer of Gulf Coast Emmaus (our local organization) and is aware that each walk ends up in the red, even though other fundraising activities are held. As a result, Emmaus is raising the bed tax up to \$200 or \$225. Jo Ann would like GCUMC to offer scholarships to those in our congregation who would like to take the walk but cannot afford the full bed tax. She asked the Church Council if we could take up a special collection and earmark the donations for the Emmaus bed tax. Those present felt donations for the scholarships is a good idea. Her request will be presented to Finance.

She said that many churches erroneously think of Emmaus as a “fix” for people who need help. In reality, taking the Emmaus walk is meant to help individuals who are active in their church to develop into better leaders and to help them become closer to Christ. She is also aware that churches who are active in Emmaus tend to be stronger churches with a larger potential for growth and community outreach.

Jo Ann also mentioned the need for GCUMC to establish an Emmaus reunion group which meets at least quarterly. They could be handled similar to post-walk dinner Gatherings, where each attendee brings a dish to share. The reunion groups that were established in the past have fallen apart.

The next Gathering in honor of the 20 men and 21 women who recently took their Walks will be held on Saturday, April 7, at 6pm, at St. Michael Lutheran Church in Fort Myers. Previous attendees of Emmaus walks are welcome to come to that event.

Chuck said that from a spiritual standpoint, taking his Emmaus walk was by far the best thing he has ever done. He highly recommends it to anyone who is spiritually in a position to take the Walk.

Pastor Mike advised that the new women’s group that meets on Wednesday evening is doing well. One of the fathers whose children attend GCUMC on Wednesday evening is thinking about starting a men’s group that can also meet from 6-7:30pm.

Engage: Pastor Mike reported that on Thursday, we had volunteers at Myakka River Elementary to help prepare and serve BBQ during their STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math) science fair. A total of 230 meals were served. The best thing Pastor Mike heard was school staff referring directly to, or variations of, “our church” and its BBQ or the help we provided.

About 250 people attended the Easter egg hunt and festival. After the festival, Holly Tozer said that for next year, we need to prepare more than 84 baskets for the children because they were all taken this year. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts were also present. Both groups helped with games.

The Boy Scouts are also recruiting for the new Cub Scout Pack which will hold meetings at GCUMC and be a feeder pack for Boy Scout Troop 776. The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts recently held a joint meeting where the topic of elementary-aged girls joining the Cub Scouts was discussed. Sue Charbonneau said that, since there are no feeder groups into the Girl Scouts, she has no objection to having the Boy Scouts recruit girls into the Cub Scout Pack. They are brainstorming to keep some activities going over the summer months.

John McGuire reported about Pastor Isel’s visits to GCUMC and Cypress Lake UMC. He is the District Superintendent of the Holguin Norte District in Cuba, the district in which both of our sister churches (Nicaro and Frank Pais) are located. During Pastor Isel’s presentations and at our Counsel meeting, we were told about the following:

- The Holguin Norte District has grown from 32 churches to 47 churches, and come June, there will be 49 churches.

- The first shipment of water purification systems was made in August 2016, and it is hoped that the second shipment will be made in May 2018.
- Pastor Isel spoke of an elderly woman at Frank Pais who does laundry to earn income, but she needs a new washing machine which costs about \$300. The 30 people who attended his presentation took up an offering and gave Pastor Isel \$630.
- If a person kills a cow that he raised and did not sell the meat to the government, he could be put in jail for 20 years. However, if you commit murder against another human being, your jail time is only 1 or 2 years.
- Several members of our congregation have visited Cuba, and they reminded us that tourists who visit Cuba do not help the Cuban people.
- The government takes the first \$1,000 of the cost of a cruise for each person.
- Each meal a tourist eats takes away four meals from a Cuban. Cubans are not allowed to eat beef; only tourists eat beef.
- Cuba extends about 760 miles east to west, and about 55 miles north to south.
- All food starts in Havana, near the western end of the island, and is rationed by the Communist government throughout the island. Tourists can be assured that plenty of food is available for them, and they are generally not allowed to travel outside of Havana.
- By the time food distributions reach Holguin Norte and Guantanamo (the two most eastern districts), several categories of basic food groups (such as eggs, rice, or milk) may be depleted, leaving little or nothing to deliver to the people. Over-the-counter medications (band-aids, vitamins, antibiotic creams, Pepto-Bismol, etc.) often have the same result: little or no items reach the eastern-most districts.
- Cubans are forbidden by the government to hunt or fish.
- Because the more tourists who visit means less food for the Cubans, it has been suggested that tourists should be discouraged from visiting Cuba.

Carol McGuire informed us that Team Cuba will hold a meeting on Monday, April 2, at 7pm. A joint presentation from Team Cuba and Kairos will be made to the congregation on Sunday, April 8.

Sarah Taylor said the youth group has been busy. A beach clean-up was held with a youth group from Venice just last week. On April 4 (during spring break), the youth will make a trip to the Children's Home in Enterprise, Florida, to present them with the shoe boxes that the youth prepared shortly before Christmas. On April 14, they will hold a car wash and bake sale fundraiser; since this date coincides with the Barn Sale and Crafty Ladies Sale, it is hoped that the fundraiser will prove extra fruitful. She said that they generally have 9 to 12 youth (mostly middle-school) who attend most functions and meetings. The 4 high schoolers' attendance is sporadic, what with part-time jobs, sports, and homework.

YELLOW, REDS & UPDATES

No yellows or reds were reported by committees which needed to be discussed.

Finance: John McGuire reported that for Finance, spendable income has been good this year. For each of the last five years we have had an average of 3.6% increase (around \$15,000 or

more) in the budget each year. However, for 2018, the total budget is \$486,487, which is only \$281 more than our 2017 budget. We are starting spring with a Reserve Fund balance of \$25,500, which is less than a goal of one month's expenses (\$40,500); but it is a good start. He expressed a special *Thank You* to the Crafty Ladies, who recently donated about \$2,430 to several ministries (Habitat, Reserve Fund, Team Cuba, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts). Because of their donation, we surpassed our Habitat goal of \$4,200.

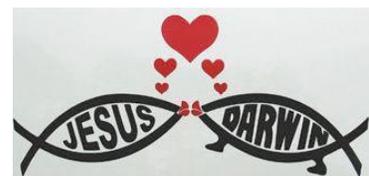
SPR: Jessie Choate advised that the last time SPR met they worked on church profiles. Staff and clergy evaluations need to be prepared soon.

OLD BUSINESS

WIG for 2017-2018, Strategic Plan: Chuck said that in reviewing the official pamphlet on what the Church Council is all about, he immediately came upon the phrase "strategic plan." He learned we don't have such a plan, so he is accepting it as his personal challenge. In his former life, his job involved assisting in the preparation of long-term plans for various industries, so he should be able to accomplish the same for GCUMC. He noted that the Conference's current WIG (Wildly Important Goal) is to achieve a 10% increase in attendance. However, a 10% growth in 65-year-old individuals is not as meaningful to our church's future growth as is a 10% growth of those in their 20s to 40s. We need younger blood to continue as a church. However, today it seems that younger individuals and families are more interested in providing charitable services than they are in joining an organized religion, even though the former is an integral part of the latter.

In this regard, Chuck is asking all of us to send him an email which indicates what we see in our church ministries that is going right, so that we can do more of that. Also tell him what we see that is not so right, what needs help – not meaning to be critical of any of our current programs, but what can be changed to better the ministry. We need to avoid reinventing the wheel. Chuck Russell's email address is crussell340@gmail.com. Let him know what is going right; what can use more attention; what do you see in the community; what are the changes in the youth; how can we reach the younger generations?

Pastor Mike reiterated that church growth is through the service door. Genuineness goes through all barriers. Because they have seen what organized religion has done and not done in the past, younger folks want to see if we walk-the-talk ... not just talk-the-walk. But the hunger for something greater than "me" is very alive. We can't just coast on autopilot any more. For more ideas along this line, if you have a Facebook account, do a search for "@KissingFishBook" to find the Facebook page for the group *Kissing Fish*. You will know if you have their page when you see their logo. Be sure to read their pinned post which is dated 7/8/2015 at the top of their page titled "rules of this page" for an overview of what their page is about.



Linda reiterated her past desire of having our youth become greeters at Sunday morning services, both before and after services. Sarah said she has recently started having the youth deposit their cellphones in a central location when they have lesson time. So far none have objected.

Attending formal church services is not what it used to be. Now people are considered regular attenders if they come to church just one Sunday a month. Today time is a commodity, especially in homes where both parents work, because schools pull the children in numerous directions. Many of today's younger generations do not feel the need to go to church, even if they are believers. Although attending church is not mandatory for salvation, by not attending, individuals miss the opportunity to have the church community provide support and help them grow in their faith.

ADJOURNING

The meeting was adjourned at 8pm with a prayer by Pastor Mike. After discussion, it was decided that the next Church Council meeting will be held on Monday, April 30, 2018, at 7pm (one week later than normally scheduled).

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary