

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Experience – Embrace – Engage

Leadership Board Meeting

November 16, 2020 – 7:00pm

Attendees:

Joan Priest (Acting Chairman), Pastor Mike Weaver, Doreen Alvarez, Sue Betz, Alfred Current (via Zoom), Dave Devilbiss, John Furtado, Carol McGuire, Jeanne Shrout, Linda Starck, Rick Starck, Sarah Taylor, Dawn Tesauro, 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 corrections to the minutes of the 10/12/2020 meeting.

Thank You & Welcome: Joan thanked those who served but are stepping down from the Leadership Board or have left the church: Linda & Rick Starck, Don Grein, Tom Shatzer, Chuck Russell, and Jo Ann & Irv Hopkins.

Joan welcomed the new members who will be joining the Leadership Board in 2021. They were invited to join us this evening for our last meeting of 2020. The new members are Sue Betz, Bev Fonder, Dave Fonder, Jim Brown, Sarah Taylor, and Joan Priest (who will assume not only the L.B. Chairman position in 2021, but has also been our Acting L.B. Chairman during the end of 2020).

Reimagining Our Mission: Joan noted that because of the pandemic, things have changed. Although we initially thought the changes would last only a few months, today (November 16) marks the start of our ninth month of our new, limiting procedures during the pandemic. Pastor Mike pointed out that the way churches in our area have handled the pandemic is wide-ranging: from complete shut-down, to partial shut-down, to almost no shut-down. He wants to thank all our volunteers and teams who have worked behind the scenes over the past eight months here at GCUMC.

Joan said she and Pastor Mike have been discussing how, with our new limitations, we can reimagine how we meet our mission, how we can better nurture our membership, and how we can better reach out to the community. She said she hears the same comments from Cuban congregations in addition to our own national, state, and local churches – they were surprised how much work is entailed under our current limitations.

Pastor Mike explained that we need to find ways that we can both adapt and flourish with the tools that we currently have under our current limitations – masks, social distancing, etc. Following are examples of things that could be done, and which should be considered in meeting our motto of Experience, Embrace, & Engage:

- Call teams to check on congregants, as was done over the past summer.
- Sarah continues to provide for our youth, and Holly Tozer for our elementary children.
- Advancements made in our audio-visual booth, including live streaming which, yes, still needs to be tweaked.
- Many things can be done in conjunction with the Boys & Girls Club.
- How can we reimagine some of the things we are doing.
- Have a family night out, possibly with a movie and hot cocoa.
- How can we reach out to the community.
- Bring more live music to our traditional services. (Roy Engler is already working on this.)

- We have to remember that the United Methodist denomination globally is one of the more rigid organizations when it comes to masks, distancing, and other pandemic-related issues.

Joan and Pastor Mike would like the Leadership Board members AND OUR CONGREGATION to brainstorm ideas as to how we can meet the needs of both our community and our congregation. Your ideas should be emailed to both of them at joanapp51@comcast.net and michael.weaver1022@gmail.com.

There are NO bad ideas! That's what brainstorming is all about!

Staff Parish Relations: Doreen reported that staff evaluations have been completed. She advised that SPR members are rotating on and off that committee.

She advised that the Conference announced today that a new Treasurer has been selected: "...Craig Smelser as the Interim Conference Treasurer beginning January 1, 2021. In June of 2021, the Annual Conference will have the opportunity to vote on the recommendation from the Council on Finance and Administration for Craig to become our next Conference Treasurer-Director of Administrative Services." Pastor Mike has met Craig and says he is very much a numbers man; he is impressed with Craig.

Finance: Alfred reported that through November 15, we have received \$356,911.71 in donations. That represents about a 1% increase compared to the same time last year. Fortunately, we have not yet this year pulled any money out of the Reserve Fund. We are still waiting for the government to provide the rules for forgiveness of the Paycheck Protection Program loan that we received earlier this year in the amount of around \$55,000.

A question was posed whether the PPP loan, assuming it is forgiven, could be placed into the Florida United Methodist Foundation account. It currently holds part of our designated funds and earns considerably more interest than it earned at the local banks. {{ After the meeting, this issue was addressed. It was decided to not move the PPP funds to the FUMF at this time, since moving them may not be in our best interest and could raise a red flag. For now, we will keep the funds where they are until we complete the loan forgiveness process and see what will actually be forgiven. This process should begin at the end of December. }}

Alfred advised that the church is now the recipient of a commercial grade refrigerator and freezer, compliments of the B&GC. They were able to tap into grant money available to them to make the purchase.

Dawn added that we are holding our own, paying our bills, and being blessed with the donations that we are receiving. She said she has only one more payment to make toward our Apportionments for 2020, and they will then be fully paid!

Dawn informed us that Ron Caminiti died on November 5. He had performed the recent audits of GCUMC's books at a very reasonable price. Dawn said she is unsure who we should contact for our next audit, which is usually in May or June (after tax season). She and Alfred will discuss this situation.

Nominations: Mike mentioned that during the Charge Conference, it had been stated that clergy could place individuals in leadership vacancies which occurred during the year. He added, however, that we prefer to go through the Nominations committee for all leadership positions.

Mike said there are individuals proposed for certain leadership positions, and the committee is meeting with them. He advised that Cindy Rowland has asked to step down from the SPR committee, so they are looking to fill her vacancy as well.

Trustees: Rick said that the plan to develop the costs for maintaining our current buildings needs to be addressed. Even though Rick is rolling off as a trustee at the end of this year, he will work with next year's Trustees to complete this project. He said that he has really enjoyed working with the Trustees team in the past.

Dave said that with help from the Boy Scouts and Men's Group, a lot of work was recently completed, such as wooden walkways and railings on the portables and the small storage shed. Although a new window air conditioner was installed in #C, it does not work. The unit needs to be taken back to Home Depot and replaced. Dave and a couple other men walked through the church and put together a complete list of everything that needs to be done. Pastor Mike suggested that instead of the Trustees trying to do all the work themselves, they should consider hiring outside contractors for some of the projects.

Dave brought up the need for funds to be continually placed in the Trustee Funds. John suggested that the congregation be advised of the projects that need to be done, and hopefully people will donate toward those items. John also mentioned that the Florida United Methodist Foundation is holding \$75,100 of our designated funds, and the interest on that account is available for our use (\$4,139.77 at the end of October). We earn much more interest at the FUMF than what we get at a local bank. **After discussion, a consensus was reached that the interest in the FUMF account should be transferred for the Trustees to use.**

Rick pointed out that for things we know will require maintenance or replacing (such as the roof), we should be setting money aside to help cover those expenses. We already do that with the air conditioners and a couple other accounts. John reminded us that the problem has always been having sufficient funds on hand to cover our recurring expenses; there have been few times when money is available to be set aside for a future purpose.

EEE Experience: John said that we are averaging about 100 in-person attendance on Sunday mornings, and around 400-420 viewing online. Several small groups continue to be active either in-person and/or online. Pastor Becky Stephenson's Sunday evening Bible Study has around 30 in attendance each week. During the first month, there were 714 people who viewed her sessions online. During October, total in-person attendance was around 109, and 587 people viewed it online. Her in-person attendance is staying about the same, but the online viewing is tapering off.

After discussion, it was decided that decorating the church should take place on Saturday, November 28, starting at 10am. Anyone in our congregation is welcome to help. The more who show, the less time is needed.

EEE Embrace: Sarah said that things are a little slower this year.

- There will be no drive-around caroling to the home-bound this year.
- The Youth will be joining others in ringing the Salvation Army Bells.
- There will be a Movie Night for the Children & Youth on Friday, December 4, for a craft, a game, and a Christmas movie.
- The Youth Christmas party will be held on Sunday, December 20.
- The Youth will hold an Advent Series using "A Case for Christmas" by Lee Strobel.

- Holly Tozer has decided that Children's Church will resume on Sunday, December 6, at 9:30am.

Other Christmas season activities include the following, but all the details have not been determined.

- A four-week Advent Series for the congregation will be led by Pastor Becky, and will start on Sunday, November 29, from 6-8pm in the sanctuary. It can also be viewed online; click the church's homepage ONLINE BIBLE STUDY button.
- Lessons & Carols worship services at 8am & 11am on Sunday, December 20.
- Blue Christmas Service on Monday, December 21.
- Christmas Eve Services on Thursday, December 24. Pastor Mike said he is thinking about holding a fourth service outside, in addition to the traditional, family, & meditative services we usually hold during the evening.

Alfred suggested we hold a social gathering for all our congregation around a fire pit, with hot chocolate, roasted marshmallows, and Christmas carols. All agreed it would be great idea! {{ After the meeting, Sarah and Holly Tozer decided that this event will be held on Wednesday, December 16, from 6-7:30pm. Holly has one fire pit; we will see if a few more are available. }}

EEE Engage: Pastor Mike reported on several items:

- He hopes to make arrangements with the Boys & Girls Club to share Christmas stories with the children. It could be at any time when the children are here (from 3-6:30pm) or during their "camp" over the Christmas holidays.
- He noted that the B&GC children are learning the books of the Bible from the painting that Linda Starck put on the Education Wing wall.
- Our Dinner Church was suspended almost as soon as it started, and it remains suspended until early 2021 at the earliest.
- In looking at ways we can adapt to our changed world, we could consider preparing to-go dinners (possibly in conjunction with the B&GC) for the teachers at Myakka River Elementary.
- John said that the Big Brothers and Big Sisters are hoping to arrange for Reading Buddies at our church for the children in the B&GC.
- Our Thanksgiving Dinner is coming to fruition. Don Teague, the Dinner coordinator, needs a few more volunteers, but not too many. Since we do not need servers in the sanctuary, he thinks he will only need about 35 people. Alfred said that he purchased the turkey breasts today. As in years past, Don will need help on Tuesday and Wednesday to prepare the stuffing, cranberry sauce, etc.

Expansion Team: Joan reported that a team meeting was held earlier in the day (November 16). They reviewed the first draft of the proposed Master Concept, which needs to go back for revisions. After the revisions are approved, it will be ready to go for County approval. Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFMD) and Department of Transportation (DOT) have already reviewed the Master Concept. She said that working with the B&GC is a dream. We are on the same page with goals and flexibility for a cohesive campus that meets our community needs.

Rick added that we are getting close to presenting the Master Concept to the congregation after the Leadership Board sees it. The team did their best to define what they thought the maximum growth was that we could achieve as a church. It looks good on paper, but after the total cost is analyzed, some revision may again be needed. Regardless, it will occur in phases. He said the B&GC have a potential donor who may fund their whole building, and that may be the first step of what happens on

this campus. He reiterated that we currently only have footprint plans of what and where each building will be placed. The outsides and insides have not yet been decided, as this will require the hiring of an architect which will be another step in the process.

Joan emphasized that the B&GC building will be called a Youth Center. It will be designated for use primarily by the B&GC, but they have said that whenever it is not in use by them, it is ours to use. The name Youth Center was chosen because we own the land, and they lease from us. If it was designated for use strictly by the B&GC, then the county might put different restrictions on various aspects of the building and land. If in the future the B&GC left our campus, the building would be ours. If in the future the church folded or moved, the United Methodist Church would reclaim their property. This is one cohesive building project, and we need to remember that in our conversations.

Upcoming Church Events:

Thurs, Nov 26	12-3pm	Free Thanksgiving Dinner for the Community
Sat, Nov 28	10am	Decorate the church for Advent
Sat, Dec 5	9am-2pm	Men's Barn Sale & Crafty Ladies Craft Sale. Donations for the Barn Sale can be taken to the Barn on Thursday mornings.
Wed, Dec 16	6-7:30pm	Caroling around the fire pits
Mon, Dec 21	?	Blue Christmas service
Thurs, Dec 24	?	Christmas Eve Services, with possibly a fourth service outside.
?		The Church Retreat Cruise that Pastor Becky was spearheading has been postponed from the February timeframe. The new date is as yet undetermined.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm with a prayer by Joan. There will be no meeting in December. The next Leadership Board meeting will be held on Monday, January 18, 2021, at 7:00pm.

*To All!
Happy Thanksgiving,
Merry Christmas, &
Happy New Year
from your Leadership Board!*

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary