

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Experience – Embrace – Engage

Leadership Board Meeting

May 17, 2021 – 7:00pm

Attendees:

Joan Priest (Chair), Pastor Mike Weaver, Doreen Alvarez, Sue Betz, Jim Brown, Alfred Current, Anne Devilbiss, Dave Devilbiss, Beverly Fonder, Dave Fonder, John Furtado, Carol McGuire, John McGuire, Linda Starck, Rick Starck, Sarah Taylor, Dawn Tesauro, Dana Hanson

The meeting was opened by acknowledging that Christ was with us, followed by a prayer by Pastor Mike.

Devotion: Pastor Mike asked everyone what the meaning was of their last name. He then read John 15:12-15.

¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Despite the meanings of our last name, the first name God gives us is “friend,” and that meaning is clear. Other words with similar meanings are “disciple” and “follower.” We need to continue to live by the name God gave us – Friend.

Corrections to Previous Minutes: The recording secretary was not notified of any corrections to the minutes of the 4/19/2021 meeting.

Opening Comments: Pastor Mike reported that the New Member Class went well, and 7 people will be joining our church. Pastor Becky's “Journey in Faith” class should be held soon, and our new members will be asked to attend.

Staff Parish Relations: Doreen reported that SPR will be meeting on Saturday for the Annual Pastoral Review process. Staff evaluations will be due in June. She and Dave Devilbiss completed the annual parsonage review and have already submitted that report.

Finance: Current Finances: Alfred advised that when comparing May spendable income this year to last year, we need to receive about \$22,030 over the next two weeks to equal the \$39,350 that we received last May. Although actual expenses are running about \$17,000 less than our budgeted expenses, YTD actual expenses this year are about \$5,000 more than what was spent last year. We do have \$83,581 in PPP money that we can draw from to pay salaries and certain operating expenses. Further, the Reserve Fund has \$33,246 in it which can also be used when there are insufficient funds in the General Fund.

Scholarship Accounts: There was a brief discussion of the Henry and Losh Scholarship accounts, but there were some questions with uncertain or unknown answers. The two accounts have balances in the Foundation of \$13,205 and \$58,428, respectively. It was decided that Alfred and Dawn will obtain specific, detailed information on the two scholarships.

They will also find out who is on the Scholarship Committee in addition to Deb Howell. Sarah advised that she has no youth who are graduating from high school this year and, as a result, none of them applied for either of the scholarships.

Cutting Checks: Dave Devilbiss inquired whether our process for cutting checks to pay bills could be streamlined. He said some businesses have been surprised when told that they may have to wait one or two weeks for payment. Dawn explained that it is necessary that two individuals (neither of whom are church employees), sign all checks. The one- to two-week lead time was established many years ago because too many people were asking the office to cut a check "right away." It became too difficult to stop everything to prepare the check, and then call two people to come to the church to sign it.

Cuba's Camaguey District Bank Account: Dawn explained that she discussed with Pastor Becky about establishing a new account at the Centennial Bank for the Camaguey District in Cuba. (See the 4/19/2021 minutes for a discussion of this original request.) They ultimately decided it would be easier to just create and maintain a new dedicated funds line item within our Englewood Bank & Trust account.

Endowments: Dawn advised that she sent a check for \$11,670 to the Foundation in late April to open a new Expansion Endowment account. She has not heard back from Conference yet as to whether the account was actually opened and what the new account number is. Since she mailed that check, the amount of \$265 was received.

With regard to endowments in general, Rick sent out a survey thru Mail Chimp to 307 different email addresses for our church congregation. He received 38 responses; receiving responses from 10% appears to be about average for a survey. Rick felt the most important question asked was, if the church sponsored a financial seminar panel (including financial advisors, CPAs, and attorneys), would you attend? He said 20 of the responses said yes, and 18 said no. The plan is to open the seminar to the whole community, not just our congregation. After discussion, it was decided that we should start making arrangements now, with the seminar being offered in January (or February).

Trustees: Dave Devilbiss advised that the company that repaired and adjusted all the exterior, double-glass doors did an outstanding job, at about \$1,300 less than quoted by other companies. Clean-up weekend is planned for Friday & Saturday, June 18 & 19, starting at 9am each day; the congregation needs to be notified that they need to pick up any items of theirs that they left at the church, or realize that those items may be thrown out. The piano was moved from the Education Wing hallway to the music room (#B).

Dave worked with the Charlotte County Sheriff's Office to hire an individual who had to perform a certain number of community hours. The person was able to clean out the portable gutters and power wash part of the sidewalk around the church. It proved, however, to be a challenge since the individual did not want to honor his commitment in a timely manner. Dave is having second thoughts about collaborating further with the CCSO.

Someone asked if the sanctuary roof was beginning to mold. Several expressed the thought that it was badly in need of painting. As we were reminded by Dave, this building is not going

anywhere and must be maintained. Joan pointed out that the whole outside of the church needs a good cleaning – one of the First Impressions made on individuals. It was suggested that bids be obtained to repaint the roof.

Dave told us about a woman who has a portable pizza food truck, but needs a commercial kitchen as a base in order to meet one of the requirements to obtain a Charlotte County permit. She has indicated that all she needs is our name and address. An organization in Sarasota told her it would cost \$300 a month to claim their facility as her base, but she said no. She indicated she would make a “donation” to use our name and address. It was mentioned that she would also need keys to our location, which might not be a good thing if she has no plans on ever being here. After discussion, it was decided that there were too many questions with iffy answers. We should thank her for considering us, but we are not in a position to help her in that way.

It was asked whether we still have inspections of our kitchen. Dave said that the Boys & Girls Club is definitely inspected, so they must be inspecting our kitchen. The whole kitchen is in great shape. The cleaning people do a great job on the kitchen floor, which proved to be more work to keep it clean than we thought it would be. Pastor Mike said we should find out the specifics behind any inspections of our property.

EEE Experience:

Camera Placement: Pastor Mike thanked Alfred for his suggestion last month that the camera used during worship services be placed higher so that people’s heads are not seen. For now, the camera was placed on a stack of books, and it does enhance the view. A more permanent stand will be sought.

Attendance: Sue had attendance figures for April. The average 8:00 online viewing was 134 and in-person was 47. The average 9:30 online viewing was 172 and in-person was 93. The average 11:00 online viewing was 178 and in-person was 51.

Transition Protocols: Last week the CDC greatly revised its mask policy and other protocols with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, yesterday before worship services, we did not sanitize hands or take temperatures, and as announced yesterday, wearing masks will be optional starting next week. Pastor Mike said we have several people at each service who have serious health concerns (such as those receiving chemo) and may not be in a position to *not* wear a mask. He spoke with them and explained that, if we need to set aside a section for people who wish to continue wearing masks, we will do so.

Our worship services will slowly go back to “normal” over several weeks. The sanctuary side-doors will be kept locked, as they were pre-pandemic for security purposes. One Narthex door will be left open so people can arrive late or leave the building to get something. The Education Wing and Office doors will be kept locked, but people with keys can enter and exit those ways – as long as they ensure the door remains locked after they go through it.

We are hoping to establish a summer choir with 6’ between unmasked singers. Consideration is also being given to having a summer bell choir.

A discussion ensued with regard to taking attendance. Pastor Mike announced that it is no longer necessary to take attendance at the Narthex door on Sunday mornings, even though we are not quite to the point where we can resume passing the attendance pad down an aisle. The only thing we truly need is the head count. We will need one or two people to pass out bulletins and take the head count.

The next topic addressed was whether passing the donation plates could resume. If we passed the plate, then numerous people would be getting up and down between chair-groupings. With the chairs still somewhat spaced, it might be easier for a couple people to walk through the congregation with the plates. Carol pointed out that 9:30 never passed the plates to start with; the donation basket was at the chancel where they received their weekly communion. When it was suggested that we restart the weekly communion at 9:30, Pastor Mike said he wanted to use the all-in-one communion cups first, so our purchase does not have to be thrown away.

Pastor Mike informed us that he hopes we can resume food events in July.

EEE Embrace:

Sarah reported that the Youth are becoming very active this summer.

- The June 4 Craft Night that was advertised as a “parents night out” will be offered to our youth and children, and to the Boys & Girls Club, with no outside publicity. It will run from 5:30 to 8:30pm.
- Move-Up-Sunday will be the last Sunday in June (6/27). That afternoon the youth will have a pool party to which the new kids are invited. Even though 5th grade kids will “move up” into the Youth group, they are still “kids” for Vacation Bible School purposes.
- The summer breakfast get-togethers that the youth previously held are turning into the Youth Lunch Bunch this summer. They will meet on Tuesdays at different restaurants in the area for lunch, devotions, and fellowship.

The church’s next Outdoor Movie Night will be held on June 11. The lawn will open at 7pm, and the movie will start at 8pm. People should bring their own snacks, seats, and blankets. It has not yet been determined which movie will be shown. It will be advertised to the community.

Joan mentioned that nothing has been done yet with highlighting the various ministries of our church. Pastor Mike said they were considering using framed pictures with short explanations in the sanctuary.

EEE Engage:

Cuba: John McGuire reported that the team recently managed to send \$2,500 to Cuba to be distributed to Nicaro (\$1,000), to Frank Pais (\$1,000), and to the District for forwarding to where it sees the need (\$500). Pastor Siubel had some serious health concerns last fall which have improved somewhat, but are not fully resolved. Last August, we sent 33 boxes of OTC medications, soap, hygiene items, shoes, clothes, etc., to Miami for shipment to Cuba. The ship pulled out of port in September. Although Cuban Customs has released one huge storage

container of boxes, the other storage container is still being held. Because of problems with, and the cost of, transportation, they are waiting for both containers to be released to make one trip to our sister cities at the far eastern end of the island.

First Monday Supper: Anne reported that we served 166 meals on May 3. Even though the meal is free, donations totaled \$690. She is preparing 200 meals, and excess meals are taken to the Homeless Coalition, Project Phoenix, and others.

Cove in the Classroom: Pastor Mike is thinking about changing this name because of how close it sounds to the "COVID" pandemic. A few new individuals have expressed an interest in joining the Reading Buddy Program. Because "outsiders" cannot go to the schools yet, the Reading Buddy program will be held here at Gulf Cove UMC with only children from the Boys & Girls Club.

Homeless Coalition Update: Pastor Mike has not received a lot of feedback from anyone interested in serving meals at the Homeless Coalition. It was pointed out that it has not yet appeared in the bulletin or the midweek email.

Myakka River Elementary Family Picnic: Pastor Mike advised that this get together will be held this Thursday, outside on our campus. He has offered hot dogs, and our movie screen for their use.

Teacher & Police Appreciation Weeks: We were able to provide 17 gift cards for Teacher Appreciation Week. Beverly Fonder delivered 50 gift bags to the Englewood police office, and she said the police liked how they were decorated by our children.

Scouting: Pastor Mike told Larry Davis of the Boy Scouts that they could possibly aim for a July fundraising dinner. Alfred said that the Boy Scouts were doing well in some other areas of fundraising. They recently had a booth at a Boca Grande event, and this coming weekend they will have a booth at the Italian Fest at the fairgrounds. In addition to the recent 9 scouts that joined, there are another 4 or 5 who may also join Troop 776. Alfred and Larry were recently talking about the Scouts helping more during Sunday services. Although we missed Scout Sunday this past February, nothing says we have to wait until next February to acknowledge them.

Dawn advised that the Daisy Girl Scout troop has ceased meeting for the summer.

AA Support Group: The AA group that gets together on Mondays has resumed in-person meetings in #109.

Expansion Team: Joan reported that the Team is meeting tomorrow. We are slowly moving forward. The BGC will also be making a presentation at the Team's meeting with regard to the status of their building project. She advised that there has not yet been a final determination as to the status of Conway Road, on our south side.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm with a prayer by Pastor Mike. The next Leadership Board meeting will be held on Monday, June 21, 2021, at 7:00pm. The devotion will be led by Doreen.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary