

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Experience – Embrace – Engage

Leadership Board Meeting

June 21, 2021 – 7:00pm

Attendees:

Joan Priest (Chair), Pastor Mike Weaver, Doreen Alvarez, Sue Betz, Alfred Current, Anne Devilbiss, Dave Devilbiss, Beverly Fonder, Dave Fonder, Carol McGuire, John McGuire, Jeanne Shrout, Sarah Taylor, Dawn Tesauro, Dana Hanson

Devotion The meeting was opened by acknowledging that Christ was with us, followed by a Devotion led by Doreen. She read Hebrews 6:19, “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.” One morning she read from a journal she had been writing in for a long time, entries that represented her prayers for a really long time. She was reading about lot of hope for prayers that God had not yet answered. This hit home when she thought about our church’s plans for expansion which have been in talks for many years already. Change sometimes seems to happen glacially slow – like a 20+ year expansion project. Other changes are like lightning strikes – COVID-19. She read about one of her particular prayers that has been around for 7 years. Her hope was fixed on God’s will, even if it did not align with her own. Now, a door has been opened, but she knows she won’t walk through that door on her own.

She ended by saying, “As we move forward tonight to try and do business of the church as a church family, let’s turn our eyes to God the Father, and ask what his will is for us this evening. Let us give him our desires and plans, and ask him what he wants us to do with them. Then we can move forward in hope and peace to honor him. I have this hope in the depth of my soul.” She then closed her devotion in prayer.

Corrections to Previous Minutes: The recording secretary was not notified of any corrections to the minutes of the 5/17/2021 meeting.

Opening Remarks: Joan commented that it was nice that we are finally able to shrink our circle of chairs – that we are getting back to not being afraid to touch, breathe, and hug.

Annual Conference: Pastor Mike reported that this year’s virtual conference was held on June 18-19, and was similar in many respects to other conferences. Several resolutions were passed, but they are not laws. Some of the resolutions dealt with dismantling racism; creating a Co-Chair position to assist the Lay Leader; streamlining membership reporting to just the number of adults and number of children; increasing solar power capabilities for churches to better aid in creation care; denouncing the QANON movement as dangerous and not in line with our principles and teachings; recognizing the value of all unborn children as God’s children, not only in protection for the unborn but also in support for the expectant mothers, especially in cases of rape and incest. The next General Conference is expected to occur in 2022.

Staff Parish Relations: Doreen reported that the annual staff evaluations are being completed. She was able to move some of the reporting onto a digital format, going a little more paperless.

Finance: General Finances: Alfred noted that it was nice to see the offering plate being passed through the sanctuary and carried by the ushers (not person-to-person); now we have the challenge of filling them up. We need to focus upon **transformational giving instead of**

transactional giving. Alfred, Pastor Mike, and Dawn are reviewing the families who have left GCUMC, the families who are new, and the impact they have all had on our finances, along with the general summer decline because of the departure of our northern parishioners. Thankfully, the PPP loan dollars are there and form a safety net, so we do not have to sacrifice any ministries. Because we have been able to pull from the PPP funds, our Reserve Fund is doing well (currently with a balance of around \$34,000). Joan pointed out that we seem to have plateaued in our decline of contributions, but Alfred stated, the decline is beginning to level off. It is hoped that we will soon be able again to start calling people who have missed two or more Sundays at church.

Scholarship Committee: Pastor Mike proposed that we start from scratch in selecting who is on this committee. There were no high school seniors who graduated this year, and currently only one who will graduate next year. The scholarships, however, are not just for high schoolers; they are also available to college students and those looking at a vocational trade. If anyone is interested in joining this committee, or knows of someone who would be good on this committee, please notify Dawn or Pastor Mike.

Endowments: Dawn said she is still working with the Foundation on fully establishing the Expansion Endowment account. She advised it has already earned \$178 in interest. She said the new account should appear in the June financial reports.

Trustees: Dave reported on several things:

- The campus maintenance update is still ongoing.
- If something is broken, he tries to get it fixed or he fixes it himself. There have been no major expenditures.
- The campus cleanup went fantastic, and he thanks everyone who participated. He said the dumpster was filled, and they have called for an extra pickup. The shed is reorganized; many extra dishes were placed in totes and are now being stored in the shed. The janitor's cupboard has been cleaned out and all chemicals are now locked in the men's room closet. The janitor's cupboard is now a maintenance or trustees' cupboard.
- In conjunction with the campus cleanup, certain shelves in the kitchen "pantry" room have been assigned to the Boy Scouts, to the Youth, and to the Children & Jesus Rocks.
- He has not yet contacted anyone about cleaning and repainting the roof.
- The County now inspects the kitchen because of the presence of the Boys & Girls Club. The BGC keeps the kitchen clean, knowing the inspections take place.
- The lights are sometimes being left on in the sanctuary. (This was also addressed later in the meeting.) Unfortunately, there is one light over the organ that seems to operate by itself.
- The mini-bus that is being stored out back belongs to the BGC. No one present knew whether the bus worked or not. Dave would like to see it removed from the property. Dave plans to send a letter giving them a deadline for removing it.
- Some of the kids (both BGC and ours) are turning the water fountain mouthpiece around. Dave said eventually that part could break off and we may have a small flood in the hallway. The children need to be reminded not to turn that part around.

- Some of the areas used by the BGC need to be cleaned more thoroughly. In addition, some of the chairs need to be cleaned because of “spillage.” Pastor Mike noted that that the cleaning lady the BGC previously had is no longer with them.
- Dave noted that kids in the BGC have already plugged the toilets up two times. He has told them if it happens again, they will have to pay the plumber’s bill.

A general discussion was held about the Boys & Girls Club. If the BGC is paying us only \$500 a month, Dave feels sure that it is not nearly enough to cover the expenses they incur – especially since the children now are here almost all day for summer camp. He believes we should review the contract we have with them and possibly adjust the amount they pay monthly. Doreen suggested that since they are here almost full-time during part of the summer, in hindsight they probably should be paying more during those months. Pastor Mike reminded us that the BGC was not brought in as tenants; they were brought in as part of our outreach. Joan said whatever new amount of money we may ask for each month will likely have to be approved by the Charlotte County BGC Board of Directors. The amount should be reflective of both our outreach to them, good management of funds, and actual costs incurred. Alfred located some relevant paperwork in his briefcase, and read us one bullet point: “The Boys & Girls Club agrees to fix or replace any damages caused by kids during the club programming hours.” Under this statement, bills for repairs could be given to them for payment.

Dave has already spoken with the BGC about Vacation Bible School occurring during the evenings from July 12-16. Specifically, although the BCG is doing some cleaning at the end of each day, areas may not be quite as clean in the morning when they arrive as it was when they left the previous day.

Joan noted that she has observed how the BGC adults are consistent in controlling and correcting the children. She added that times have changed and to “judge” others by our upbringing is not helpful.

Joan also mentioned that she has heard several complaints about kids running thru the sanctuary. She reminded everyone that our sanctuary is a sanctuary for worship only on Sunday mornings. The rest of the week, it is a multi-purpose room. Kids will be kids, and kids will run. On Sunday mornings, they should be encouraged by adults to be safe which may mean to slow down and consider others. The Chancel/Altar area and kneeling rails are areas of concern with kids. Please ask them to refrain from playing in these areas. Although most of us try to keep it at “no running inside the building,” there can be exceptions, especially outside worship hours. And we mustn’t forget that, if we need to correct them, we also need to praise them when warranted. As John pointed out, if it’s a safety issue, reprimanding them is appropriate. But if it’s joy and jubilation, praise the Lord!

EEE Experience:

Attendance: Sue reported that the number of individuals in small groups has declined because of COVID. In March 2019, 624 people attended small groups, while in March 2021, only 330 attended in 11 small groups. Midweek Boost and Pastor’s Bible Study meet both in-person and via Zoom, and the After Dinner Group meets solely via Zoom. The Genesis group has disbanded.

Sue advised that during May 2021 worship services, the average in-person attendance was 153 people each Sunday, while the online attendance averaged 402. A clipboard with a list of usual attendees is still at the front door and being marked for attendance. Pastor Mike said the Nurture Team could once again start calling people who miss church for a while. Attendance pew pads will be used again starting Sunday, July 4, even though Pastor Mike said they could be used prior to then... 😊 Ushers will hand them out early in the services, and make necessary notations between services.

Worship: Pastor Mike advised that the 9:30 weekly communion should be starting back up soon. We still have a good number of joint communion-wafer cups to use up at all three services.

Sue informed us that the choir will be resuming on Sunday, July 4, at the 11:00 service. After that, it will alternate weeks with the 8:00 service. Rehearsals will occur Sunday mornings 30 minutes before the service starts, i.e., at 7:30am or 10:30am.

Written instructions for ushers and greeters need to be updated. Sue questioned whether the 11:00 greeters needed to stay until the last 11 o'clock parishioner leaves – which is sometimes not until 12:15 or 12:30. She was advised that they should go ahead and lock all the sanctuary doors; people can still leave the building, but they cannot re-enter it. Lights can be turned off in the sanctuary, hallways, and Narthex. Joan added that everybody she and Sue have spoken with about being an usher or greeter has said yes, even if they are not available right now. People are willing and want to serve. We simply need to ask individuals.

Pastor Mike reminded everyone that the bathroom lights are motion-activated and turn off automatically after no movement is detected for a period of time. If someone presses the button and turns them off manually, then they will not come on for the next person who enters the bathroom.

Sue and Larry Davis spoke about having the Boy Scouts act as greeters on the first Sunday of every month at all three services. We will still have adult greeters to oversee them and take their place if they are unable to make it. Sarah said she will speak with the youth about them being greeters on the third Sunday at the 9:30 service, if not all three services. The youth are helping in the sound booth during the 9:30 service.

It is planned that coffee-between-services will start again soon. It will be moved from the serving room to Room 101 (next to the Narthex ladies' room), where it can also be a welcome station.

After VBS is over, the round tables will be set up in the back of the sanctuary, like they were in the summer of 2019. The new vinyl-covered chairs will be placed around the tables. If something spills on them, they can be easily cleaned.

EEE Embrace: Sarah talked about several topics:

- She and Pastor Mike are planning to take photos of our various small groups and ministries and place them around the sanctuary.
- Jesus Rocks is having another Messy Wednesday on June 23.
- The youth will be in charge of all worship services on August 29.
- The Youth Lunch Bunch is going well on Tuesdays. Instead of going out on June 29, they will meet in #D.
- The Youth Beach Day is June 24.
- Move-Up Sunday is June 27, with a pool party that afternoon. **Thank you, Janet Rowe, for providing the pool facilities!**
- Vacation Bible School is scheduled for July 12-16, 5:30-8:30pm. A light meal will be served to the VBS kids and volunteers. A “tarp tent” will be set up in the back of the sanctuary soon inside which the decorations and sets will be made.
- The Youth Lock-In is planned for July 30-31.
- Two of the youth, Caleb Waterman & Kaylee Jongsma, cooked dinner for the youth a week ago. **Yummm.... Thanks, Caleb & Kaylee!!**
- Joslyn Coleman, one of our youth, helped at the Closet of Hope on June 19 and plans to again on June 26. She has also arrived early to help with the 9:30 service. **Way to go, Joslyn!!! Thanks for all your help!!**

EEE Engage: Several items were briefly mentioned:

- First Monday Supper: Anne advised we served 187 meals in early June. Although several of her volunteers have gone north, new individuals have stepped up to take their place. The July main entree is beef and noodles.
- Kitchen Info Book: Anne will be putting together a list of instructions on what to do before, during, and after meals, and outlining how the pantry should be handled.
- Cove in the Classroom: Pastor Mike said school is out for the summer.
- Reading Buddies: Pastor Mike said this program will continue over the summer, but it will be held here at GCUMC with only the BGC kids.
- Homeless Coalition: Nothing new to report.
- Myakka River Elementary School held a family picnic on our campus on May 20. Everyone had a good time.
- Movie Night has gone well. Two new families showed up for the one held on June 11. It was decided that it will be held on the second Friday of the month. (During the LB meeting, it was mistakenly stated as the third Friday.) During the summer, it will be moved inside the sanctuary and the movie itself will start at 7pm.
- Boy Scout Sunday will be held after Larry Davis and Pastor Mike decide upon a date. Although usually held on the Sunday before February 8 (per Boy Scout tradition), we will hold it later this year because of the pandemic.
- Dinner Church at Myakka River Elementary School will resume after the community can go back into the schools. They are still prohibited from doing so because of COVID.

- Alfred said the Boy Scouts made \$1,500 at the Tarpon Tournament at Boca Grande, and also made a fair amount of money at the ladies fishing tournament that was recently held. They will be leaving soon for Boy Scout Camp in Georgia.

John reported for Team Cuba:

- They think that the money we sent to Cuba to meet critical needs is actually in Cuba, but exactly where is unknown.
- There is no change to the situation of the two cargo containers that were shipped last September. One large container is still being held up by Cuban Customs. Neither container will leave Havana until the two can be transported together.
- When traveling to Cuba, there is now a five-day quarantine in effect thru July or August. Dan Christopherson is not planning any trips there in the near future, since the quarantine would take up almost the whole time they would be there.
- Cuba has its own developed COVID vaccine. But so far, only government officials and health personnel are receiving the shot. Pastor Siubel in our Frank Pais sister church thinks they *might* receive vaccinations in their area next week.
- Churches were finally allowed to hold worship services starting yesterday, June 20.

Expansion Team: Joan reported that the BGC are doing a further survey about usage and location for their new building. Although nothing is firm yet, there is a possibility that they could build in a location farther to the west. They want to expand their services to the high school level, and the high school is on the other side of Rotonda, the opposite direction from our campus. Regardless of whether they stay with us or build elsewhere, we are incrementally moving ahead with GCUMC expansion plans. It is a given that the previous preliminary drawings will be changed. A more-inviting sanctuary building has been discovered that the Team feels would better suit our needs.

Adjournment: It was decided not to hold a July meeting. The next Leadership Board meeting will be held on Monday, August 16, 2021, at 7:00pm. The devotion will be led by [an at-this-time unknown person]. Doreen reminded us that the devotion does not have to be written by you; it can be something you read from another source, but pertinent to our meetings. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm with a prayer by Joan.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary