

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Experience – Embrace – Engage

Leadership Board Meeting

September 20, 2021 – 7:00pm

Attendees:

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

The meeting was opened with the lighting of the candle representing Jesus Christ. Joan read our opening devotion and led us in prayer. Her devotion is reproduced at the end of these minutes. Before we started on agenda items, a special prayer was said for Carol.

Corrections to Previous Minutes: The recording secretary was not notified of any needed corrections to the minutes of the 8/23/2021 meeting.

Opening Comments: Pastor Mike emphasized that 90% of all growth is achieved by invitation. Joan reiterated that we go far with a personal invitation and recognition of a person's worth, abilities, and gifts.

Staff Parish Relations: Doreen advised that all evaluations are completed except one. SPR has submitted its budget request.

Doreen said that Angela Navarro (our organist) has indicated a desire to use our facilities to teach piano, recorder, and possibly other instruments. This would not be for her personal gain – it would be for our youth. Angela had noted that we need to encourage our next generation of musicians. Everyone felt this would be great if she was willing to pursue this idea. Doreen will discuss the details further with Angela.

Joe Pariseau (our Praise Team leader) has expressed to Doreen a desire to conduct a fundraiser so that some electrical components on the chancel can be replaced. Two items mentioned specifically were monitors and speakers. Joe mentioned possibly holding a karaoke night. The benefits of new equipment would extend to all three services, not just the Praise Band.

Doreen noted that most of our staff have indicated a desire to pursue professional development. She will check with Conference to see what is available for those who are interested.

We still need a drummer for the Praise Band. Derek Hughes has been filling in as the drummer as needed, but he much prefers to stay in the audio-visual booth. It was mentioned that possibly a high school percussionist might be interested in being our drummer for community service hours.

Nominations: Pastor Mike has been researching Scholarship Committees in other churches. He has learned that most committees are comprised of the pastor, youth director, finance chairman, endowment chairman, and lay leader. He presented his findings to our Nominations

Committee, and they all agreed that would be the best thing to do. With permanent positions on the board, as opposed to named individuals, the Scholarship Committee would always be filled.

With regard to open leadership positions in our church, good suggestions were received, and contacts have been made. He believes all positions will be filled soon. Ken Priest has already agreed to be our Finance Chairman, and John Furtado has agreed to be his assistant.

Finance: Dawn advised that our finances are not in very good shape. Donations have been down considerably. Joan said the essence of what we need is a stewardship campaign – which involves more than just money. We need both involvement and the church to grow in order for the finances to grow.

Dawn has been notified by Centennial Bank that it is time to submit the paperwork for forgiveness of our second PPP loan. She is starting to gather the necessary information. (The first PPP loan was forgiven as of 2/5/2021.) At the end of August, the amount of \$49,581 remained in our PPP loan account.

We are having difficulty in obtaining a CPA who is willing to conduct our audit. Ken was informed by one individual that the insurance he needed which would allow him to conduct the audit for us is about \$12,000. Dawn said all the documents and paperwork which should be needed are contained in one box, and any CPA could have the box shipped to their office to conduct the audit. We had been paying less than \$500 for each yearly audit, but it is not likely we will be able to pay that small of an amount again.

Trustees: Dave Devilbiss reported that when he calls to make inquiries about cleaning and painting the roof, no one ever calls him back.

Oaks Cove is 99% done. Dan and Jane will start paying rent of \$1,300 as of October 1st. They will also be responsible for 2/3 of the monthly electric bill. (The Crafty Ladies, on the first floor of Oaks Cove, and the Barn are both on the same electric meter.) As indicated last month, because of all the sweat equity Dan has put into the building, they will pay no security deposit. Dave said the building has made a marvelous transformation! The washer and dryer that were removed and placed in storage are not needed, and they may be sold at the next Barn Sale. A new refrigerator is needed; Joan suggested checking with the Habitat Store.

Ken and John Furtado pointed out that we need to watch the drain field after Dan and Jane move into Oaks Cove, because it is still on a septic system. The back field is totally saturated and may not be able to drain properly with substantial daily use. Since the pond and nearby canal have never before been this full for this long, we need to be alert for potential problems. Dave Fonder will follow-up with the County to find out what any requirements may be.

Dave Devilbiss pointed out that the decking on the portables is in bad shape, and at least some of it needs to be replaced. This is all the more important since we are being forced into using the portables for several more years while the eventual, new buildings are constructed.

Dave mentioned that all of the lower lights in the sanctuary are now working. With regard to the upper lights, the majority are 8-foot fluorescent tubes. All the upper lights that are dark have

something in them which has burned out. Dave wants to switch over to LED, and is checking into several factors which need to be considered.

Dave said the kitchen is slowly evolving into a really nice kitchen. He is continually upgrading and changing numerous small things.

Dave indicated he would be willing to stay on as head trustee one more year as long as he has a co-chair who can handle the administrative matters.

With regard to cleaning the building, those present were unsure of what the original contract said with Lindsey Cleaning LLC, especially as cleaning relates to duties duplicated by the Boys & Girls Club. Dave will locate the original contract to find out what the specifics are.

Tom and MaryEllen Eisele have indicated they will clean the carpets in the Education Wing.
Thank You, Tom & MaryEllen!

EEE Experience

Sue Betz had attendance figures for the month of August. The average online viewing each week was 365 unique views. (Information available indicates that each view is *supposed to be* a unique view; i.e., each URL location is supposedly counted only once.) The average Sunday in-person attendance over all three services was 174 each week. Pastor Mike said there are Idiosyncrasies in the online and in-person numbers, and questions relating to duplications, but generally we should not be too concerned with them unless the totals are considerably higher than usual.

John Furtado advised that right now, the District asks for attendance in-person, attendance online, and finances. Pre-COVID, he said they asked for attendance, Salty Service, new conversions, finances, and baptisms.

John said that Jeanne and her team count the in-person donations received on Sunday and amounts received through the mail. Generally, the total monthly amount Dawn receives electronically from various sources is about \$4,000-5,000 more than Jeanne's total.

Doreen asked about the Education Wing door being left unlocked on Sunday mornings. She noted that pre-COVID, we always kept it locked when children were present. When questioned, Pastor Mike said that one of the front glass doors in the Narthex should be left unlocked on Sunday mornings, and ideally all other doors should be locked during services. It was suggested that perhaps we should consider putting a greeter at that the Education Wing door who could monitor security, or at a minimum a sign that the door should be kept locked. Sue noted that right now it is a challenge getting greeters just for the front door – although when the northern folks return, it might be a little easier. Quite a few people already park in the Education Wing parking lot. At the end of the discussion, Pastor Mike said that we should put a sign on the Education Door similar to the signs on the side sanctuary doors.

Sue showed us an usher/greeter sign-up sheet that will be put on the bulletin board in the Narthex. After her in-person announcement on Sunday morning that ushers and greeters were

needed, several people volunteered. As a result, she only needs people for 8am in December, 9:30am in January, and all three services during February. Joan reminded us that someone should also be here on the 2nd Sundays when the Boy Scouts perform those duties, and at the 9:30 service on the 4th Sunday when our youth perform those duties.

With regard to acolytes, Joan said she would work with our children and youth to perform those tasks during the 9:30am service. Tom Eisele performs those duties during the 8am service, and Dana Hanson has agreed to take care of it when Tom is not there. John Furtado performs those duties during the 11am service.

Dave and Anne Devilbiss have agreed to clean up the serving room on Sunday mornings after the 11am service starts. In their absence, Jenna Alvarez has agreed to clean it up.

Thank you, Dave, Anne, & Jenna!!!

A discussion was held about counting the children on Sunday mornings. John Furtado said that for at least the last 10 years, the counts we give to District have always included the children (to include those in the nursery). Pastor Mike explained that they would like to know the percentage of kids that are in worship. At GCUMC, the children attend Contemporary Worship for the first 2 songs, then break out for Sunday School/Nursery. The children will be included in both worship and Sunday School.

Jeanne asked about Salty Service. Once we started handing out the attendance pads, people started turning in the Salty Service slips. John Furtado said he has not been reporting any Salty Service numbers since the COVID lockdowns started last year. The day after our Leadership Board meeting, Dawn checked with the District and learned that Salty Service cards are no longer being tracked.

EEE Embrace

Everybody commented on how great Youth Sunday was. Under Sarah's direction, the kids did a fabulous job!

Sarah informed us of several upcoming activities:

- The youth plan to have a Youth Sunday every six months, with the next one probably being in February.
- The youth will be heading to Heartland Farm in Bowling Green, FL, on Saturday 10/16/2021. (This is a change from plans to go to Hunsader Pumpkin Fest.)
- Trunk or Treat will be held on Saturday 10/30/2021 from 3-5pm. We will offer hot dogs, chips, and a drink. People can donate candy for when we run out later in the day.
- The Youth will be starting a new curriculum, studying the book of Mark.
- The Children under Holly Tozer will be starting the *Dig In* curriculum from Group.
- In November, the Youth will be partnering with a business from Venice which will be doing a Turkey Drive. Our Youth will collect all the other fixings for a Thanksgiving meal and pack Thanksgiving meal bags for hopefully 50 families. The fixings bags will be delivered to Englewood Helping Hand where they will be handed out along with the turkeys.

- Sarah is tentatively planning an arcade day in November for the Youth.
- Dave and Anne Devilbiss said they would work with our Youth at cooking events as time and school permit.
- Pastor Mike has spoken with Hospice representatives about starting up at GCUMC a peer-led grief group. Joan had thought widows and widowers might get together for both support and fellowship.
- Pastor Mike said that an individual asked him if we have a singles group, a group in which individuals can meet each other with a view towards possibly dating. Mike told him we did not have such a group.

Carol said that several individuals from the 9:30 service have indicated a desire to start an Adult Sunday School at 11:00. Joan and others said it was an excellent idea. It was suggested that if they had trouble finding one person to lead it, perhaps a facilitator could rotate among the participants. Carol said she will check with others about making it a reality.

EEE Engage

Team Cuba: On Saturday 9/18/2021, Pastor Becky & Jack Stephenson hosted a carry-out fish fry at the church. A donation of \$10 was asked for each meal, and many people donated more than that. The amount collected was \$1,601.00. All money collected (not just proceeds) will be going towards our Cuba mission. ***Thank you, Pastor Becky & Jack!***

John McGuire advised that \$10,000 was recently sent to our South West District for forwarding to Cuba. This money is meant for pastor salaries, missionary salaries, and critical needs. Team Cuba felt it was better to have the money sent now than to have it just sitting in our account. John also wants to ***thank the Crafty Ladies for paying the pastor salaries*** – this is something they have done since we started supporting our sister churches!

Joan advised about information received from pastors in Cuba. Their COVID vaccine is administered in three doses, and it is finally reaching the rural communities, including our sister churches in Nicaro and Frank Pais. In addition, they are vaccinating children who are at least two years old. They are hoping to have travel reopen by April 2022. Carol said there is a lot of clothing in our Closet of Hope that can be sent to Cuba.

First Monday Supper: Anne Devilbiss reported that she was very pleased with the 163 meals that were handed out in light of it being a holiday weekend. Dawn said only a handful of people are using the new reservation system. Ken opined so few are using it because it takes a lot of clicks and typing to complete the reservation, as compared to just picking up the phone & calling Dawn or Jeanne.

Boy Scouts: Pastor Mike advised that the Boy Scouts are coming to the end of their sexual misconduct lawsuit which involves over 84,000 claims dating back to the 1970s. Our Conference is concerned that in addition to the Boy Scouts having to pay out, chartering organizations (such as our various UM churches which sponsor troops) might also be held liable. There are many gray areas which are being reviewed.

Farmer's Market: Pastor Mike has discussed some of the details with the gentleman who oversees the market. An extensive discussion was held, and some concerns mentioned included the following:

- The market would be here one day each week.
- We would have to decide on a fee for the event or a per vendor fee.
- They would use our campus starting at 7:30am for set up; the market would be open 9am-1pm; and they would probably be gone by 2pm.
- We don't know if electricity would be needed.
- Only produce would be sold.
- We might need people to direct parking, be it the side parking areas or the back lot.
- The church would have to be open for bathroom facilities. Would we set up one individual as "security"?
- Weekly use will likely cause problems with or damage to the grassy areas.
- Just because the church hosts an event doesn't make it an outreach ministry to the community. For example, AA meets here, but in the vast majority of churches, none of the individuals who attend AA go to any church.
- We would have to clean up the market area each week.
- Does the day on which the Farmer's Market is held affect any other groups that meet here, such as the Boys & Girls Club?

After this in-depth discussion, even without all the answers, no one volunteered to be organizer, so it was decided that we should not pursue the weekly Farmer's Market.

Penny Sunday: Our most recent collection was on September 19. The amount of \$495.97 was collected and will be forwarded to the United Methodist Committee on Relief. UMCOR is our disaster response organization that is often at locations prior to a disaster hitting, and in appropriate instances, is still there many months later.

Car Show: Ken Priest has agreed to be the contact person for this event. The details Ken and his contact with the Vintage Motor Car Club of America discussed are reproduced at the end of these minutes. VMCCA charges a nominal fee of \$5 per car entrant, and all of this amount goes to the host organization (GCUMC). Dave Devilbiss has already indicated he would be willing to prepare hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, and drinks to sell to participants and visitors; again, all of this amount would stay with GCUMC. Ken said this would be a one-time event unless we decide to continue it.

The Crafty Ladies have indicated that they would like to set up a table with samples under the porch. If anyone attending the car show was interested in purchasing anything, they would be directed back to Oak's Cove.

VMCCA also operates a 50-50 raffle at its car shows. Usually, the VMCCA offers their 50% to a local mission. (The other 50% goes to the raffle winner.) Discussion ensued regarding the ability of any UM church to participate in a "raffle." Since this is not possible, VMCCA will not advertise any intent for the monies received from the raffle. If the club should choose to make a donation to GCUMC after the show, it will be gratefully accepted.

The consensus was that we should definitely hold the car show on January 15, 2022.

Charge Conference

This year's charge conference will again be held via Zoom on Sunday, October 10, at 3pm. The Leadership Board has to approve the Pastor's Salary Package for 2022 prior to that date. Doreen advised that Pastor Mike has generously offered to accept no pay increases this year. However, she added that if insurance or similar benefits change, those will flow through to him. All agreed that his package, as described by Doreen, should be approved. It was suggested that in lieu of a salary increase, perhaps he could be granted an additional week's leave. All thought that was a good idea. Doreen said SPR will look into that.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:07pm with a prayer by Doreen. The next Leadership Board meeting will be held on Monday, October 18, 2021, at 7:00pm. The devotion will be led by ???.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary

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Who are We?

I'm taking a course that focuses on our Heritage as United Methodists. The book is called: The United Methodist Way - Living Our Beliefs by Kenneth Carder. I'm learning that John Wesley was raised in a very disciplined family. He saw value in discipline and plain talking. He felt a disconnect between what people voiced as beliefs and faith with their actions. He believed England in the 1700s "seemed to have lost its spiritual and moral compass." WOW! Does that sound familiar? He believed the church needed to experience a revival to reset its spiritual and moral compass.

What does this have to do with us?

He didn't throw the baby out with the bath water. He affirmed the basic doctrines, beliefs, practices, and liturgies of the Anglican Church. Wesley was committed to the oneness of the church in Jesus Christ as shown by its inclusivity, and diversity. In fact, the Book of Discipline states: Wesley's familiar dictum was: "As to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think." I believe this boils down to a unified purpose of commitment to the Trinity and Christ's commandments as singleness of purpose. In all other areas "Live and let live" through the love God has instilled in us.

The 21st Century is suffering with enormous, complex problems. Without a revival, the future of God's creation is in jeopardy and suffering could increase. Methodists are summoned by The UM Book of Discipline "to experience the justifying and sanctifying grace of God and encourage people to grow in the knowledge and love of God through the personal and corporate disciplines

of the Christian life.” Now as then, Wesley’s challenge is to live out what we say we believe. He wanted to translate the doctrines from abstract thinking and compartmentalized reciting of creeds and expand that head knowledge into a true relationship with the Creator, Our Redeemer, and His Holy Spirit residing in each one of us. Beliefs shape behavior and practice, so knowing we are children of God, Wesley’s emphasis is on “practical divinity” which is loving God, our neighbor, and ourselves. One may act themselves into believing or believe themselves into acting, but our actions are part and parcel of who we are and what we believe. God equips the called now, just as he did throughout Hebrew Scriptures. We just have to seek out people, plant the seed and nurture God’s work through each of us.

The Great Commandment is to go make disciples: we can’t do this within our own walls. It means we have to go out and exhibit enough faith to share our stories:

- who led us to Gulf Cove UMC,
- what we learn of God the Father/Son and Holy Spirit through worship and Bible Study,
- when we’ve experienced fellowship in various groups,
- how friendships are made that strengthen and support us.

These are gifts that people are looking for now. Some may have been involved in churches before, but some may be new to the idea. We just need to find ways to meet new people, find common interests and invite them to meet some of the extraordinary sinners and believers we have here. After all, church is a hospital for sinners. Offering to go for lunch after church is a great way to encourage a new person and actually put our beliefs into practice. Joining community service organizations offers exposure to all sorts of folks who may just be waiting for one of us to befriend them.

We’re looking forward to a big new year with lofty goals, but we need to get ourselves individually and corporately into a solid relationship with our Trinity. Then we need to intentionally commit to and discern how best we can accomplish God’s plan for reconciliation of ALL creation to him. Prayer, stewardship of gifts, talents, time, and service are essential to this commitment. If we commit to and share the vision of this journey with others, the other earthly needs will come. Matthew 6:33 - “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”

J. Priest 9/20/21

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Car Show Proposal

Date: Saturday, January 15, 2022. Time: 11:00am-2:00pm.

Location: Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

In conjunction with Vintage Motor Car Club of America, SW Florida Region

Presented by Ken Priest (car enthusiast)

I have spoken with Ms. Lee Royston, President VMCCA, who was seeking a location for a car show. Her club is active in showing and coordinating shows in the SW Florida area. We have tentatively agreed upon the above date for various reasons: It is a month when car owners and visitors will be present in high numbers, the weather will be more conducive for a show, the ground should be dried out by then, hopefully we will have more volunteers to help with the show. This will not be a judged show, but Pastor Mike may present a trophy to his favorite car.

GCUMC will provide the following:

1. Space for 100-125 show cars
2. Food. Dave Devilbiss says he can prepare hamburgers, hot dogs, chips & drinks for \$5-6.
3. Parking assistance for show cars and spectators. Perhaps Boy Scouts could help.
4. Bathrooms (in narthex).

VMCCA will provide the following:

1. Advance and day of show registration.
2. Collection of \$5.00 registration fee. (100% of fees donated to GCUMC).
3. 50/50 raffle ticket sales. (50% of sales donated to GCUMC).
4. Disc jockey for on-site music.

This should be a fun event for car owners and the community alike and should result in a donation to the church of \$800-1,000. In addition, it is an opportunity to increase our exposure to the community. We could provide all visitors with a church program brochure and calendar of events as they enter the property. Also, if they choose, the Crafty Ladies would have an opportunity to sell their goods.

Also consider the following:

1. Coordinate with Sandy Palmer regarding the Closet of Hope on that day.
2. Post-show follow-up to determine if we want to make this an annual event.