

Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Experience – Embrace – Engage

Leadership Board Meeting

December 13, 2021 – 7:00pm

Attendees:

Joan Priest (Chair), Pastor Mike Weaver, Doreen Alvarez, Sue Betz, Jim Brown, Anne Devilbiss, Dave Devilbiss, Beverly Fonder, Dave Fonder, John Furtado, Barb Garafolo, Richard Jacoby, Ken Priest, Jeanne Shrout, Pastor Becky Stephenson, Sarah Taylor, Hanson

The meeting was opened with a devotion by Joan, which is reproduced at the end of these minutes. It was followed with a prayer by Pastor Mike.

Corrections to Previous Minutes: The recording secretary was not notified of any needed corrections to the minutes of the 10/18/2021 meeting. There was no meeting in November.

BOARD ITEMS

Joan welcomed Richard Jacoby as a new member to the Leadership Board, and conveyed a heart-felt thank you to those who switched hats into a new position for 2022. Pastor Mike said we are well into the Advent Season and are already having an impact on folks.

SPR

Doreen advised that Duff Duer has returned and taken up his rightful position as drummer in the Praise Band. She said that Angela Navarro is teaching piano and recorder to both youth and adults. Doreen believes Angela found some online lessons to help her advance her skills as an organist.

NOMINATIONS

Pastor Mike said that Karen Bodo and Jackie Miller have agreed to take on the duties of Service Stewards. They will prepare (or get someone to prepare) the communion elements each Sunday morning. Pastor Mike and MaryEllen Eisele are helping them learn what needs to be done.

FINANCE

John advised that November income was around \$46,000 which included two, one-time, substantial donations. If those two donations are removed, November income was still \$7,000 higher than in October. As more people return, income should continue to increase. Our PPP loan balance is \$15,581, and the Reserve Fund is a little over \$39,000. Our total spendable income received so far in December (not including Vanco and PayPal) is a little over \$18,000. Dana mentioned that, for the month of November, donations received through Vanco and PayPal totaled \$4,864. So far, individuals have turned in 29 pledge cards for 2022, and three people asked for the cards yesterday morning.

Regarding Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace program, they are sending the package to John. He hopes to start these nine-week classes in late February or early March.

TRUSTEES

- Dave Devilbiss advised that the old flooring in the Education Wing hallway and serving room was removed, and new flooring laid in its place. Additional donations were received to enable the floor in the Narthex to also be replaced! Thank you to everyone who helped financially to make this possible.
- Repairs are ongoing; if something breaks, he tries to fix it.
- As soon as the B&GC gets the money for the gravel parking pad for their bus, he will have it installed, but he does not anticipate that happening until January.
- He mentioned that one of the legs on one of the wing-back chairs in the Narthex was folded under. Tim Matthews said he believes he can repair the chair. *Thank you, Tim!*

PIG PICKIN WEEKEND

We had a lengthy discussion on a proposed Pig Pickin, Cookie Dash, Arts & Crafts Show, and Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast in February. This event was last held in February 2020, just before the church closed because of the pandemic. It was not held in 2021. Points decided during the discussion included the following:

- It will be held on Friday & Saturday, February 11-12, 2022.
- Alfred Current has agreed to be our Pig Pickin Chef.
- Anne and Dave will be out of town that weekend, but Anne has someone in mind who can handle the Cookie Dash in her absence.
- Barb said that as far as the Craft Show is concerned, craft vendors plan their schedule a year in advance. Since we don't even have two months before it starts, she expects that the number of vendors will be small.
- Each 15'x12' spot (on the grass) or 10'x6' spot (on the porch) will remain at \$75 this year. Crafters have to provide their own overhead tent if they want one.
- John said there is a handful of men who will help lay out the 15'x12' vendor areas.
- After discussion, it was felt that the 2023 event should also be held on the second weekend in February, i.e., February 10 & 11, 2023. By establishing those dates now, Barb can approach arts & crafts vendors about their one-year-in-advance plans.
- Regarding advertising the event, Dana said that both the ENGLEWOOD REVIEW and WENG radio have said we can have the same deal for 2022 as we had in 2020. The ENGLEWOOD REVIEW charged us \$600 for a one-time, full-page, color ad; it will also include appearing in their online paper as well as on their Facebook page. WENG charged a special not-for-profit rate of \$400.00 for a 50/60-second spot which played 50 times over 2 to 3 weeks out. She had not yet heard from THE SUN.
- We can also prepare an online flyer which can be placed on several webpages.
- The Pig Pickin price will increase from \$12 to \$15 and run from 11am to 7pm on Friday.
- The Boy Scout Breakfast price will increase from \$10 to \$12 and will run from 8am to 12:30pm on Saturday.
- Based in part on crafter comments after our last event, the Arts & Crafts Show will run on Friday from 10am to 6pm, and on Saturday from 8am to 4pm. On Friday, if a vendor wants to stay until 7pm (when the Pig Pickin is over), they can do so.

- At Alfred's suggestion, instead of offering pulled pork or smoked chicken (which looks pink after it is cooked, causing some to think it isn't fully cooked), we will offer pulled pork or turkey.
- After checking with them, it was confirmed that overnight security will be provided by Larry Davis and C.T. Twardzik. *Thank you, Guys!!!!*
- [After our meeting, publicity regarding the need for vendors was submitted to four area newspapers, as well as being posted on Nextdoor.com and on the What's Happening in Englewood Facebook page. In addition, Barb sent out 120 emails to previous vendors, and two have already indicated they would be returning their application.]

UPCOMING EVENTS

- The **Carol Sing** will be held on Wednesday 12/15 in the church front yard.
- Holly is meeting with the younger kids to ring the **Salvation Army Bells** this Saturday 12/18.
- Because of the 44 tornadoes that recently destroyed much in their paths while going through 9 states, our **Penny Sunday** donations on 12/19 will be going to UMCOR instead of the Youth Mission Fund.
- The **Youth** Christmas Party will be held this Sunday 12/19.
- The **Blue Christmas service** will be held on Monday 12/20 at 6:30pm.
- On Wednesday 12/22, the **Youth** will have pizza and watch a Christmas movie, and **Jesus Rocks** kids will hold a Christmas Party. This will be the last meeting in 2021 for both groups.
- The **office will close** on Thursday 12/23 at 12pm, and will not reopen until Tuesday 1/4/2022. Joan asked if there was any type of phone coverage when the office is closed for an extended period of time. Pastor Mike said that he, Dawn, and Jeanne could access the church phone messages remotely, and they can also transfer calls to a different number. Jeanne pointed out that during extended absences, people are reminded that they can call Pastor Mike.
- There will be four **Christmas Eve services** on 12/24; all are candlelight (or glow-stick) and communion. Although families are welcome at all the services, the 5:00 service is geared, in part, toward the children.
- With regard to **First Monday Supper** on 1/3/2022, Anne said that over 100 people made January 3rd reservations when they were here on December 6th. Jeanne added that reservations have been coming steadily into the office ever since. Anne said most of those who made reservations were still opting for take-out, even though sit-down will be available starting in January. (This is also discussed later in these minutes.)
- **Family Movie Night** will be held on Friday 1/14/2022. The movie to be shown has not yet been selected. Since the VMCCA Car Show is the next day, the movie will be held inside.
- The **VMCCA Car Show** is scheduled for Saturday 1/15/2022. It is anticipated that 100 to 125 vintage cars will register. There is a \$5 registration fee for each car being shown, with the total amount of registration fees coming to the church. Proceeds from hamburgers and hot dogs (prepared by Chef Dave Devilbiss), and chips will go to the church. The Youth will be selling water and soda as a fundraiser. Ken advised that the

VMCCA has been distributing flyers about our show from Naples to Sarasota. Tom's Traveling Tunes will perform DJ music.

- Starting Sunday, February 20, at 5pm, through Palm Sunday on April 10, Pastor Becky will conduct an **8-week Lenten Study**. There will be "soup and a movie": "The Chosen, Season 2."
- A **Friday Fish Fry** will be conducted by Pastor Becky and Jack from March 4 through April 8. The time and cost have not yet been determined.

EEE Experience

Attendance: Sue Betz advised that the average attendance for the month of November was as follows:

	8:00am	9:30am	11:00am
In-Person	48	135	51
Online viewings	108	170	84

Pastor Becky queried how the in-person numbers compare to pre-COVID (2019 & earlier), during the worst of COVID (primarily 2020), and post-COVID (2021).

Online Counts: A question arose again about counting the online viewings. If a person watches for a few minutes, then leaves and comes back another day, it is counted as two viewings. Pastor Mike said that is correct. But that is the reason we have only one person (John Furtado) counting the online viewings. John counts them in the same manner from week to week. So, whether the numbers are considered accurate or not, at least there is consistency in the way we count.

A/V Booth & Online Camera: A discussion ensued about what was viewed online during the Festival of Lessons and Carols on December 12. All that showed the entire service was the overhead screen. The camera never panned away from the screen. Pastor Mike said we really need three people in the A/V booth at every service: one to run the camera, one to run the slides, and one to run the sound board. If there is only one or two people there, something will likely not get done.

Acolytes: Joan reported that Sarah and Holly are taking over the scheduling of the children and youth as acolytes at the 9:30 service. Acolyte duties are usually done by Tom Eisele at the 8:00 service and by John Furtado at the 11:00 service. *Thank you to both Tom & John! And now Thank You to our kids!*

EEE Embrace

- Youth **Confirmation classes** will be held every other Saturday, starting January 8 through April. Currently three youth are signed up.
- After further consideration, Pastor Mike said that we will not pursue starting a group for singles after the death or divorce of a spouse.
- Pastor Mike is planning to have a **New Member Class** sometime in mid-January.
- Two **baptisms** will take place on Sunday 12/19.

EEE Engage

- Sarah said 11 students showed up for the **Cookie Dash** on 12/12. They made about 45 treat bags of cookies. The bags were then handed out to primarily non-members who live in Gulf Cove. Brownies were also made and delivered and to the Fire House.
- Sarah reported that the **Youth food drive in November** was a huge success. They received enough donations to prepare 50 bags with food for Thanksgiving Dinners with food left over. The bags were taken to Englewood Helping Hand for distribution. The challenge posed by Pastor Mike was easily met and he paid his obligation by doing as he promised – eating a slice of sweet potato pie! *Way to go, Pastor Mike!!!* 😊
- Pastor Mike reported that the recent **Family Movie Night** on 12/10 went great. There were about 55 people in attendance, most of whom were not from GCUMC. It was moved inside because of the heat.
- Pastor Mike said there was a massive turnout for **Trunk or Treat**.
- Joan and Pastor Becky reported on **Team Cuba**. We have received several pictures from Cuba of things the Nicaro and Frank Pais churches have purchased which enable them to better teach their children. Frank Pais is growing incredibly. Pictures of their worship services have been received from the Nicaro church. Last month, we sent \$2,100 to support those two churches and the district. They are talking about opening flights to Cuba from Miami in February. Mission visits can hopefully start soon thereafter. Pastor Siubel in Frank Pais was ordained on 12/1/2021. Pastor Mike suggested we talk to the Crafty Ladies to see if they can make a stole for Pastor Siubel. Some of the money we have given the churches has been used to take food to the community, and this often leads to those unchurched individuals gravitating to the church. We also sent over \$1,000 to be used for shoes for the pastors' kids.
- Starting January, our **First Monday Supper** will include dine-in seating as well as take-outs. Anne said she will know better after the January dinner how many people she needs on the dinner team (to greet, to cook, to serve, to carry to the tables & drive-thru, to clear the tables, to wash dishes, etc.). She believes there will actually be a small number of dine-ins in January. Set-up will take place on Sunday 1/2 at 12pm, and re-set will take place at 6pm on Monday 1/3.
- The United Methodist charter with the **Boy Scouts** usually runs January to January, but their current bankruptcy case will continue through March. This means that new or renewed charters will have to wait until after March.
- **Penny Sunday** was 11/21. Donations of \$342.46 went to the Local Church Ministry Reserve.
- We handed out 830 take-out meals at our **Thanksgiving Community Dinner**. Thank-you donations received totaled \$3,191.00 which is \$3.84 per meal. After expenses, the proceeds were \$676.34 which went to the General Outreach Program. Although we started serving people at 11:40 (instead of noon), we ran out of turkey at 1:15.

EXPANSION TEAM STATUS REPORT

Joan, Jim, and Richard reported that an exciting meeting was recently held. They were very impressed with Alex, the architect, and found him easy to work with. He had clearly done some thinking prior to the meeting, and had some unique thoughts and designs. Some of his ideas

even changed the minds of our team members who had their own preconceived ideas. Jason is the project manager, and he indicated they hoped to have some preliminary renderings before the end of December. The tweaks he has already made end up saving us (i.e., using our current facilities in a better manner) instead of just adding on.

ADJOURNMENT

After discussion, it was decided that, because the scheduled dates fall on a holiday, the next two meetings will be held the following day, i.e., Tuesday, January 18, 2022, at 7:00pm, and Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 7:00pm. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm with a prayer by Doreen.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Hanson
Recording Secretary

Creating God in Our Own Image

I'd like to share part of a devotion from Richard Rohr:

"Your image of God creates you—or defeats you. There is an absolute connection between how we see God and how we see ourselves and the universe. The word "God" is a stand-in word for everything—Reality, truth, and the very shape of our universe. This is why good theology and spirituality can make such a major difference in how we live our daily lives in this world." (Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations)

We each create the persona of God according to our own experiences with parents, family, and friends along with where we are in our spiritual walk.

Some of us perceive God as punishing, and in so doing, treat ourselves and others in this same manner. Whatever we deem incorrect deserves punishment.

Some see God as judgmental; this is translated as meaning we should judge our own efforts, experiences and others' actions and words with that same measuring stick, which can be either severe or lenient.

Some people picture God as conditionally loving because this has been their experience in life. This belief leads us to determine only certain people or groups are deserving of receiving our love.

Some see God as distant, which causes folks to erect a wall between themselves and God, and themselves and others.

Some believe God is a part of us. In believing this, we have the opportunity to share God's love with those with whom we are angry, disagree with, don't share the same values and opinions, are of a different color, ethnicity, religion, political persuasion, and prejudices. Think about it! If we profess to worship and believe in an unconditionally loving God, then we are able to love others unconditionally. We first look for the Christ in the other person, and relate to that vision even if this means we have to hold our tongues, count to 10, or walk away until our un-Christ-like reactions abate. Through prayer and time, we can then rationally respond in a kinder manner.

During this Advent season of preparation, let's look inwardly and honestly consider how we envision God. Can we practice tearing down walls, being less judgmental, replacing punishment with understanding and grace, learning to love without placing conditions on it?

Ezekiel 36:26 says: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." "Jesus is our model for what it means to live from our hearts" (Richard Rohr).

Let us practice being more loving in our hearts. Let's practice easing the tension in our hearts that shoot sharp barbs and stinging words. Let us practice being deliberately intentional, to be gracious and kind to those walking with us. After all, this practice is integral to loving God with our whole mind, heart, and soul. (Matthew 22:37).

Preparing for Christ's arrival as Jesus in this way could be our Christmas present to God, to others, and to ourselves. The result would help: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."