

# FINAL – APPROVED FEB 13, 2020

Ad Council Minutes  
January 9, 2020  
7:30 pm, Lower Level Conf Room

In Attendance: Joy Barrett, Edie Wiarda, Rodney Gasaway, Diane Brown (guest), Jim Alford III, Sandy Schmunk, Charles Schmunk, John Seto.

Opening Prayer – Edie Wiarda

Welcomed new member at large, Jim Alford III

Reviewed Minutes from meeting of December 12, 2019. No edits to the minutes. Jim moved to approve, Charles seconded. Approved by all. Jim noted re: Town Halls – perhaps make a single service Sunday on those days, followed by the Town Hall.

Jeanne Franks asked for permission on Fundraiser for “Mikey and Me” from the Middle School Youth Group. Edie noted that we need to see if we have fundraiser policy. Joy recalled a discussion regarding not having too many at the same time. Decided to just act on this one fundraiser tonight. Joy moved we approve, Rodney seconded. All approved.

CFUMC’s Path for Discernment and Decision-Making Regarding Issues Related to Human Sexuality and Our Place in a (Likely) Restructured Denomination.

- Brief Background/Overview – Edie  
Recently announced in National News: Compromise agreement which was released from the Council of Bishops office. Broad range of parties involved. Seems like everyone has something to gain. None of this is official legislation. No guarantees of it passing as presented. The UM church is a group of corporate entities (Annual Conferences) that own church property. In this agreement it looks like the “Traditionalists” would form their own alliance or denomination. The rest would stay as the United Methodist Church. The agreement allows for the remaining UMC to have another General Conference soon, where it would have the ability to make changes in the Book of Discipline, especially related to same-sex marriage and ordination of Gay pastors. Churches do not have to vote to stay United Methodist, but can vote to leave and be allowed to take property with them. Decisions to leave and join the new denomination would need to be made by churches by Dec 2024. This is one plan out of at least 10 plans that have been proposed to come before the General Conference. There has been a huge amount of positive response and some negative response to this idea. Joy noted this is not the first time the Methodist Church has split (many incarnations throughout its history). Cause for concern: It is not good at this time to make prognostic statements about what we think will happen.
- Reviewed list suggested by Edie Wiarda of issues for consideration related to Human Sexuality and our own future place in the Denomination. These are for possible consideration over the next several months:
  1. What does the congregation need to hear from us now?

2. What actions/decisions should Ad Council make under its own authority? What decisions should devolve to congregational vote?
  3. Is there benefit to a congregational survey or “straw poll?”
  4. In what ways has the denominational turmoil been holding us back? What clarity or actions would get us “unstuck?”
  5. Timing/Speed -- What actions, if any, are needed during 2020? Before Gen Conference (May)?
  6. What is our attitude toward staying within the letter of the Book of Discipline, vs some measure of “ecclesial disobedience?”
  7. What can we do to minimize pain and disruption?
- Discussion of whether there should be additions to the above list of issues.
    - Have we seen a change in finances or attendance related to the disruption of this issue? We saw a dip in non-pledge (plate) giving in the summer but this has rebounded. We know of some people who have said they just can’t keep coming because of the stance the larger church has taken. We know of at least 3 couples/families that have left because they feel this church is too progressive. Some other people have come. We need to keep an eye on this.
    - Concern that our pastor has stated personal thought on God’s inclusive love for all persons yet the leadership of the church has not made definitive statements in support.

Presentation by Edie Wiarda of a list of examples of actions taken by other churches.

- Offer activities to help with congregational and personal discernment
- Do a congregational survey or “straw poll”
- Develop an internal / congregational statement of policy intent
- Implement new policies
- Develop public-facing statements of LGBTQ support (welcome statement, rainbow banner, etc.)
- Develop public statements of policy intent or actions
- Become involved with Reconciling Ministries Network (discernment / education / advocacy)
- Focused prayer efforts, either as part of discernment or advocacy.

Discussion:

- What might we want to intentionally put on the calendar, and in communications before and after the May conference?  
 Comment: We as a church should move towards being leaders in how we think our church should move forward  
 Comment: I think we are losing people on both sides because we have not taken a stance. If we do something like put out a rainbow flag we need to be prepared for what comes from that.

Suggestion: Make a statement that reads something like: “We are very hopeful about what we see in this proposal. Anything that comes out of General Conference

that promotes full inclusion of all persons in the life of the United Methodist Church seems to be in accordance with God's Love. We believe this is a direction that is compatible with where our congregation is leading."

Note new language proposed for the General Conference regarding the United Methodist Social Principal, related to homosexuality.

Comment: We need to be very careful about wording statements that assume all in the congregation agree.

Discussion held regarding doing a poll of the congregation related to this issue. Comments that these are highly personal feelings and decisions. Not everyone wants to note where they stand. Things are rapidly changing so no decisions can be made at this time. Simply determining percentages of where people stand does not show us where God would have us go. Is this about majority rules? Leaders need to discern and lead.

**Decision: Edie will draft a statement based on our comments/discussion to be made to the congregation January 19<sup>th</sup>, which coincides with Martin Luther King Day. She will email this to Ad Council members for comments regarding wording and content. Also, set up some learning, conversation times (early Feb., late April?) for the congregation to gather and digest what is likely to come before the General Conference.**

Suggestion: invite parents of LGBTQ children in our church to start a dialogue and, be involved as this congregation moves forward related to these issues.

Suggestion: Set up some "watch times" where people can gather to see/hear live what is happening at General Conference, as well as times for prayer.

Town Hall: The Material Girls are excited about being a part of the program in February.

Future Meetings and Events:

- Saturday, January 25, 10 am-2 pm—Ministry Audit Retreat (Lunch Provided!)
- Thursday, February 13, 6:30-8 pm – Ad Council Meeting
- Sunday, February 9, 5-7 pm – Town Hall Potluck [Material Girls Ministry]
- Sunday, April 26 – Town Hall Meeting
- Please hold every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday for possible Ad Council meetings.

Closing Prayer – Sandy Schmunk

Notes by Sandy Schmunk