

FINAL, Approved as of 10/5/2020

Ad Council Meeting, 9/10/2020

Minutes

7:30-9pm via Zoom Conference

Attendance: Joy Barrett, Mike Vanderspool , Brenda Beck, Charles Schmunk, Sandy Schmunk, Dana Schmunk, Kerry Plank, Rodney Gasaway, John Seto, Jim Alford III, Edie Wiarda

Guests Darlene Schaffer, Diane Brown, Jessica Fahlgren.

1. Opening Prayer – Edie: “ Lord, we are Grateful to gather together for your church. Cultivate in us gratitude, calm, discernment. Thank you to those who provide examples of the Christian life. May we be examples to others”.
2. Approval of Minutes from July meeting- questions about external vs internal messaging . Suggest clarification on terms or technical or core for new language for revised draft, item 3 in original minutes. Suggested changes in red below:

External Messaging / Marketing – Telling our story, being who we need to be in the Community. Interest in increasing our presence digitally ~~and technical/missional core activity~~, This relates to “Messaging and Outreach” item on list of Ad Council objectives for 2020. I.e., important not just to allow for better communication among people who are already involved, but also for outreach and evangelism. More effective communication is high priority to our mission to “Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.”

Approved.

3. COVID: Sustainment & Transformation of Ministries:
  - a. Finance – Kerry : Stable income over past few months. Pledged income held firm. Unpledged income came in stronger than previous months. Expenses have been underbudget. Break even thus far due to PPP loan. Still have a strong ongoing surplus. Have discussed critical importance on improving website and branding. Have talked about establishing additional need, hiring in the budget to manage those tasks.
  - b. Restart and related activities– Joy: All congregation email has been sent about starting in person worship this Sunday on the East long, weather permitting. Staying within 10 person rule for now. When our state reaches stage 5 we will begin having in house services with 50 people rule. Would plan a second service on a different for more capacity. NO IN PERSON WORSHIP ON Christmas eve. Big on line music service. Do not want people to feel left out. The Sanctuary will be open Christmas Eve with decorations and special music. People can walk through the space and safely engage in that space. Jessica question – are we going to do angel tree? (Has not been discussed but probably).

4. Next Steps, Clarifying LGBTQ stance —Ad Council has issued the Affirmation statement and there have been several info/sharing meetings. Are there actions or activities that we as a congregation should be pursuing? Please continue to consider big questions: What actions are you willing to take under Ad Council authority versus broad church input? What is your attitude toward violations of the current Book of Discipline? Are we going to make our church properties open to gay couples who wish to marry?

Individual thoughts of AD Council members

Where are we in our own comfort level?

Kerry Plank— Communication of the Affirmation Statement of Ad Council is important. People outside of the congregation don't know where our church stands. We need to do more with respect to this, both internal and external. It has never been more clear to me how divided our own town is on this issue as well as racial issues. Our church needs to be clear on where we stand. Need to do publicizing immediately. Have taken the first step but not enough. The more detail we can provide, the better.

Charles Schmunk— One of the things that came up in our open meetings was a misunderstanding that this was a Council statement not an all church statement. We need a greater opportunity for others to in the congregation to express their opinion. I think we need more input before "going to the top of the bell tower". I do not want to make a statement that does not include the congregation.

Sandy Schmunk— Personally I am in favor of being stronger with our messaging both within and outside our congregation.

Jim Alford III — I am in favor of being more aggressive in our outreach in the community. I do not want to put our pastors at risk in their career.

Mike Vanderspool —I am in line with what Jim said. In terms of using our church building for weddings, I would like to understand better. I think we can make things clear that any statement comes from the Ad Council. Like approve of symbols like the Rainbow banner.

John Seto— Helpful to have this conversation, respectful. A statement without action to back it up is hollow. As an Ad Council we seem to have common thought. I am fully in support of being more aggressive. As long as clergy is protected. Might we ask people in the congregation to sign on or endorse the prior Ad Council Statement of Aspiration? This would not be a vote, but I have seen this in other settings and it gives people a voice.

Brenda Beck— We were making the statement as the official decision-making body. Suggest that we lay out for the congregation exactly what path we are on. There will be a separation coming. Individuals can be fully informed, and decide to stay or move to a Traditional Church.

Dana Schmunk— we should come up with a bullet list and ask which ones does the congregation fully agree with? We can make a stronger statement from the Ad Council? People want to have a statement they can support.

Joy Barrett— Feeling very encouraged and mentored in this congregation. I resonate clearly with Dana's summary comments. What is real in real time? Good place for the congregation to weigh in.

Rodney Gasaway— I am relieved to hear where this is going. Feel there is a place for people to have voice. All about following the discipline until the General Conference meets.

Jessica Falgren– (guest) Talking about drilling down to more points in the Aspirational state. I think a survey is warranted. If I were on Ad Council I would want legitimacy. Can put out all the aspirational statements you want. Want to put out something to gay couples that let them know they are safe here to be like everyone else. Make them feel they are loved. Let them know they can be welcomed and married here.

Diane Brown – (guest)I completely affirm what Jessica has said. We need a temperature gauge. Need a much more aggressive stance. If we can not say publicly what we are doing we will send mixed messages. We need to take action, note “The Council says this” Need to have symbols. Need to be clear on what are you doing. There are things where we are currently not in complete compliance with the Book of Discipline. We need to get to Open Doors, Open Hearts, Open Minds.

Darlene Schaffer (guest)– Would ask again that the Council would undertake a study of the scriptures on homosexuality. Could be noncompliant with the Book of Discipline without being an offence that is different than ordination or support of gay marriage.

Dana thanked Diane, Jessica, Darlene for their input. Many churches have closed due to missing their mission.

Eddie’s Thoughts in moving forward – things I am hearing that appear to have broad agreement:

- Resonate with Brenda’s statement – laying out for all a clear articulation of the path we are on.
- John on asking people if they wish to endorse Ad Council statement, getting buy in
- I’m hearing some wanting more aggressive statement. But also some unsure of putting a banner out tomorrow; Have we earned it?
- Ad Council members would like some advice on what exactly to go public with? What is an action that is worthy of public distribution?
- Regarding the possibility of making our building available for gay weddings, what is the Bishop’s current stance? What are the ramifications of a chargeable offense?

Messaging / Outreach / Communications Initiative – Edie

Want to move toward revised branding package, website that incorporates that look and feel like that. An easily refreshed website staff can use. Need to bring in a team who have expertise in this area. This is likely to involve contracting external services. Can we create a line of credit to move this forward. Need to effect a budget for this between now and the end of the year.

Could take some of operating surplus for this effort (\$8,000) Motion: Kerry

Second: Jim

See this as how we get the branding etc. in hand. Other funding for future not determined at this time. Vote: Unanimous approval.

Charles. Have had a failed attempt already. Should we try to have a competition within the church to come up with something that represents us.

Dana – as head of trustees we are all for this effort. Trustees could help with technology.

Rodney – not a question of whether we need to do this. We have to do this.

John – Please keep in mind the needs of our existing staff. SPRC wants to protect funds for staff salary increases. Want to make sure this is not affected.

5. Quick Updates on Other Objectives:

- a. Mission Tithe RFP – Watch email for proposal, upcoming Special Conference vote.
- b. Safe Sanctuaries Policy – Joy RAN OUT OF TIME FOR REPORT
- c. Nominations & Leadership Development – Mike RAN OUT OF TIME FOR REPORT.

6. Schedule of Upcoming Meetings:

- a. Special Church Conference on Mission Tithe (Sunday, Sept 27, 2020. Time?) Can vote by zoom or in person (must come to the church for that)
- b. Zoom town hall meeting the week before with presentation and open for questions.- Deb Hubbard moderating.
- c. Oct 8 Ad Council Meeting
- d. Charge Conference Oct 19 7:30 (with DS)
- e. Nov 12 (Scope out our 2021 Objectives?)
- f. Dec 10 (Budget Approval?)

John Seto: WE need to upgrade our frequency of meetings to make progress. Edie: we will keep Oct 8 meeting.

7. New Business NONE.

8. Closing Prayer- Rodney Gasaway