

FINAL, Approved as of 10/27/2020

Ad Council Meeting, 10/8/2020

Minutes

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

Guests: David and Darlene Schaffer, Jessica Fahlgren

1. Opening Prayer – Edie. Devotional about what we are doing here: Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World. Romans 10:13-15,17. “Faith comes from what is heard.” Prayer: For the Making of True Disciples.
2. Approval of Minutes from July meeting- Approved via email.
3. Finance Report – Edie reporting on behalf of Kerry Plank. To date in 2020, pledged income is exactly on budget. Unpledged income is well below budget, but the infusion of PPP funds (\$77k) and below-budget expenses (down by \$40k) more than make up for that income loss. The Finance team approved a motion to apply large portion of \$50k maturing CD to the outstanding mortgage rather than re-investing in another CD; current rates on CDs are low so this is the better application of the funds.
4. Next Steps, Clarifying LGBTQ stance – Joy and Edie are working with Jessica Fahlgren to create a task force and look at how to move forward, and how to present this to the our congregation and, as appropriate to the Chelsea Community.
Questions posed by Edie in advance – please consider these in the context of previous meeting suggestions by Brenda (“articulate a clear path forward for the congregation”) and John (“might we offer a way for congregants to ‘endorse’ or sign on to Ad Council statement?”).
 - Does draft “Path Forward” provide the clear description of what we intend?
 - Is draft “Welcome Statement” the right wording?
 - What does endorsement mean? How would that work? Can people express “I do not endorse?”
 - How do we go public with our statements?

Kerry (via email in advance of the meeting)- I like “The Path Forward”. Want us to implement and go public ASAP. We owe it to people during stewardship drive to be transparent before Commitment Sunday, Nov 1. Could do endorsement via Change.org.

Joy – I support all the statements put forth. My sense about endorsement is to have our task force weigh in and then involve the congregation I am in agreement of both of those statements going on our website now.

Mike: I agree, I like those statements. I like the welcome paragraph. I always waver on endorsement. Would we accept anonymous feedback? If not it may limit the feedback we get. I would lean toward getting endorsement of the next steps, rather than full endorsement.

Edie: I am cognizant of the fact there is a lot of pain in the world, and our lives – this is not the only important issue. Some may feel the timing is not right with the prominence of the election, racial issues. But we need to be clear on where we are headed, so we should get the information out now. We could follow with a letter requesting feedback, but even that is subject to incomplete response.

Jim – I wonder if using the word genuinely instead of “particularly” in the welcome paragraph would enhance it. I am very much in favor of everything written including the path forward and having it on our website. Make sure it doesn’t take away from other things on the website that inform people of things going on in our church. My concern about asking people to endorse or to take a poll is that we make sure not to push people too quickly to make their own personal decision. We should allow people to sit with this issue as they feel they need to.

Sandy: I support the Welcome Statement and the endorsement and putting these statements on the website. I support other’s wishes to make their own personal decisions.

Charles: Agree with proceeding with putting the Welcome Statement and Path Forward on the website. I am always in favor of including the congregation in conversation. In the end people will need to make their own personal decisions.

Brenda – I support the Welcome Statement on the website. I do think we should seek feedback from the congregation. Could be a poll or round table discussions again. I would like to see it in the Pathfinder and believe it should be put out on the website now. The feedback from the task force needs to be vetted. The reality is that at some point everyone is going to have to make a decision for themselves. They need to understand what the nature of our church is going forward.

Joy: Re: anonymous feedback. It allows for unhealthy behavior. And does not promote honest relationship and dialogue.

John – I am in full support of the Welcome and the Path Forward statements and going public with it. I think we need to be sure to use all the terminology to include everyone in the LGBTQ Community. I make the original suggestion about “endorsement” or “signing on,” but I have reservations about forcing people into “yes” or “no,” and about non-responses or anonymous responses. We also need to be careful about promises of confidentiality. If you make those promises, what does it mean exactly? Who does get to see your responses, and what controls to you have in place to safeguard?

Dana – I am in full support of the Welcome and Path Forward statements going on the website. People need a way to comment.

Rodney – I do believe we need to hear from others in the congregation. I think we would get good response; see the example of the poll about people’s comfort levels with various activities under COVID.

Jessica – I think the word we need for each person’s statements is “confidential.” Not anonymous but important to be confidential.

Edie – I am not sure an on-line petition is a good idea for this. It would be visible to all; some people from the outside community might endorse it. Also we are at a difficult moment. There may be people we end up saying goodbye to, others who feel hurt and that their church is abandoning them, so we need to be sensitive to this.

Darlene – One thing I would like on the task force are people who have varying views. There is a resource of articles that would explain the two sides, what the Wesleyan Covenant group is. I would ask that a letter go out to the congregation initially asking for feedback. Give people a month to decide and then move forward. I think people will feel heard and will give input. We want to provide congregational care to people who will be losing their church.

David – I think turning against traditional teaching is a bad thing and leaders will be held accountable.

Charles: I agree with Darlene on the letter. In a sense that will be a straw poll.

Joy: Regarding feedback, I think we should take what we have heard and take it back to the task force for discernment rather than make a decision tonight.

Edie: Any delay due to seeking immediate feedback will not allow us to meet Kerry’s request for taking a clear step before the pledge campaign is over.

Darlene: I ask for a letter be sent in advance to people as a sign of love and respect. I also ask you to reconsider my earlier request for a presentation about the Traditionalist plan.

Jessica: Having such a presentation will create confusion.

Edie: We won’t talk about this request at this meeting. Darlene please make a proposal.

John: Regarding suggestion to put out a letter in advance as a form of respect, that’s fine, but I don’t have a strong feeling about putting out a letter. But it’s time to take strong action. We have sometimes shown a lot of caution. I think inaction reflects on who we are as leaders. Ultimately it needs to be a group of leaders who make a decision.

Edie: What I am hearing is support for a letter, alerting all in the congregation that we are about to be more public with Path Forward and Welcome Statement. I am hearing support for putting both statements out (homepage, FB) immediately following letter. We have been working under consensus/unanimity, so please speak up if you disagree. [Concurrence.]

5. Charge Conference Oct 19 7:30 with District Superintendent.

Since no All-Church Conference this year, suggestion to have a webinar or Zoom meeting on various things going on in the church re: objectives, general information. If many attendees, could do it as a webinar (like the one Deb Hubbard led on Mission Tithe). If not too many, do it as a Zoom. Will need to hear from Kerry on Finance, Dana on Trustees, John on SPRC, Mike on Nominations/VCI. Any others please let Edie know if you know if you have content to add.

6. Updates on Other Objectives:

- VCM – Mike: We decided at the last meeting to no longer meet as an implementation team. We have not filled all prescriptions. We feel that things have either been accomplished or we will have a team who is continuing to address them. The Ad Council now owns them to make sure things move forward. The First Impressions team and Worship team are still working on prescriptions.
- Nominations -- Mike. We have been focusing on filling positions on Committees. The majority have been filled. We are working on the Spiritual gifts survey. This will be the focus of the team once the Charge Conference is over. The goal is to have people understand their Spiritual gifts.
- Safe Sanctuaries Committee: Joy. We have made several suggestions to both make it more efficient and protect our children, youth and vulnerable adults. Best practices – theological, legal. We have a test group trying out a resource for doing background tests. That will give us feedback on how to conduct the training process. Plan to bring to Ad Council on board for approval before the beginning of the year.
- External communications & messaging: Edie. Have a team now charged with getting us new logo/look & feel, upgraded website, and trial run with social media / messaging / engagement. Kate Russell, Ray Stankiewicz, Kerry and Theresa Plank, Heidi Doyle. Have had their first meeting plus \$8k budget so off and running.

7. Schedule of Upcoming Meetings:

- Charge Conference Oct 19 7:30 (with DS)
- Nov 12 (Discuss possible 2021 Objectives?)
- Dec 10 (Budget?)

8. New Business -- None

9. Closing Prayer- Joy. Especially hold Pete and Nettie Severn. She is making her journey from this world to the next. Prayed for guidance and discernment for our team.