

FINAL: Approved via email as of 12/2/2020

Administrative Council Meeting, 11/12/2020, 7:30 pm via Zoom

### Minutes

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

Guests: Diane Brown, Darlene and David Schaffer, Dave Gilbert

Note that Minutes for meeting on October 8, 2020 were approved via email.

1. Opening Prayer – Edie. Devotion on Psalm 104. Loving God -- often through nature that this comes most directly; specificity in calling out the many glories of God's creation. Prayer: May our church help us to experience joy and awe, and overcome delusions and fear.
2. Finance Report – Kerry.
  - Church remains in sound financial position; good month income wise in October; members who have pledged continue to do so.
  - Relatively strong bump in the unpledged income in October
  - PPP – has been officially forgiven; has kept us in the black
  - Current \$208,000 balance in Operating Surplus; this will decline some by end of 2020.
  - Stewardship Drive relatively successful; follow up with those we have not heard from yet – this is not unusual. That follow up is in process.
  - Forecast a spending level in 2021 that will be similar to 2020.
  - Sanctuary Renovation mortgage – due August 2021 – forecast about \$100,000 due at that time; reviewing options about how to address. Fundraising drive to close or eliminate that gap. Refinancing is an option, though not our first preference.
  - Questions/Comments: Operating Surplus is high, so why not apply that to mortgage rather than consider fundraiser? – Ans: This is also an option. Operating surplus does serve as our “rainy day” fund...financial planners recommend at least enough to cover 3-4 months of expenses on hand.
  - Comment: Note there may be new initiatives for 2021...may need to tap surplus for these purposes also.
3. Objectives for 2021

**Edie** – Starting from document with our 10 prioritized objectives ... first developed in Dec 2019; this has been a very helpful guide for me; gave a road map, clear identification for what Ad. Council wanted to achieve. Hope we will do this again for 2021.

Will be asking you to comment on updated Objectives document, with my highlighting of “unfinished business” that might belong on 2021 list:

  - Heighten level of congregational care
  - Action on LGBTQIA Task Force Recommendations
  - Focus worship, hospitality and Christian Education on target demographic groups

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- External engagement – Evangelism!
- Reinvigorate our mission work
- Small groups, spiritual formation, adult education.

Also, what's missing? Think big about core mission. What must we do in 2021 to release the full potential of our staff and our people as we seek to:

- Invite and entice people to the call of Christ and to our congregation?
- Witness to Christ's salvation and its implications for our lives and for the world?
- Provide encouragement and guidance to people as they pursue their discipleship path?
- Provide compassionate care and healing to our own members and to the broader community?"

### **Kerry**

My top 3:

1. Reimagining as needed to get through the pandemic
2. External Communication & Engagement
3. Task force and UMC denomination decision on LGBTQIA.

A major strength we have is our facility and downtown location. Could be participating more fully in groups like DDA. Sit in on some of these committees – DDA meetings, City Council meetings, opportunity to connect with others, to be visible participant in the community.

### **Rodney**

1. Communication
2. Congregational Care
3. Missions and Outreach

More personal connection & phone work; more small groups & studies.

### **Joy**

1. Unfinished items from 2020 are high priority.
2. I resonate with points made thus far: Mission, Outreach/Engagement.
3. Be a healing force to demonstrate the common places in our lives; creating opportunities for real sharing and conversations. E.g., see "Crucial Conversations" resource; [braverangels.com](http://braverangels.com).

### **John**

Top priority is for Congregational Care. Note outreach will need to go beyond those we think of typically as shut-ins, to include everyone -- families, others. As this pandemic continues, the needs are great.

### **Jim**

I am concerned with engagement; pastoral care, providing care to our own members. People need to be connected: small groups, book clubs, need more of all of this. Concerned for people who are disengaging. How can we reach out in a more personal

way to reengage people – personal invitation, contact beyond an all-congregation email or Pathfinder announcement?

**Charles**

Personal contact is so important...thinking about people I routinely would talk with in church and yet haven't spoken with in 6 months. We have our pandemic call lists, they are still valid ... we should/could be in contact with.

For congregational care, we need a system for following up on how people are doing; be responsive to needs. Quick response, not after 2 week delay before I'm informed via Path Finder.

Mission activities have been almost non-existent...how to reengage in ways that we can? House in Jackson...we failed miserably on that one, provided Jeanne with very little work support. [Update from Rodney: house goes on the market next week.]

I see outreach, external messaging, engagement in community as one whole. Presence at School Board meetings, Township meetings, City Council meetings? Or make more visible the activities of the church?

We really need the spiritual gifts survey...encourages involvement of people.

**Sandy**

all set

**Brenda**

Spiritual gifts discernment is critical – we must develop new leaders to build our church.

Congregational care – in midst of pandemic, there is too much isolation. Ideas: virtual coffee hours; Virtual lunch/dinners for 8; we do “conversations in the kitchen” at our workplace 10 minutes per day on Zoom for the personal connection/conversations.

**Dana**

Need to show our commitment to human compassion... how to reach people in need right now... Attention is going in so many directions, how do we direct attention to the church? Invite people in to listen to our take and our actions on the causes they are already fighting for: LGBTQ, BLM, Caring for each other and for all, loving each other, “our community, our world.” Social media alone not enough. Suggest sermon series that show the Christian and Methodist ways of responding in troubled times, or to particular issues. Show our acceptance, how we react to others. Help people learn more about who we are as UM's.

**Comments from Guests re: priorities for 2021**

**Diane:** 1) more creative and comprehensive outbound communication -- who are we; promotion of weekly sermon call-to-action; visibility in the community. Tell our story: be inviting; be affirming and keep building. 2) Intensive personal outreach with calling lists....this pandemic will not be over soon. Check in with people as we step into Advent.

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**David Schaffer** -- encourage small group Bible study; this will feed into all other areas.

**Darlene** -- communication about GC issues and related decisions to make.

**Dave Gilbert** – stronger connectivity with the community, especially on COVID and mental health. There is currently a big Washtenaw County effort on mental health; maybe there's a way to be involved.

**Eddie** –

- Congregational care -- Agree with need for stronger personal connection – calling and creative ways to do small groups.
- Leadership development – got tremendous response from invitations to be on LGBTQ Task Force, which suggests pent-up desire to serve.
- Communication/outreach/engagement.

4. Updates on 2020 Objectives

- LGBTQ Task Force – Eddie. Jessica Fahlgren and Nolan Peterson co-chairs; 1<sup>st</sup> meeting 11/22
- Messaging/Communications Task Force – Kerry. The Team Leaders are experts in this area in both tasks needed and methodology; starting to get bids.
- Nominations Report – will wait for Mike V's return; leadership nominations list that was approved at the Charge Conference is posted on the Ad Council page of the church website.
- Safe Sanctuaries – Joy. Plan has come into shape this week; optimistic that it solves past issues with how to deliver training, and how to get consistency in background checks with reasonable effort. Expect recommended policy updates at January Ad Council meeting.

5. Update on in-person worship – Joy. Have been doing in-person outdoor worship for several weeks; some rain-outs. First in-person worship in sanctuary was Nov 1, with a couple dozen participants. Careful protocol. Then back outside on Nov 8 – lovely day with 70+ people! Expect to be back inside from now on, but keeping a careful eye on what governor and health departments are saying, esp. as cases rise.

6. Upcoming Meetings -- Eddie

December 10: Expect to consider 2021 budget ; more on 2021 objectives.

January 14: Three new at-large members to Ad Council: Ruth Ammon, Nolan Peterson, Heather Hay (editorial note: all NEW people not currently in leadership roles in the church).

Eddie expressed her deep gratitude for each person...asked Joy to offer closing prayer.

Adjourn.

(Prepared by Joy Barrett and Eddie Wiarda)

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