



First United Methodist Church

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*Catch our vision to...present Jesus Christ positively.
Make and encourage disciples, relieve suffering*

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES, March 25, 2008

Welcome - Mary Kilgour opened the meeting today with a devotion.

Minutes - Approved as submitted and distributed.

Old Business

Parsonage's Future Committee Report - Parker Lawrence, Chair

The purpose of this discussion was to fulfill one of the steps required by the Church Discipline prior to a Congregational vote on selling the parsonage. Parker provided a written report laying out the costs of various options. Those in attendance were reminded that the full Lawrence committee report on whether to sell the parsonage is available on the FUMC web site and also in the church office. If the parsonage was sold, and assumed proceeds of \$420,000 invested with Lakeland, the annual income would be, based on September yield of five percent, \$21,000. Combined with the savings from the budgeted items of approximately \$15,000 now spent to maintain the parsonage, and paying a competitive housing allowance of \$26,000, the church would realize a net savings of \$10,000. Additionally, the church would be less the administrative burden of keeping the parsonage in good condition. If rented, the results would be about the same money-wise, however, there would still be administrative overhead for management, and there would be continued appreciation of the real estate. Discussion included that there may still be a party interested in purchasing the property. Additionally, the possibility of renting until the decision is made on selling the property was brought up, however, it was stated that there are real estate taxes that would be incurred if the property is rented. It was confirmed that only one more decision that has to be made before the sale is allowed and approved. Mary Kilgour quoted from the full report on what the funds may be used for from the sale of the parsonage. The funds should be invested and the interest used as so deemed and approved by the Church Council and the District Committee. The proposed housing allowance must be approved by the District Committee. It was noted, however, that we do not need to concern ourselves with this issue at present because Dr. Henderson does not require a housing allowance. Dr. Henderson indicated that the trend is towards providing a housing allowance but not directly urging churches to sell their parsonages. Mary Kilgour suggested that Parker Lawrence's committee prepare a position paper for the full Congregation conference to be held on this subject that will include the things that we would use the money.

Jim Nation motioned that the proceeds from the sale of the parsonage be invested in a permanent fund. The interest would then be used to fund the ministerial housing allowance and other expenses as outlined by the discipline. Seconded by Jim Knight. Approved by the Council as motioned.

Disaster Relief Planning - Sara Emmanuel, absent, written report of the survey provided. Dr. Henderson suggested that the Council hold the topic until Sara Emmanuel is available to present the survey.

Helping Hands Clinic, Women's' Clinic Update - Randy Stacey

Trustees did approve the use of the conference room on every other Thursday evening. 5-7 volunteers would be available for the Women's' Clinic. 7 referrals for screening exam but not sure how many have

taken the next step. First group April 10th, April 24th an open discussion and in May would be the next formal educational presentation. Flier to be put together. There is a city commission meeting on April 3rd at 6:00 to approve zoning change on April 3rd, with a protest proceeding at 5:00. The Blue Foundation grant is a 3-year grant to fund the Helping Hands women's program and to be used for extending other services.

New Business

Future Ministries, Thoughts from Dr. Henderson

Written Report submitted. A vision of some of the challenges and opportunities that we face as we seek to maintain the growth momentum we have begun to experience during the past year and especially since we moved back into the sanctuary in November, 2007. The paper is broken down into a catalogue of ideas:

Numerical: Numbers represent people who are being reached and served by our church's ministry. Numbers are but one way to measure whether we are being effective or not, especially if we are located in an area that has growth potential. I don't think anyone could sustain an argument that we are not in a growth environment. We have not scratched the surface of understanding how to minister to the numbers of people working around us Monday through Friday. Use of the Christian Workers' Chapel and the sanctuary as possible locations for services designed for people working in our neighborhood. Healing services, prayer and vesper services, times when the chapel is open for quiet meditation have been mentioned as possibilities. Music opportunities are also an important outreach. Building on the earlier attempts to reach the growing residential population growing all around us. Continued growth in the areas most recently experienced with the young adults (particularly, though not exclusively, graduate and post-graduate students, with consequent increases in children and youth ministries, including Boy and Girl Scouts. Another growth area for us should be within the growing number of single adults in our society.

There is considerable research evidence that people approaching retirement are looking for help in negotiating the transition to retirement. There is other research that indicates a strong interest in recreational activity on the one hand, and intellectual growth opportunity on the other. We have begun, under Rev. Carl Romey's leadership, to think about this area of opportunity and add new thinking and experimentation.

Our emergence and growth of our Wednesday night program masks that our Sunday School attendance is in continuing decline. Although this follows a national trend, there is nothing inevitable about it; the challenge for us is to find ways to turn that decline around so that it at least matches the growth in Sunday worship. (The Christian Education Committee has begun working on the issue). Ensuring that we grow the kind of music program that inspires and energizes people who come here for worship and for a wide range of other musical encounters is important in a city where good music abounds. The Helping Hands Clinic expansion into a program for women on Thursday nights with an educative and preventive emphasis, is a pointer in the right direction for expanding the outreach services our church provides. The establishment of an Adult Literacy Center is one known need in our community and would be an important contribution to breaking the poverty cycle among the homeless/poor. It could be considered an extension of the Helping Hands Ministry or undertaken as a separate initiative by the church. There are grant funds available for such programs and at least one United Methodist center has been established in Clearwater, FL. Without becoming a "wedding assembly line" what steps could we take to make weddings a more effective ministry of outreach to people beyond the life of the church? Along with an active response from potential wedding coordinators and assistance from retired ministers available to us. We might envisage a continuing relationship with couples who are married here, perhaps through the equivalent of an alumni association with an annual renewal of vows and/or get-together of some appropriate kind.

Financial: Budget realities will always be a factor in influencing how much ministry a church can undertake, and the priorities and timetable involved, but budget considerations should never determine

ministry. The Stewardship Committee worked on this principle for the current year, with good income results. We need to build on that experience for the future. This congregation has a very limited endowment fund... less than \$200,000. Even the goal of \$500,000 established some years ago has been rendered inadequate by inflation. The Endowment Committee has begun to work urgently on the establishment of an effective endowment recruitment program, and the policies that would govern the acceptance and distribution of funds. Without such a fund in place, the church is extremely vulnerable to unexpected setback, and the real possibility of inhibited growth and/or lost opportunities.

Property: Parking is an issue that the church needs to address. There is no single factor that would adversely affect our ministry and our ability to expand as the loss of parking (the unforeseen scenario by which the SunTrust parking lot would be closed to us).

Areas of Concern: identifying areas where we are under-achieving including homebound, hospitalized and otherwise unable to attend worship on a regular basis or at all. Communication of FUMC happenings. Extent and quality of services that we are able to provide people who come to the church office for assistance - not professionally trained in how to provide them the necessary interventions and not do them harm. Identifying and following up on visitors who come to our services.

Self-awareness: How would we define ourselves as fitting into the spectrum of other churches in Gainesville (especially United Methodist). As Dr. Henderson sees us, we are an interesting blend of traditional worship where the emphasis is on the quality of the worship experience, and theological and sociological openness (as distinct from tendencies toward dogmatism or exclusionism) where the emphasis is on finding ways to enfold people in the body of Christ.

Committee Highlights

Finance Committee - Audrey Lewis, Chair, absent.

Written report provided. In the process of setting up sub-committee structures to further the following goals: migrating financial records to on budget, planning for the future and emergencies through reserve and capital projects funding, and reviewing existing financial policies.

Board of Trustees - Leon Couch, Chair

15 passenger vans have poor safety record, so conference is encouraging us to get rid of the van. Insurance is \$4,000 and may increase or not be available next year. Sub-committee looking into the issue.

UMM Men - Lawrence Shaw, Chair

Successful pancake breakfast, helped set up and take down the IHN equipment. Emphasis on outreach committee, setting up a calendar for the mission box collections. Furnishing water for people at the Spring Arts Festival.

Scouts - Sandy Evans, absent, written report provided to Mary Kilgour

Boy Scouts parked cars at Gator Nationals as a fundraiser and are camping next weekend at District Camporee, and responsible for Council Bonfire. Girl Scouts sold 10,244 boxes of cookies and will have 30 boxes available for sale at the Spring Arts. Troop 259 carried 109 boxes of cookies as a gift of caring to the St. Francis House and cooked supper. Cub Scouts did well at the recent Pine Wood Derby and have been camping frequently. They will also have popcorn for sale at the Spring Arts Festival.

Staff Reports

Pre-School Director, Amy Watson:

FUMPers will be hosting their annual baked goods booth during the Spring Arts Festival. The proceeds will benefit the ongoing ministry of the preschool. Amy called for all to support them by baking a batch of cookies and/or purchasing at the booth. Registration is underway for the 2008-2009 school year. Amy

encouraged all to tell people who may be interested in a preschool. One of the goals for 2008 has been met: adding a representative from both the Finance and Trustee committees to the Preschool Board.

Director of Music, Robert Jackson: absent, no report

Pastor of Children, Youth, Christian Education - Nathan Carden:

With the awareness of the steady decline in our Sunday School attendance there will be a brief survey to determine possible future direction.

Assistant Pastor - Carl Romey:

Focus on two upcoming events; March for Babies on March 29th and on April 20th we will begin Sunday Night Live. As announced earlier, Lynda Knight is retiring and B.J. and Carl are planning a gourmet dinner for \$50.00 a ticket. The Saturday night event will take place on the third Sunday of each month in the format of leisure, Cokesbury hymns and various guests marking each event. Carl will keep us up to date with the final confirmation of the dates and events.

Senior Pastor - Harold Henderson: April 27th, Celebration, 100th Anniversary of the Children's Home.

Pastor Harold Henderson closed the meeting with a prayer.

NEXT MEETING APRIL 22, 2008.

[Note: changed to April 21 to accommodate church conference on sale of the parsonage.]