



## Minutes of the Church Council Meeting

January 27, 2009

Bill Yeager opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minutes, November 2008 meeting - Approved as submitted and distributed.  
E-mail approval of Finance Committee's 2009 budget proposal – confirmed.

### Staff Reports

**Pre-School Director, Amy Watson:** present, written report.

The church family was extremely supportive with their financial gifts at Dickens' Inn. Thank you for your help to replenish our Mile O Pennies FUMPers Scholarship Fund. This fund is in constant use and thus always in need. The Preschool families joined together with FUMC in supporting Arbor House during the month of December. We collected two boxes of various items we were told the mothers needed. Both of the items just mentioned are examples of the continuing work of bridge building between the preschool and the church. Let's keep up the good work!

**Helping Hands Clinic, Randy Stacey:** present, read written report.

#### **% Change, 2007 to 2008**

Total patient visits increased 17%

The average number of patients seen during a Monday night clinic increased 48%

Unique individual patients increased 29% from 2007 to 2008

Medical visits increased 30%

Psychiatric visits increased 19%

Acupuncture visits increased 19%

#### **Women's Health Program**

74 women were screened with the Women's Health Questionnaire

18 women were referred to Believe in Miracles or Planned Parenthood to receive recommended health services

33.3% of those women referred for recommended health screenings fulfilled their appointment

Women's Health Nights had 70 visits by 29 individual women in 2008

#### **Future Plans:**

We hope to find additional medical professional volunteers, like ARNP's, MD's and RN's to volunteer on Thursday evenings. In time this would allow us to provide a second medical clinic that is exclusively for homeless women. A second clinic would reduce the number of patients requesting care during Monday night clinics by diverting women to Thursday evenings for their medical needs, increase our ability to help referred women make and fulfill appointments for recommended health screenings, and increase our ability to provide both privacy and a comfortable environment for HHC patients.

Super Bowl- dinner and game to be provided. Youth very involved- planning for approximately 150.

**Director of Music, Robert Jackson (BJ):** present, written report.

We have seen Advent, Christmas and a whirlwind January come and go. The choirs of First UMC provided music for our regular Sunday morning worship services, as well as Dickens' Inn, and the three Christmas Eve services. It was good to have additional voices join the choir for the Christmas program, as well as some new members who have remained on board since then.

In January we bid farewell to Ben Ehrlich, our organist of 7+ years and wished him well on the next chapter of his life. I would be remiss if I did not in this report my gratitude for his excellent work during the short time I have served Director

of Music Ministries.

That same Sunday we were graced with the presence of The Chattanooga Boys Choir, under the direction of Vincent Oakes, a former student of mine at University UMC. Pride was among many of the emotions I experienced that day as I heard the boys sing and watched Vic lead them in such remarkable manner. The following week we again were graced with the presence of Jane Holstein and Joel Raney, founders of and performers in Keyboard Excursions. I was excited to have been able to schedule them here at First Church to share their ministry with our congregation. Both groups added greatly to our start of the new year and were well received for their musical offerings. Plans are already underway to bring Jane and Joel for a return visit in 2010.

I would like to express my thanks to Harriet Wise and Valerie Walters for their help with the Boys Choir luncheon and to Joanne Sheffield, Joanne Young, Margaret Couch, Joan Van Winkle, and Miriam Mathis for their tremendous effort at planning and helping at Ben's farewell reception.

On Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, members of our handbell choir, Celebration Ringers, participated in a local handbell workshop/festival at First Presbyterian Church with four other groups from Gainesville and Ocala. The workshop was led by Valerie Stephenson, noted composer of handbell music and a highly sought after clinician for both local and national events.

All choirs have returned to their normal schedules of rehearsals as we continue to prepare and provide the best music we are capable of to help lead the congregation in worship. As Holy Week looms large on the calendar, we of course, will be spending time preparing music for our special Holy Week services.

### **Upcoming Musical Events:**

Sunday, February 15, 2009- Dr. Leon Couch III (son of Dr. Leon and Margaret Couch) will present an organ recital at 2:00 pm in the sanctuary.

Sunday, March 15, 2009- Kama Rasmussen will present a piano recital at 2:00 pm in the sanctuary.

### **Holy Week Events**

Sunday, April 5- Palm/Passion Sunday

8:25 and 10:55 AM services

Thursday, April 9-Maundy Thursday

5:30 PM- Seder-type meal sponsored by the Youth

6:30 PM- Maundy Thursday Communion Service-Sanctuary

Friday, April 10- Good Friday

6:30 PM- Good Friday Service-Sanctuary

Sunday, April 12- Easter Sunday

8:25 and 10:55 AM services

Sunday, May 24- Aldersgate Sunday- Hymn Festival celebrating the hymns of Charles and John Wesley.

Sunday, August 30, 2009- Mr. Jim Hendricks, Professor of Piano, Chicago State University, will be part of the morning worship services and then present a Christian piano recital at 2:00 PM in the sanctuary.

The congregation is encouraged to support these events, and the persons who spend many hours in rehearsal to prepare them.

***Director of Children, Youth, Christian Education - Frank Ferreri:*** present, written report submitted.

On behalf of Heather and baby Frank, I would once again like to thank the FUMC family for the great and many different kinds of help we've received over the past few weeks. It's been a humbling reminder of just what we mean when we speak of a church family - - the church's kindness and generosity has been living proof of how we are sisters and brothers in Christ and we deeply appreciate it. It has also been a powerful testimony - - the way folks from the church have treated our family has prompted my mother to seek out a church home and she has begun regularly attending First United Methodist Church of Clearwater.

The Youth continue to be a growing and healthy part of the church and I'm pleased to report that parental involvement has been quite strong. This was on display this past Sunday with another one of our breakfast-in-a-cup fundraisers and at youth fellowship on Sunday evening when Rick and Barbara Vineyard put together a cookout for the youth and parents. I counted 27 in attendance Sunday evening.

Also, in terms of the Youth, we have a great opportunity to extend a warm FUMC welcome to the Boy Scouts on Feb. 8 for Scout Sunday. The Scouts will be hosting a pancake breakfast that morning and will be involved in the 10:55 am worship service. I would encourage everyone to reach out to all the Scouts and their families that day to really make them feel at home. Additionally, that morning, 3 people will be honored with the Cross and Flame award.

There are a number of events and activities on the horizon for children, youth, and young adults. I am planning a Lenten devotional study series targeted specifically toward young adults that would bring participants together for study and fellowship.

Before I close this report, I want to make a comment about external communications. Today, we received a call from

someone who is interested in our Wednesday evening program because she read about it on the Gainesville Sum's website. She will be attending tomorrow night. There is currently a woman enrolled in Trisha Eccles' class because she found the information on our website. Her initial hope was that the Baptist church in town would have weeknight classes, but she couldn't find any information on the web. She then came across our site and reached me through e-mail. Now those are only two examples, but we really haven't begun to put our best communications foot forward. And we haven't really done anything systematic since ending the Perceptions program. I say all this as staff contact to the Communications Taskforce to emphasize the point that communications is vitally important to the growth of the church and we will continue to look for better ways to get the word out about FUMC because we have a good word to get out.

**Assistant Pastor - Carl Romey:** present, read written report.

It is always good to report to you. I am at this time working with Dr. Henderson and Rev. Bill Yeager in outlining some ministry changes. Pastor Yeager will be handling some areas that I have worked in and I will be emphasizing programs for the new retiree age group and investigating possibilities of an International Student Ministry for our church.

Plans are being made for the Lenten Breakfast Series based on:

- A. Repentance- March 3, 2009
- B. Remembrance- March 10, 2009
- C. Revitalized- March 17, 2009
- D. Reliance- March 24, 2009
- E. Response- March 31, 2009

The speakers for the Lenten Breakfast Series are yet to be confirmed.

"A Festa da Primavera" (Spring Festival)- A special event for Portuguese speaking families will be held in upcoming weeks. A date has to be set around the UF student schedule. This is being held since I was gone on vacation on the Brazilian Independence day in September.

Hopefully!! Brazil 2009 will take place this fall. I believe that we can raise sufficient funds to make our Brazil Mission Trip possible yet this year. We have put the work/vacation trip off for three years and now it its time to return and assist another church in Brazil ( and see more of Brazil).

Creating a new account for benevolence- receptions for families, not a budgeted item. Believe it will continue to be funded.

These are projects plans in the areas of my ministry with FUMC

**Assistant Pastor - Bill Yeager:** present, read written report.

Thank you for this opportunity and responsibility. Please allow me, once again, to formally apologize for the delay in beginning here at First United Methodist. It is good to be rejoining Dr. Henderson, Bob Jackson and Tim Leslie, from my time at the University Church, as well as others of the congregation from various District and Conference positions in the past. My special thanks to Harold and Jim Nation for their patience and for their confidence in me. I have already received a wonderfully warm welcome from so many of this worshipping community.

My job description is a work in progress! We are each day trying to match my interests and skills with the needs and desires of the staff and the congregation. Emerging from discussions thus far have come two primary areas of ministry. First is the desire to continually improve on our care of those who are unable to regularly attend Sunday Services. This is, of course, everyone's responsibility, but I hope to better organize our efforts utilizing lay and clergy alike, creating a program of regular visitation which includes offering the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The second area is in the cultivation of new members. I will be focusing on first time visitors, leading those who are interested into membership classes, and further guiding them into the full life of the congregation. We have also just begun talking about my role in Christian Education, which is obviously a vital part of this church.

Beyond these specifics, I will be available to assist with all other pastoral duties as Dr. Henderson see the need. Please do not hesitate to call upon me day or night. If it is in the daytime, I have Frank's phone number, and if at night I will pass it on to Carl!

Seriously, I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about my background and experience, my family, my expectations for our service together, or anything else you might imagine that I would know.

**Senior Pastor - Harold Henderson:** present, read written report.

It is a pleasure for me to be able to present this report to the Church Council as I

enter my third year as Senior Pastor. Having been appointed originally as a Supply Pastor for six months, I am now changing gears to embrace the opportunity of serving for a significantly longer period of time as a licensed Local Pastor. That means that I need to pace myself better for the longer haul that lies ahead of us, so that I can give the congregation the sustained and vigorous leadership it needs and deserves over a longer period of time than was originally envisaged.

Although clergy appointments in The United Methodist Church are from year to year, both Bishop Whitaker and Rev. Annette Pendergrass, our District Superintendent, have made it clear to me that they both hope I have no plans to do either, that I am excited by what I am doing

At First Church, and that I have always seen the task here as needing at least a 3-5 year commitment on my part for the turn-around we are experiencing to be sustained into longer term future.

With this in mind, Ruth and I are in process of buying a home in Gainesville so that I can minimize travel time (especially at night), have more time to keep up with the reading I need to stay fresh, and have access to the kind of exercise routine I need to maintain in order to keep fit. Being Senior Pastor of this great church is a very demanding and busy assignment, and these practical measures are part of a responsible approach to filling the role adequately into the foreseeable future.

Part of the pleasure in this position is leading the capable and dedicated staff team we have been able to assemble, notwithstanding the challenge of significant personnel changes (as mentioned in my report in November 2008). This year from Ben Ehrlich to Melanie Yeager as Church Organist and the addition of Rev. Bill Yeager to our pastoral team, half time. Bill has been assigned responsibility for the regular pastoral care of our care partners and the timely follow-up of newcomers. In addition, he will be taking over major responsibility for Christian Education from Frank Ferreri so that Frank can assume responsibility for Young Adult ministries ( an area that has never been part of anyone's job description, not even Nathan's).

I continue to be grateful for the presence of Rev. Carl Romey on our staff team. Carl has been like a sheet anchor for this church through many ups and downs over the past ten years, and continues to play an important caring role in so many ways. His knowledge of the congregation and his sensitive collegial spirit have been invaluable to me as the new boy on the block. Special areas of ministry possibilities for which Carl has accepted responsibility are new ministry opportunities among new retirees, and among new retirees, and among international students.

Members of the Church Council will be interested to know that the slow but steady growth in worship attendance that we experienced in 2007, continued in 2008. The average attendance at our main worship services in 2005 was 239, in 2006 238, in 2007 247 and in 2008 253. Average attendance for January 2009 was 296 as compared with 261 for January 2007. By contrast, average Sunday School attendance dropped from 114 in 2007 to 104 in 2008.

This is not the report I intended to make at this meeting but I realized that the information I have shared here is important for the Church Council to know.

## **Committee Highlights**

Audrey Lewis presented an oral report on the progress of opening the Worker's Chapel at noon for 1-2 hours. The program is targeted to the downtown workforce. She currently has four people volunteering (Randy Stacey volunteered during her report) so she now needs 3 additional volunteers. The day and time are TBD with a suggestion from the Church Council that perhaps starting during the Lenten Season would be appropriate.

Harold Henderson announced that the Master's Plan working towards Phase II. Harold met with the architect with an initial estimate of kick-off for 2010.

## **New Business**

Replacement of Recording Secretaries. To make it easier to recruit a new recording secretary, changing the format for the minutes of the meeting to include only motions passed/not passed and actions otherwise decided was discussed and agreed upon. Copies of the written reports will be attached for a historical record. Lori Uhr and Shirley Frost will remain through the February meeting, meanwhile, efforts will be made to find a replacement.

**Next meeting will be on February 24, 2009.**

*Minutes courtesy of Lori and Shirley. Please contact Dan Greathouse if you have any changes to make. Dan will be chairing the Feb. 24 Council meeting.*