



# **1st United Methodist Church**

*The Heart of Downtown Gainesville* 352-372-8523

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[www.fumcgv.org](http://www.fumcgv.org)

## CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES – March 24, 2009

ATTENDANCE: JoAnna Emerson, James Emerson, Barbara Kirby, Harold Henderson, Tom Gill, Betsy Gill, Mary Kilgour, Randy Stacey, Dan Greathouse, Muffet Emmanuel, Jim Nation, Tim Leslie, Amy Watson, Robert Jackson, Frank Ferreri, Joan Van Winkle, Joe Willcox

Opening prayer by Mary Kilgour, presiding.

Continuing as secretary—Joe Willcox

Minutes of February 24 meeting approved on motion by Robert Jackson, 2nd Jim Emerson.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

1. Preschool Director—Amy Watson—Written report attached
2. Helping Hands Clinic—Randy Stacey—Written report attached
3. Director of Music—Robert Jackson—Written report attached
4. Children, Youth, Christian Ed—Frank Ferreri—Written report attached
5. Assistant Pastor—Carl Romey—Written report attached
6. Senior Pastor—Dr. Harold Henderson—Written report attached

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Committee Highlights

Trustees—Joan Van Winkle—verbal report

Staff Parish—Jim Nation—verbal report

Congregational Care—Tim Leslie—verbal report

Mission & Outreach—Tom & Betsy Gill—Written report attached

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Henderson presented three forms containing updates of policies of the United Methodist Church requiring annual approval by local congregations and which, after discussion, were adopted by acclamation.

They are:

1. Fiscal Responsibility and Management Policies in Local Church—copy attached
2. Child and Youth Protection Policy—copy attached
3. Local United Methodist Church Basic Policy Statement on Sexual and Gender Harassment and Misconduct of a Sexual Nature—copy attached

FINANCE REPORTS—Chair of Finance, Audrey Lewis, was unable to attend—reports of Analysis of Revenues and Expenses and Balance Sheet were submitted and are attached.

Dr. Henderson presented for approval the latest list of 2009 CHURCH COUNCIL VOTING MEMBERS (blue copy dated 03/24/09) reflecting minor changes—copy attached. Motion for approval by Joan Van Winkle, 2nd by Tim Leslie, passed.

Closing Prayer by Robert Jackson

**Next Meeting 7:00 pm Tuesday, April 28, 2009**

Joe C. Willcox, Secretary

## Senior Pastor's Report to Church Council.

March 24, 2009.

This month, I want to reflect on how busy the life of our church is. Busy-ness is not, in itself, a virtue but if it reflects a wide range of ministry opportunities adequately grasped, it is an encouraging sign. It is also encouraging if a significant part of the activity relates to the ministry priorities the Church Council identified and prioritized throughout 2008.

The highest priorities related to strengthening church support for the ministry of the Helping Hands Clinic, and upgrading the range and quality of our communications activities.

### Helping Hands.

It is fair to say that enormous progress has been made in relation to the Helping Hands priority. The number of volunteers from our congregation involved in the whole range of tasks essential to the effectiveness of the Monday night clinic has increased very significantly. Similarly, the quicker-than-expected establishment on a regular weekly basis of the Thursday Women's Clinic can be attributed, at least in part, to the ready response to the call for additional volunteers.

It is fortuitous that these developments have taken place at a time when the economic downturn has increased the number of homeless people, and the need for basic services that private agencies are called upon to provide. We have felt the impact of this increased demand at our front office as well as in the Helping Hands ministry, to the point where our human resources (staff and volunteer) were being overwhelmed.

We discovered that Holy Trinity Episcopal Church was facing the same dilemma, and have been able to set up a cooperative arrangement with our colleagues there to focus our energy on things we are equipped to do and not dissipate our energies and our resources across the entire waterfront of human need. To deal with situations that lie outside the scope of Helping Hands (for those needs people are referred to the clinic), Holy Trinity will see folks by appointment on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and we will do so on Monday mornings and Wednesday afternoons with the agreement that we will refer cases to each other on the appropriate days. Rev. Carl Romey, our most experienced counselor in this area, will be our counselor-on-duty on Monday mornings and Wednesday afternoons. The hours are posted on our front office door together with information about things we are unable to do – such as assist with rent or utilities or provide food.

We believe these arrangements will enable us to focus our efforts on behalf of the homeless population, and to serve them more effectively. We will continue to refer visitors to our office to other agencies that we believe can address their situation more

effectively than we can, and the office will remain open to the general public Monday-Thursday 8:30am-4:00pm. Of course, the phone lines are open 24/7 and the cell phone numbers of the pastoral staff are included in their voicemail messages so that we are contactable 24 hours a day, if need be.

#### Changes in Security Arrangements.

Out of consideration for our office staff and our front desk volunteers, we have tightened our security arrangements. A different member of the pastoral staff has arranged to be in the office at 8:30am each day so that when Charlene opens the office, she never does so on her own. Likewise, during the day, if all staff members need to be away from the office at the same time (which sometimes happens) the front desk volunteer locks the front door and places an appropriate notice outside, so that the office volunteer is never here on her own.

#### Communications.

It is fair to say that, although we have made progress in communicating who we are to the general public, our progress has not been as dramatic as in relation to the Helping Hands ministry. Everyone will have noticed improvements in the Sunday and Special Services Bulletin presentations, the *Messenger*, our weekly advertisement in the *Gainesville Sun*, and the wealth of information available on our website. We have not made as much progress on some of the longer term communications needs, partly because Courtney Dell, the Convener of the Task Force was presented with the opportunity to take a full-time job at the Hahn Museum (where she was working part-time) while still trying to complete her Masters program in Public Relations at UF. How could a graduate student pass up that opportunity? Courtney is now very close to squaring away her Masters thesis and is looking forward to more time to put into the Communications Task Force.

Even so, the urgent need to produce a new photo directory of church members is moving forward – a project we will undertake in-house.

#### Other Priorities.

Some other priorities further down the list have been, or are in process of being, implemented. Most notable of these is the Grief Share program that is at present a regular and on-going feature of the Wednesday night Christian Education program. The classes are small (as they usually are initially) but extremely helpful for those who participate, and meeting a very real and widespread need in the church and in the wider community. I am delighted that Dr. Doug Kirk, a former Senior Pastor, and Ricki, are able to team with Carl Romey to provide quality leadership for this program.

The purpose of this report is to underscore how worthwhile our priority setting agenda last year is really turning out to be. We need always to keep those priorities in mind and be open to the need to establish new priorities as we move forward. There is no lack of exciting ministry opportunities out there. We as a staff confront them almost daily and

sometimes struggle to keep focused on what are the most important in terms of our mission as a church set in the heart of the downtown of a University city that is being re-populated on the basis of forward-looking city planning and development.

### Interesting Ideas.

In the *Messenger* that you will receive later in the week or early next week, I have floated an idea that we celebrate Aldersgate Day, May 24, that happens to be Sunday this year, by combining our two services and our Sunday School into one great celebration of what many regard as the birthday of the Methodist movement, the date in 1738 when John Wesley, after a long and arduous spiritual journey, “felt his heart strangely warmed” as he trusted in Christ alone and gained the quiet assurance of the forgiveness of a gracious God. There are plans in place already for the choir to present a “Festival of Charles Wesley Hymns” for our worship service that day, and it seems like an excellent opportunity to bring our two congregations together for a joyful celebration, perhaps followed by a family meal afterwards.

The other idea emerged from the Lenten breakfast addressed by Rev. Louanne Loch, the Rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, who took the opportunity to pass on some of the research she had been able to do relating to the time First Church hosted the Holy Trinity congregation while their sanctuary was being re-built after the fire in 1991. She had been told by present and past clergy and parishioners about the Sunday they returned “home”. The first part of the service was held in our Sanctuary, the joint congregation processed down First Street, and celebrated the Eucharist together in the Holy Trinity Parish Hall (the Sanctuary was not yet finished). It seems to me that there would be every reason to re-enact that pilgrimage (perhaps each year) for the mutual benefit of our two congregations and as a witness to the Unity of the Church. There would be lots of details to work out, and we would need to find an appropriate date, but Louanne Loch is interested in exploring the idea further. Are we?

### The Best of All.

One of John Wesley’s signature sayings was: “The best of all is...God is with us”. That is certainly true for us at First Church as we receive new members, experience a steady growth in our attendances at worship, in our children and youth programs and in other areas of our life together, and are privileged to serve a broad cross-section of people with all kinds of needs. We do this through weddings, funerals, the joy and excitement of our worship services, and through pastoral care and counseling sometimes at very painful levels.

Grace and peace.

Harold Henderson,  
Senior Pastor

Frank Ferreri -- Report to FUMC Church Council -- 24 March 2009

This is my first report to the Council since changing my job portfolio and title somewhat. Now that Pastor Yeager has taken charge of the adult Wednesday night classes, my new title is Director of Children, Youth, and Young Adults. This is an important development in the life of the church, not because of how it impacts me, but because it means that we are finally making young adults something more than an ad hoc priority.

There are numerous items I'm pleased to report to the council this month. The Lenten series for young adults that I've been leading on Friday evenings has been beneficial. Though it has never had more than 5 people in attendance, it has had a good small group feel to it, and it appears to be helping a young couple, Brad Jones and Jennifer Anderson, who are relatively new to the church, get back into church after being away for a while. I've appreciated getting to know them over the past several weeks.

Our youth group continues to impress me. On Saturday, I was fortunate enough to take part in Sean Eccles' Eagle Scout ceremony. That was an important day in the life of this church as it marked the first Eagle Scout from FUMC since Sean's brother, Kris, attained that rank some years ago. However, in the near future, Alden Sharp and Wesley Evans will be Eagle Scouts as well. Sean is an impressive young man, to say the least. He's active in his school's marching band, a real leader in our youth group, a dedicated lacrosse player, and a long-time volunteer with Studio Percussion. In fact, the night before his Eagle Scout ceremony, he spent about 5 hours here working a Studio Percussion event.

Last Sunday, the youth hosted a "Faces of Homelessness" speakers' panel. I am deeply appreciative of all from the congregation who joined us at that event. I've learned that the best way to teach youth is through unspoken communication, and those who attended Sunday night communicated to our youth the importance of homeless ministry here at First Church without saying word. It reminds me of St. Francis of Assisi's exhortation to "Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary, use words."

This weekend is the youth's single biggest fund raiser for the year: the Spring Arts Festival Cafe. Cynthia Hight, Scott and Trisha Eccles, Norma Courtney, Evelyn Jones, Barbara Vineyard, and the entire youth council have once again put a great deal of time, effort, and planning into this year's event. And, as you will see this weekend, they have and will put an extraordinary amount of sweat equity into the project as well. We have an exciting menu this year, and I hope to see a strong FUMC turnout on both days.

Coming up at the end of April, the youth will be participating in World Vision's "30-Hour Famine," a program that is designed to raise funds and awareness about poverty, hunger, and preventable diseases the world over (including here in the United States). We will be glad to take any suggestions anyone has about possible fund raiser ideas or service projects that we can do in conjunction with the Famine.

In terms of children's ministries, Joanie Thompson has been hard at work in putting together this year's "Eggs"-travaganza egg hunt, which will be held at 10 am on April 4. We hope to see a great many families with children that morning. Also, we will have a traditional, week-long vacation bible school this summer, likely in mid-July. In the next week or two, a call for volunteers will go out. My prayer is that this format of VBS will provide a good shot in the arm of our children's program.

In the bridge between our children's and youth programs here, we will begin another confirmation

Frank Ferreri -- Report to FUMC Church Council -- 24 March 2009

course on April 19th. That course is open to any child who is currently in the 5th grade or above and who has not been confirmed.

As many of you are aware, we will be losing David and Stephanie Snead in June as David finishes his Ph.D. in chemistry and begins law studies elsewhere. The Sneads have been a key part of the church and our young adult group during their time here and we will miss them greatly. I will miss their friendship. And it also means that David will be stepping down as chair of our stewardship committee, which had a more successful pledge campaign for 2009 than the one I led for 2008 despite a much bleaker economic picture. When David's time is finished, another one of our young adults named Heather Ferreri will assume the duties of Stewardship Chair.

The Communications Task Force has begun to work on a new photo directory for the church. We are in need of a new one and Charlene Haufler has recently informed me that we are able to put one together easily and with very little cost through our computer program in the church office. Thus, the congregation can expect a new photo directory in the very near future.

On a personal note, I'd like to express my appreciation to Rev. Yeager for serving as a mentor to me. He has given me much valuable advice on preaching and other areas and I am grateful for the experience and knowledge he brings to our ministerial team here. I also appreciate the conversations I've had with his son Michael, mostly about college basketball, through Facebook.

Respectfully submitted.

First United Methodist Preschool (FUMPers) Report  
-presented to the Church Council on March 24, 2009

The Spring Arts Festival is upon us – scheduled for this coming weekend. This event has historically been an opportunity for exposure and outreach for First United Methodist Church to the greater Gainesville community.

FUMPers will be hosting our annual baked goods booth during the festival. The proceeds from our booth sales this year will go toward classroom upgrades.

For the last two years we had such tremendous support from the church family during this event – *I am asking for and have great hope for yet another repeat performance!*

*Please consider one or both of the following ways in which you may lend your support during the festival:*

- *Bake a batch of cookies for us to sell*
- *Come and make purchases at the booth during the festival*

Registration for the 2009-10 school year is underway at FUMPers. Please consider ways *you* can help get the word out about our preschool program here at FUMC.

*I encourage you to tell people you know who may be interested in a preschool:*

- *Next door neighbors with young children*
- *Friends or relatives*
- *Co-workers with young children*

Thank you for your support of this ministry of First Church,

Amy C. Watson

Director, First United Methodist Preschool (FUMPers)

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### **LADIES NIGHT INN**

On Thursday evenings from 3 to 7 pm homeless and marginally housed women are provided with the opportunity to take a shower, change clothes, obtain personal hygiene items then enjoy playing cards or checkers, working with crafts, watching a movie or just talking with friends. A healthy dinner, brought in by various women from the church, is served followed by an array of services including, acupuncture, mental health counseling, hypnotherapy/relaxation, hair styling and screening and referral for special health exams ie; pelvic exams and mammograms. Women come to the program “as they are” and are accepted and appreciated for “who they are”. During the first 3 months of weekly meetings we’ve had 35 different women taking part in over 75 services. A clean private shower seems to be the most popular service. The program is providing structure and routine where there often is none while offering a safe, accepting space to those who live within very complex and, at times, threatening social settings. A social network or “community” is developing which is beginning to meet their needs for connection and offer a sense of belonging. Feelings of self-worth and self-esteem are beginning to reemerge as they take part in the program.