



# 1st United Methodist Church

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## CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

September 22, 2009

ATTENDING: Cleo Abbott, Elizabeth Shaw, Lawrence Shaw, Carl Romey, Muffett Emanuel, Jim Nation, Dr. Harold Henderson, Leon Couch, Kay Greathouse, Dan Greathouse, Mary Kilgour, Barbara Kirby, Audrey Lewis, Joe Willcox

Mary Kilgour presiding – Opening prayer by Carl Romey

Minutes of August 25, 2009 meeting approved as circulated

### STAFF REPORTS

1. *Preschool Director – Amy Watson* – Written report attached
2. *Helping Hands Clinic – Randy Stacey* – Mary Kilgour read an e-mail from Randy reporting that the Thursday women's clinic now includes nursing, acupuncture and psychiatry services.
3. *Director of Music – Robert Jackson* – Written report attached
4. *Children, Youth and Young Adults – Frank Ferreri* – Written report attached
5. *Assistant Pastor – Carl Romey* – Written report attached
6. *Assistant Pastor – Bill Yeager* – Written report attached
7. *Senior Pastor – Dr. Harold Henderson* – Written report attached

### OLD BUSINESS – Committee Highlights

1. **Finance – Audrey Lewis** – Comments concerning current finances
2. *Methodist Men – Larry Shaw* – Comments concerning coming programs
3. *Staff Parish Relations – Jim Nation* reported on deliberations of the committee and its recommendation that Dr. Henderson's salary for 2010 continue the same as in 2009. Motion by Jim that the Council approve the recommendation, 2nd by Audrey Lewis. Motion passed.
4. *Endowment Committee – Jim Nation* exhibited a plaque with identities of church members naming FUMC in their will.

### NEW BUSINESS

Reporting for the Committee on Nominations and Leadership, Dr. Henderson presented the first draft (Edit 09/22/09) of the 2010 PROPOSED CHURCH COUNCIL VOTING MEMBERS. On motion by Barbara Kirby, 2nd by Jim Nation, the first draft of the 2010 proposal was approved.

Closing prayer by Kay Greathouse.

**Next Meeting October 27, 2009.**

Note: Minutes and a full set of written reports will be available in the church office for approximately 30 days. They are also available on the church website, courtesy of Web Master Leon Couch.

*Joe Willcox, Secretary*

## REPORTS

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### First United Methodist Preschool Report

-presented to the Church Council on September 22, 2009

FUMPers is sponsoring a Book Fair beginning this coming Sunday Sept 27<sup>th</sup> to run for 1 week. The fair will be located in the Media Center. It will be open to the church family on Sun Sept 27 before/after services and on Wednesday night Sept 30<sup>th</sup> before/after Bible study. Please consider coming by to get a head start on Christmas shopping. We will have books for sell for all ages.

Our annual Open House will be the first day of October at 6 pm to show off the preschool to the parents. We have a potluck dinner together as we listen to the teachers tell of their goals for the school year. Join us if you can!

The FUMPers section of the FUMC website had a facelift over the summer. Many thanks to Leon Couch & Jill Wagstaff who helped so much in completing this project. We made improvements and added more information to the preschool section. The website has already attracted new families to our church through the preschool ministry.

- submitted by Amy C. Watson

Director, First United Methodist Preschool

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### First United Methodist Church Council Report 9-22-2009 Director of Music

I am submitting this report in absentia. I am currently in Jacksonville rehearsing with the community handbell group, First Coast Ringers.

In October, members of the chancel choir will participate in the Twenty second annual Festival of Choirs. The event begins with a rehearsal on Thursday, October 1, a second rehearsal on Saturday morning, October 3 and the final rehearsal and performance on Sunday, October 4. The clinician for this year's event will be Gerre Hancock, internationally known organ and choral master. In addition to his work with the choirs, Mr. Hancock will also present an organ recital on Friday evening, October 2. All rehearsals, recital and closing festival worship will be held at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Gainesville.

The following weekend I, along with Jenny Eckenrode and Evelyn Jones, will be attending the Distinctly Bronze event in New Bern, NC. This year's event will be marked with great sadness as we mourn the loss of our esteemed conductor, David Davidson. David lost his battle to liver cancer in early September. Fortunately, two other fine conductors have agreed to step forward and lead the event. Your prayers are requested for the Davidson family.

I am happy to report that the children's music program, now affectionately called the First Church KIDZ Music Club is experiencing some growth. We now have six children age 4- first grade and five children in the older children's group. Please continue to pray for this ministry and spread the word to all children.

The handbell choir has a full compliment this fall with the addition of Cortney Powers, Sean Echols, and Ian Mitchell from the youth group, and our newest member, Rachel Jordan, a student at UF. The group will be hosting the second annual Gainesville handbell festival in January 2010. The clinician will be Michael Helman, noted handbell composer and organist/choir master at Cape Coral Presbyterian Church. In March the choir will be participating in the Florida State Festival sponsored by Area IV of the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers. The event will be held at Lake Magdalene UMC in Tampa. In addition to the choir's participation, I will be serving at the clinician for the Level 1-2 groups.

As always, I extend an invitation to all church members to join the musical program here at First Church. There is always room for more.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Jackson

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### Frank Ferreri -- Report to FUMC Church Council -- 22 Sep 2009

As this report is being read, I am directly overhead in my office leading our Tuesday night study, "Serious Answers to Hard Questions." This week is meeting number 3. Thus far, the numbers have been low (with only about 3 participants plus myself), but the quality of discussion and the relationships being formed gives me reason to believe that it is well worth it. I would also add that the subject matter is wonderfully presented and would encourage a Sunday school class to think about using it when we're done. It's put together by the Wesley Ministry Network, which is the same group that put together the religion and science materials for the Wednesday night class. The idea with these programs is to bring good, thoughtful Wesleyan theology out of the seminary and into the local church. I think they've done a great job at that.

It terms of another new development, Robin Brandon's Sunday school class is starting to roll along. It too has had small numbers thus far, but some of the folks who have been coming haven't come to Sunday school in quite some time. So that is moving in a positive direction, and I want to reiterate how blessed we are to have Robin's leadership with that group.

The only other item I would like to mention in this report is our stewardship campaign that culminated on September 13. Of course, everyone is interested in the numbers, but before we get to those, I have to say that the work we put into stewardship this year underscores the good that can happen when the church family pulls together and works as a unified body. There are many, many people to thank for this year's program, which culminated in a high-energy day in worship on Consecration Sunday along with the celebration luncheon that followed. What I am most proud of is that it was a good day for FUMC and it felt great to be here.

Nevertheless, the numbers give us much to be proud of as well. As I told the stewardship committee at our meeting on Sunday, while the economy has been sluggish the past few years, we've seen a strong increase in giving here. This year is no different; whatever else is happening in the economy, we are seeing a pattern of growth in the congregation's pledging at FUMC.

Here are the key stats: Thus far, we've recorded 150 pledges for a total of \$499,324. Of those 150, 29 are first-time pledges, 60 are increased pledges, 48 have held steady, and only 13 have had to decrease. As of yet, there are 66 pledges that have not been renewed from last year; a number of those will not be renewed due to death or relocation. However, we can expect that the vast majority of those 66 will pledge and it's highly possible that we will see close to 200 pledges this year.

To me, the fact that 89 units either started or increased their pledges says that we are indeed in a growth mode, that the congregation is feeling it, and that there is enough concern and love for the church that many folks felt called to make that "step up" this year.

On that point, I came across an interesting statistic this week. I randomly discovered that in 1956, this church had an average Sunday school attendance of 581. Now, certainly times have changed, but that kind of number doesn't happen without a strong, church-wide commitment to the future of the church. What our current stewardship numbers tell us is that despite the poor economy, there is a strong, church-wide commitment to the future of the church. And if that's the case, we can go however far God's grace takes us.

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### Report to Church Council – September, 2009.

#### **That they all may be one (John 17:11)**

Last month I introduced the five **missional vital signs** adopted by the Florida Annual Conference as constituting the **Methodist Way**. These are the categories by which we are to measure our progress as a congregation, and by which we will be evaluated at the annual Charge Conference at 6:00pm on Wednesday, October 28. The vital signs are:

1. Passionate Worship
2. Salty Service
3. Extravagant Generosity
4. Intentional Discipleship
5. Radical Hospitality

Whilst I suggested that I was less than excited about some of the terminology, I think the concepts are all important to growing a healthy church. Without trying to be smug, I suggested that you can find elements of all of these in the steps we have taken to encourage and maintain the growth we are experiencing in the life of our congregation.

There is, however, a glaring omission from this list and that is in relation to ecumenical commitment and initiatives. In some ways, this is surprising to me because our bishop, Timothy Whitaker, is responsible for ecumenical relationships on behalf of the Council of Bishops and is very committed and active in this role. I'm not interested in crafting a catchy title but I am committed to ensuring that we keep the need for ecumenical relationships and initiatives in sharp focus in our ministry as a congregation, if necessary as a sixth vital sign.

This is not a new emphasis for us, as is evidenced by our long and positive relationship with Holy Trinity Episcopal Church. We will be re-affirming that relationship on Sunday, January 24, 2010 when our two congregations join in a shared worship experience, to remember the disastrous fire that destroyed Holy Trinity on January 21, 1991 that led to First Church and Holy Trinity sharing our worship space until May, 1994. The underlying purpose of this shared worship experience in 2010 will be to bear contemporary witness to our oneness in Christ.

Another aspect of ecumenism that we should all celebrate is the decision on August 20 by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) to enter into a full-communion agreement with The United Methodist Church. The decision was made by the recent biennial assembly of the ELCA in Minneapolis, the delegate vote being 958-51. The United Methodist Church had already approved the full-communion agreement by an overwhelming majority at our General Conference in 2008. It is the first time our church has entered into such an agreement with another confessional body but the ELCA has five other full-communion partners.

The agreement means that our two churches recognize the validity of each other's ministers, baptisms and communion services and pledge to work closely together. This could mean, for example, the joining together of a small congregation from each church in an isolated area to be served by a minister from either denomination. Or the two congregations could remain separate and be served by the one minister from either denomination.

I hope we can find ways at a local level to give visibility to this new shared relationship. It applies only to the Churches that belong to the ELCA, which is most of the Lutheran Churches in Gainesville.

A wider aspect of ecumenism is emerging in Gainesville, an inter-faith group comprising Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu (and hopefully other) members who plan to meet on a regular basis for dialog, exchange of ideas and understanding and joint action, aimed at fostering civility and mutual respect. This initiative is prompted in part, though the initiative is of longer duration than that, by the recent incident involving the Dove World Outreach Center posting signs and having children wear T-shirts claiming that Islam is Satanic. I attended an inaugural meal on Sunday evening, September 13, to explore the possibility of some kind of ongoing inter-faith program. A steering committee was set up for this purpose (Dan Johnson is the United Methodist representative on it) and I intend to maintain my involvement as developments unfold. Hopefully, there will be ways for First Church to be a constructive part of whatever emerges. I will keep the congregation informed.

Whether as part of the Christian family, or as part of the wider human family, the Wesleyan tradition commits us to respect those with whom we differ, to learn from them, to be civil, and not to play God by consigning this one or that to bane or blessing.

Harold Henderson, Senior Pastor.

September 22, 2009.