

November 2016 Church Council Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2016

Attending: Jan Bajuniemi, Jim Schleppe, Jason Freund, Barb Leary, Pastor Mariah Furness Tollgaard, Superintendent Dan Johnson, Linda Krueger, Bill Kimes, Victoria Brenner

Opening Prayer and Check-in

Church council opened with a prayer from Pastor Mariah at 7:38 pm, followed by introductions of the council members to Superintendent Dan Johnson.

Meeting with District Superintendent Dan Johnson

- Next iteration – mission/vision/values of Minnesota conference
 - Discussed how churches in conference reflect the missional alignment plan
 - Discussed how to measure the outcomes related to the conference plan – three key metrics have been identified: 1) increasing worship attendance, 2) multiplying faith professions, and 3) expanding stories of transformation – replaces 7 metrics that had been working on measuring last year – moved to two numerical and one anecdotal metric, because faith resists being quantized
 - Goal is not a “homework assignment” – goal is to understand the vitality of the church, and how it is changing, including how our faith is being passed to others, and how we connect to different generations/audiences – stories of transformation become catalysts for communication, both between churches and with the broader community
 - Church responses for anecdotal responses range from testimonies, as at the Recovery Church in Saint Paul, to Good Samaritan in Edina, which is quite intellectual but chose to live into their namesake by putting up a bulletin board for people to post their thoughts
 - Hamline Church is working on a video series to capture how the church is a series – UMCOMM has also done a video on our bread oven – other possibilities include a relatively recent video from the Dining Hall
 - The provided tool is not intended to replace the HCI plan – it instead is a reminder of why we’re going through the HCI transformation
 - Data on metrics will eventually be automatically populated by survey – replaces vitality indices which lacked functionality for long-term analysis
- Clergy evaluations to be introduced
 - A form has been provided based on the MAP, which helps to tie clergy evaluation to the conference (and church) strategy
 - Plan is to tie goals for the church going forward to goals for the pastor, and back to the conference vision
 - In case of Hamline Church, this will be tied to our HCI plan (and largely copied directly from that into these categories)
 - Key content is who is responsible with the pastor for documenting various metrics
 - Goal is for evaluation to be completed by next summer, since this is only being introduced now – move towards all churches sharing common language for evaluation
- Touch base on Mariah’s maternity leave

- Rev. Suzanne Makes will be acting as the interim pastor while Pastor Mariah is on maternity leave – she has an entrepreneurial bent, and is also musical
- Her focus will be on Sunday morning, with pastoral care, and a little bit beyond that
- Church Council will need to focus on healthy communication and maintaining momentum while Pastor Mariah is on maternity leave, particularly in terms of conflict resolution, if necessary
- Questions/concerns/open discussion
 - The Altar for All resolution was discussed with Superintendent Johnson, and how the conference is approaching this issue – Bishop Ough has been involved in setting up a General Commission on Human Sexuality to study this issue – it’s been noted that the Book of Discipline regards Annual Conference as the basic unit of United Methodism, with the local church being the unit which creates discipleship – however, there is a tension between an attempt to have general unity across General Conference, while still preserving appropriate local autonomy
 - There is no mechanism for bring churches up on charges – clergy have a more distinct tie to potential risk – certain conferences have outlined risks up front, but Minnesota Conference has been reticent on this – at this point, Minnesota Conference is practically adopting a “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy – the conference is trying to manage this – at this point it’s best if the Superintendent is informed, so he can appropriately manage the complaint and/or charges
 - The option for alternative voting was discussed. The Conference feels fairly strongly about people needing to be “present” for votes – however, this definition could be broadened to “virtual presence”, however there are significant concerns about pre-balloting or absentee balloting for situations where amendments could occur

Consent Agenda

October minutes, Investing in Congregations grant application, Bread Oven Patio grant application

Moved by Victoria B., seconded by Linda K.

Discussion Agenda

A – Safe Sanctuaries Policy and Practice

- This policy is in the works, and is in the process of being implemented – using online training/background screening – previously used with employees, now expanding to Sunday School teachers/youth workers – no official policy as of yet, this is now in process

B – Pastor’s Salary Approval

- After discussion, the church council agreed to a 4% raise in base pay for Pastor Mariah for 2017, there was a decrease in the cost of pension contribution so the net increase in the overall package is about 1.7%– moved by Barb L, seconded by Victoria B.

C – Finance Update

- Jason indicated that there was no meeting this month, but financials seem to be on track
- Stewardship drive is in process, please bring commitment cards

- Church budget is still on track for the remainder of the year – 2017 budget will be brought forward in January
- Increased water bill is being attributed to increased attendance and building use

D – Town Hall date change to Sunday December 4 at 11:30 – to include Church Conference, Altar for All vote, and Healthy Church Initiative update

- Please make an effort to attend for this discussion

Closing Prayer and Checkout

- The meeting adjourned at 9:18 pm.