

St. Mark's United Methodist Church
Guiding Council Meeting Minutes
December 6 ,2021—6:30 pm—Zoom Teleconference

Members Present:

Administration: Anne Boyle, Jimma Attaway, Betty Schiele

SPRC: Stephanie Brewer, David Harmon, Sarah Wright

Trustees: Justin Coffey, Phil Poag, Laura Godwin

Finance: Kendall Humphries, Richard Worcester, Chris Franklin

Lay Leadership: Tim Stuller, Mark James, Jon Ryan

Secretary: Sarah Vaughan

Lead Pastor: Justin White

St. Mark's Staff Present: Hannah Hopper, Kelly Chin

New GC Members for 2022: Rob Heare (Trustees), Kitty Ambers (Finance)

CALL TO ORDER

Anne called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and conducted roll call.

DEVOTION AND OPENING PRAYER- Jimma Attaway

Jimma encouraged us to “not be a Martha”. She shared Luke 10:40 where Lazarus’ sister, Martha, asked Jesus why he didn’t tell her sister Mary to help her. Jesus instructed Martha to slow down and be in the moment. It is an important lesson to us this holiday season to pay attention to the important things and the rest of the stuff will take care of itself. Enjoy the holidays and don’t forget to pause, reflect, enjoy and be in the moment.

PRAISES (6:36 p.m.)

- Kendall shared that his daughter participated in her first Children’s Moment on Sunday and could not stop talking about it.
- Mark praised St Mark’s for being a blessing to his family for decades.
- Pastor Justin shared that the Children’s Moment was about being a light for the world and that we all had that light in us and a little girl asked if that meant she could go outside at night now.
- Phil thanked everyone for the last 3 years he has spent on GC and thanked those rotating off for their service.

- Anne thanked all those rotating off GC: Jimma, Stephanie, Tim, Phil, Richard and Sarah V. as secretary. She also welcomed all those starting their GC service: Sarah V. (VC Chair), Kitty (Finance), Rob (Trustees), Lynne Kelly (Lay Leadership), and Julie Marshall (SPR).
- Tim said the highlight of his 3 years has been working with everyone on the panel. He has really enjoyed the opportunity to get to know folks and enjoy the skills they bring with them.

MINUTES (6:46 p.m.)

Anne amended the minutes to show the Path Forward task force was approved by GC in February 2021 and the first meeting was May 2021.

Jimma moved to approve the amended minutes of the November 15,2021 meeting. Mark 2nd the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

FINANCE (6:48 p.m.) REPORTS IN GOOGLE DOCS

Kendall informed:

- Revenue continued to be strong.
- Collected 99.95% of budgeted income for November.
- Expenses were slightly higher resulting in a deficit of \$3,262.21 for the month, raising the deficit for the year to \$25,726.58.
- Hannah shared that 2 donations of \$5,000 apiece came in over the weekend and will be reflected in the December giving- hoping to break even by the end of the month.
- December is a time of year when a lot of visitors come to church and we may be missing out on giving by not circulating the offering plate.
 - Richard said it is not a question - we ARE missing out on revenue, especially at the Christmas Eve services. That offering is a big part of Service to Others budget and visitors are not going to drop donations in a brown box at the entry to the sanctuary. We are probably missing out on close to \$10,000 of donations.
 - Pastor Justin said there are envelopes that will be in every bulletin on Christmas Eve and he will talk to Selina about passing the plate. He is pretty sure there is not a prohibition against it.
 - Anne shared that if the people who come to service are comfortable being around singing, they would probably be ok with touching a plate since she is pretty sure it has been shown that passing the virus through touching is not really a route of transmission.

- o Jimma clarified that the donations in the envelopes on Christmas Eve make up Service to Others entire budget.
- o Stephanie shared that ushers may not be comfortable touching the offering plate and the money. She also highlighted the difficulty in recruiting volunteers to usher.
- Budget approval- the budget was proposed in October. Finance is not proposing any changes to the budget that was preliminarily approved by GC.
 - o Kendall shared the new projection and the biggest thing is confidence in the Capital Campaign. He explained it is not uncommon to start the year with a shortfall, but the final outcome depends on the CC.
 - Hannah's 2022 projected revenue is \$618,968.00
 - 2022 Budget is \$684,372.00
 - Projected shortfall is \$65,404.00
 - Cap Campaign Mortgage Contribution \$40,000
 - Shortfall w/Cap Campaign \$25,404.00
 - o Richard agreed it is a little uncomfortable to approve a budget with a \$25,000 deficit and \$40,000 CC, but the church does usually start in a deficit.
 - o Pastor Justin - we are hoping for a successful Cap Campaign. If the results are disappointing, we will have to come back and revise the budget.
 - o Tim asked what the original budget was for 2021?
 - \$656,950
 - o Anne asked if the increased budget for 2022 was for the staff raises?
 - Kendall said yes, the 3% raises and the building and grounds budget accounted for most of the increase.
 - o Hannah explained when they started the last Stewardship Campaign, we had a \$60,000 deficit, so we are in a better place now.
 - o Jon said asking for Cap Campaign donations and asking the congregation to increase their Stewardship pledge at the same time is rough, and that it is hard to approve a budget with a \$25,000 deficit.
 - o Pastor Justin confirmed that the Cap Campaign will make it clear that the CC donation is in addition to regular giving.
 - o Laura wanted to clarify - we are not having a formal Stewardship Campaign or a formal pledge Sunday? But we are having a formal Cap Campaign pledge Sunday?
 - Pastor Justin said the communications with the congregation will emphasize "How is this different than my regular giving?" so they will understand that it is in addition to their regular pledge.

- o Hannah thinks it will be easy to make up the \$25,000. She explained she is very careful with her numbers/projections, and we have gotten \$25,000 just in surprise donations before when people knew there was a shortfall.
- o Betty pointed out that worship attendance is increasing, we have new people attending and some old members returning. Based on the numbers just since September, we should be getting additional funding from the increase in attendance.
 - Richard added especially if we start passing the offering plate.

The Finance Committee proposed the 2022 Budget of \$684,372. 15 voted in favor of the budget with 1 dissenting vote. The proposed budget was approved.

TRUSTEES (7:08 p.m.)- REPORT IN GOOGLE DOCS

Justin informed:

- 2 12” returns are needed for the Fellowship Hall unit and repairs are being quoted.
- The heat regulator for rooms 208-211 is not working properly so James River has ordered a new one.
 - o Hannah said they will be fixing it Wednesday and Thursday and that it is actually for the dining room. Parts are not covered under warranty.
 - Laura clarified that the regulator is separate from the units, so when the new units were replaced, the regulator was not.
- Fire protection completed the hydrostatic test on the kitchen stove hood.
- ServPro came 11/16/21 and cleaned the mold from the chairs.
 - o Hannah said they did all the chairs in the gym and they look good.
- Currently in the process of getting Certificate of Insurance documentation from vendors/contractors and updating Trustee Manual.
- Matt West replaced the bus battery.
- 1st priority for 2022 is to coordinate and complete an inventory of church assets.
- Herb Coen is stepping down as head of the security team and John Sternik is assuming the role.
- Herb will still be around for training and helping out.
- Security consists of at least 2 members per service, doing perimeter check, unlocking doors for service and relocking them when the service begins to neutralize any outside threats. They are also CPR/AED certified to assist in any health emergencies. They have radios, earpieces, badges and there are no budgetary needs.
- They currently have 10 people on the security team, but need about 15.
- It has been very rewarding for Phil and he loves doing it.
- Proposes that GC reaffirms their support of the Security Team.

- o Kendall asked what Phil means by reaffirm? Phil explained that it just means that we support it and we want it. It has not really been discussed since it started in 2017.

Phil, on behalf of the Trustees, moves to have Guiding Council reaffirm their commitment to the security team. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Charge Conference re: Boy Scouts of America settlement

- Pastor Justin explained the BSA is in the middle of a lawsuit involving misconduct with minors. The Methodist Church is one of the largest supporters of BSA. BSA is working on a settlement, but it is not to the Methodist Church's liking because it does not extend liability protection to the churches.
- Laura, Justin C. and Anne prepared documents on St. Mark's NO vote, as suggested by Dr Lee and the General Conference.
- We are a chartering organization for a local cub scout group and need to postpone any discussion about rechartering until after the settlement. We are still allowing them the option of using the building as long as they have signed the facility use agreement.
 - o Hannah said 10/22/21 was the last time she spoke to anyone from Heart of Virginia.
- Tim asked if there was any discussion about the difference between BSA and Heart of VA since they appear to be 2 separate entities now.
 - o Justin C. said the exhibit itself only mentioned BSA.
 - o Anne's understanding is the national organization is trying to keep the local organizations separate so they are not liable.

VISION COUNCIL (7:27 p.m.)

Betty informed:

- There is no report submitted from VC because they have not met for the month.
- GROW
 - o Children Ministry Team
 - They continue to see numbers increase in Sunday School and are trying to open a 2nd class to split into more age appropriate groupings.
 - This past Sunday they tested out the family service and it sounds like it was a success having the children in worship with their parents.
 - The Mission Room is still active at 10 a.m. and there is always room for adults to help.
 - The Christmas Eve Nativity pageant is at 5 p.m.
 - o Student Ministry Team
 - Annual Christmas party will be on 12/12/21.

- Putting together care packages for teachers at Evergreen Elementary School.
- Youth Group will take a break after 12/12 and resume in January.
- o Adult Ministry Team
 - No update, but they have been very active.
- o Worship Ministry Team
 - Average number of people attending services has been steadily increasing
 - The number at each service changes every week, but the total number stays pretty consistent, and the online presence is pretty strong.
 - There are now greeters at the online service.
 - 4 Christmas Eve services will be held at 3, 5, 9 and 11 p.m.
 - Nancy Spencer is the new worship chair.
 - The WMT requests help building awareness and expanding engagement on Facebook and YouTube.
 - Kitty shared that there are spikes in attendance numbers at Relevant when the songs being played are shared online before the service.
- LOVE
 - o Congregational Care remains very active with calls, visits, and mailings.
 - Jimma is running the Care Cab and they have taken Arlene Dunkam to several treatments.
 - Bobby McDaniel is taking over from Prim Coffey.
 - o Service to Others
 - Packaged over 10,000 meals in under 2 hours.
 - 160 turkey bags were collected, which exceeded the goal of 125 bags.
 - Christmas Mother gifts were delivered for 17 children and 3 older adults, with a few extra toys collected.

Hannah and Kelly left the meeting after Anne thanked them for all they do.

SPR (7:37 p.m.)- REPORTS IN GOOGLE DOCS

Sarah informed:

- Staff appreciation lunch will be held 12/22 and they will receive their Christmas gift at the luncheon.
- Communication with the congregation about the “Staff Christmas Gift” has already begun.

Pastor Appointment Survey

- 17 responses were received which is the best SPR has had in the last few years.

- A motion was made to accept the S/PPRC & Pastor JOINT Annual Recommendation.
 - Mark questioned the line “focus on re-engaging those who have strayed.” He thought a decision was made in NLI meetings to not focus on pursuing those who have left St Marks. He also mentioned that over the last 3 to 4 years, Pastor Bob Jennings reached out to members who have left with very little success.
 - Sarah W. explained that it just came from comments in the surveys and was not received as an initiative, just meant to engage people.
 - David said Tim has brought it up on more than 1 occasion of having the ability to meet Justin and, during the Meet the Pastor initiative, he does not believe many who left the church took advantage of the opportunity to meet with Justin.
 - Anne pointed out that NLI has a section called “Moving Ahead.”
 - Sarah said that, if there is a recommendation to take the line out, it is fine. It was just a compilation of responses from the survey.
 - Mark asked Pastor Justin if he felt the need to engage with those who have strayed.
 - Justin responded that he does not feel it needs to be an initiative. He has spoken with some who have returned to St Mark’s for the 1st time in 3-4 years, but it is a better return on investment to focus on gaining new members and growing the ministry.
 - Tim asked if it was a theme that resonated throughout the survey replies.
 - Sarah said there were 2 people who mentioned it out of 17 surveys.
 - Richard sees no harm in keeping the language. It says “could”, it is not an instruction.
 - Stephanie agreed that according to NLI we were not going to spend time chasing lost members.
 - Kendall mentioned the verbiage of “strayed during the pandemic” could mean those who were/are not comfortable attending in person.

Mark moved to amend the order to strike the sentence “We would benefit from a minister that can focus on re-engaging those who have strayed from St. Mark’s due to the pandemic or for other

A motion was made by SPR to accept the proposal to have Justin return as Pastor, with the amended wording. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion, with Justin White abstaining.

CLOSING PRAYER AND ADJOURNMENT

Mark led us in a closing prayer and Anne adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m.

These minutes were submitted to Guiding Council members over email for review and approval. No corrections or additions were proposed. The minutes were formally approved on 12/16/2021.