

Ministry Council Meeting Minutes
April 27, 2020 at 6:30pm via Zoom conference call

Attending: Judy Belter (chairperson), Rev. Jason Valendy, Rev. Estee Valendy, Melanie Grice (recording secretary), Lou Tiner, Erik Skaarer, Amanda Stansberger, David Gerig, Polly Soulsby, Michael DeLaune, Keith Bierley, Toni Bliss, Jules Plewes, Ellie Skaarer

Judy called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

Devotion:

Pastor Estee shared a devotion on Philippians, a letter Paul wrote while in jail. It is often referred to as the Letter of Joy. Paul writes about the reasons for his joy, including his gratitude for his friends in Philippi. Estee encouraged us to follow the example of Paul and think about what brings us joy. She shared a video from KUMC's children's ministry and read from the book of Philippians.

Minutes:

Judy asked for any discussion over the minutes from the last meeting. No discussion. Dave moved to accept the minutes as written, Michael seconded, passed.

Vision Statement:

Pastor Jason reviewed the previously proposed vision statements: *Realizing Grace* and *Training Ground for Discipleship*. He shared that he is used to a discerning process, which has been interrupted in this case due to COVID-19. With so much uncertainty, he spent some time on walks today noticing all the signs of spring. Plants that seemed to be dead were just in a season, waiting for spring. KUMC is in a figurative season of winter/pause and it is hard for him to know which way to go in a waiting season. His concern is that a vision statement made in this time will not make sense later.

Jason proposed a pruning rather than recreating right now: shorten the current vision statement to *Know, Love, Serve* to have a consistent message in this season of turmoil. This would be an incremental step before embracing a new, concise vision statement in the future.

Toni was part of the group that chose the last statement. She shared that there was lots of input in creating the statement. She believes the three words are important to hold onto, especially in a season of change.

Jules commented that if the vision statement is shortened and then changed soon, it might be confusing for the congregation.

Polly said a shortened form of what we all know well at this time will provide an anchor and sense of security.

Jason said the general conference now scheduled for 2021 may be a catalyst for individual churches to change their vision statements.

Melanie said that in KUMC communications there are already instances where the 3-word version of *Know, Love, Serve* is used as shorthand. She suggested perhaps just being more intentional about that.

Dave agrees with waiting for a big change until after the general conference, when there may be a better sense of direction.

Michael asked if the idea of developing a vision statement is intended to guide priorities.

Lou read a definition of vision statements, which included guiding priorities. He supports the shortened *Know, Love, Serve* for now.

Judy recapped the January meeting in which input from all the committees seemed to lead to a need to develop a new vision statement at some point. She feels comfortable staying with the shortened version of the statement for now.

A consensus was reached to keep the current vision statement and be more intentional about shortening it into the *Know, Love, Serve* format.

Estee will talk to Carol about ways to implement the shortened version moving forward. There will be no formal announcement, just a soft launch.

Financial Update:

Amanda said the Finance Committee met last week and reviewed first quarter (Q1) financials. Pledged and non-pledged income was 23.5% of the budgeted amount for the year, which is a higher percentage than the same time in 2019. This number is expected to be less than 25% due to seasonality and higher giving traditionally at the end of each year. Income took a dip when the church closed, but has since come back up. The forecast for Q2 expenses was also reviewed by the committee.

Jason gave an update on the Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) application. KUMC was not included in the first round of funding. We are waiting to hear about the second round, and the result will impact financial decisions going forward. The bank has everything they need to process the loan with the Small Business Administration.

Erik commented that he was pleasantly surprised by the steady level of giving. He does not feel a great sense of urgency to make spending cuts at this time.

Youth Update:

Jules explained that the focus right now is on creating a leadership team to increase the visibility of the youth program and help it grow.

Ellie wants to help building relationships, both between the different grades and with other groups, like children's ministry and adult ministry.

Jason mentioned a new program being developed, pen pal relationships between college students and kindergartners.

Lou asked what the structure of the youth leadership team would look like.

Jules said they are working on outlining the make-up of the group: how many representatives per grade. The reps will be selected by application. She also emphasized that increased involvement would be a major theme, both more youth involved and more inter-generational involvement in youth.

Judy asked how Ministry Council could be of assistance.

Ellie said once the team is created, they want to serve. The council can help by getting the word out that they are available and not just staying in their corner in the DAC.

Keith suggested that they attend Zoom Sunday School classes as guests to introduce themselves and share youth information.

SPR Update:

Keith said he has received a lot of feedback that staff members miss being in contact with the congregation. He sees the staff as divided into three groups: pastors and worship staff (visible to congregation), program staff (visible to certain groups) and support staff (engaged in work activities, but not visible generally to the congregation).

Keith wants to communicate that all staff are working hard, whether or not they are currently visible. He would like for us all to keep all staff in mind and in our prayers.

He will continue to monitor the financial situation with the Finance Committee, but based on what is known so far, he sees no need to make cuts at this time.

Trustees Update:

Lou pointed out that about 1/3 of the annual budget is in the Facilities department, and therefore Facilities has a great impact when trying to control costs. There are currently five staff members on the custodial and maintenance team. He is working on writing stories about what they have been doing: painting the Sanctuary and Narthex, deep cleaning carpets, heavy lifting in the Resource Center, etc.

Lou shared a list of cost-cutting ideas brainstormed by the Trustees. The board went through the list and evaluated each item at their last meeting.

This section was copied from the information that Lou provided and showed on the screen during the meeting:

Summary of cost savings/reductions from Board of Trustees

Mortgage refinance: Finance Committee action. We recommend an investigation.

Insurance coverage: It appears there may be some potential to reduce coverage for the outbuildings. Further investigation needed and recommended.

Equipment leases: There is no opportunity to reduce or eliminate costs, only opportunity is to delay monthly payments.

Staff furloughs: SPR responsibility. Should be considered as a last resort option.

District office rental: Engage a realtor for gaining a renter.

Utility costs: No opportunity. Already reduced and managed by software already installed.

Supplies costs: No opportunity. Already being reduced.

Sell trailer: No opportunity.

Volunteers do lawn care No opportunity.

Meeting setup process. Any option does not reduce costs (associated with staff)

Rebid maintenance contracts: Lawn care only opportunity and is already being rebid.

Remove budget padding: Team is being convened to investigate and identify opportunity in Facilities budget.

Projects cost: All projects are on hold, no cost occurring.

Stewardship Update:

Michael explained that his role of Stewardship Chair is a new one for our church. Stewardship is a measure of a close walk with God, an outpouring in response to that close walk.

He sent out an email communication after Q1, which signaled that changes are being made and solicited feedback. He believes that as people are asked for their opinions, they will become more engaged. He foresees a time of abundance coming, both in involvement and in financials. About 4% of the people who received the survey filled it out, and there was a very positive response to programs like nightly prayers and the Resource Center.

Erik asked how the survey was created, and where the data was delivered and stored.

Michael said the survey was created in Google and the responses went to him directly. He would like to discuss how to solicit feedback going forward.

Erik said it is important for those offering survey responses and feedback to know where the information is going, that staff have access, and that the data is secure.

Lou commented that KUMC should only ask for responses if there is a plan to do something with the data. He suggested sending a response back after any feedback.

Melanie explained the tools available using Shelby, our church management software. The Shelby Giving tool can be used to develop surveys and other response forms in which the data is secure and only seen by the intended audience.

Judy proposed coordinating future feedback solicitations so that they will be more comprehensive, perhaps once per quarter.

Polly would like to include UMW information in future surveys.

Jason closed in prayer at 8:11pm.