

Ministry Council Meeting Minutes

September 28, 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, David Gerig, Keith Bierley, Toni Bliss, Ellie Skaarer, Amanda Stansberger, Polly Soulsby

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

Jason shared a scripture from Luke. He related how Jesus dealt with the question of “who is the greatest?” to this group’s roles as leaders in the church. Jason opened in prayer.

Finance Update

Erik recapped the September Finance Committee meeting.

1. August numbers were up, with about \$250K in giving in 2020 and \$178K in giving in 2019. There were 5 Sundays in 2020, although the number of Sundays seems to have less impact when worshipping online. Expenses were down in 2020 as well, so the net gain was very positive.
2. A sub-committee was created to consider the issue of cash strategy. The sub-committee outlined a framework and the committee approved the plan. The plan uses the metaphor of a house, with cash levels that correspond to ceiling, floor, and basement. There are steps in place for action when the level of cash is in each position.

Judy asked the amount for each level. Melanie reported that the ceiling is \$800K, the floor is \$650K, and the basement is \$500K. The current position is between the basement and floor. If giving trends continue, the committee expects to be well above the floor before the end of the year.

3. Erik asked if, outside of committee responsibilities, Ministry Council had any specific budgetary requests. Jason proposed a lecture series to encourage ongoing discipleship. He explained the types of broad initiatives that could possibly be facilitated by Ministry Council. Melanie reported that no budgetary line item currently exists for Ministry Council, but could be added easily if needed. Judy asked that all Council members give the issue some thought and send ideas to her. She will add as an agenda item to the October meeting to sift through the submitted ideas. Erik requested that members associate dollar amounts with their ideas.

Staff Re-Opening Update

Keith reported that staff members are back in the building with regular hours, but not yet on a full schedule. The campus is still closed to visitors and groups. The staff will discuss next steps at their full staff meeting in early October.

Keith also reported that SPRC is working on the 2021 personnel budget.

Children’s Ministry Update

Building Blocks re-opened on September 8 and has had 3 good weeks of class. This year there is no kindergarten, but fifty 3 and 4-year-olds are registered and attending. Cleaning and other safety protocols have been followed with no problems.

Kristin has planned limited activities, and is hoping to grow those and provide more. It is still too early to host large events on campus.

Confirmation was in the Sanctuary last weekend and in October 3rd and 4th graders and their families will be in the Sanctuary for a Bible presentation.

Youth Ministry Update

Ellie reported that family group leaders met recently and that went well. Collide and grade level Bible studies start next month.

Keith summed up re-opening in all areas. He stressed that we want to welcome people back safely, so this will probably happen in stages. We need to make sure we can manage cleaning and other protocols. He thanked everyone for their patience during this process.

UMW Sunday

Polly reported that UMW Sunday was mentioned by Pastor Lauren in online worship. UMW members usually pass out literature after worship. This year staff members helped with mailing a letter and flyer to all women of KUMC not already affiliated with UMW (610 letters). Circles are receiving new members even though they are not meeting in person right now. They currently have 110-112 members.

Tech Buddies

Polly reported that information has been gathered regarding who is willing to help and who needs help. Once matched, the tech buddies will meet by phone, or possibly in the clean room at church. They will not be meeting in homes. Pastor Jim will call the volunteers to find out their preferences on meeting times and locations. Lisa Ham will use a spreadsheet to make matches.

Estee said Lisa Ham sent her detailed recommendations:

1. Tutorial videos
2. Courses on topics such as cyber security and social media (SAGES are target audience)
3. Resource Center – expand offerings beyond food to include ESL and GED classes

Polly said Lisa had great ideas, but the group is still open for other ideas for classes and videos.

Data Tracking – When Team

Jason said the team is finding inconsistencies in reporting regarding COVID, with more cases reported from national sources than from local sources.

In the last week, cases are trending up. We are back in the mid-orange range when we had been in high yellow.

There has been a debate in the media regarding how long aerosolized vapor stays in the air. Because worship involves singing and the Sanctuary is enclosed, this is a point of concern for in-person worship. There is also concern about fatigue in following protocols, and people becoming more lax over time.

Jason asked that we encourage one another to wear masks, stay at safe distances, and not linger. We are proceeding with caution. We expect to follow a hybrid model for some time, anticipating that many congregants will choose to worship online for safety reasons even when the Sanctuary is open.

Jason discussed the issue from a theological perspective: the need for “place”, to stop wandering in the wilderness, balanced with the knowledge that we are all temples.

Erik asked how conferences are deciding how to proceed.

Estee said our bishop has left the decision to local churches and has only offered guidelines, not edicts. Rural churches have different circumstances and may make different decisions. Jason shared his screen with guidelines from the bishop.

Jason highlighted KUMC’s worship stats, which have stayed fairly consistent across the months of COVID. Other churches are not seeing many new members, but we have welcomed 60. He is proud of the way our members have stayed committed.

Virtual Leadership Fair

This year 5 fewer people signed up than did last year when there were sheets in the Narthex between worship services. Jason considers this very positive, especially considering that we have fewer open positions this year. More information was collected this year than name and contact information. Interested people were also asked about why they feel called to serve. This week Jason will meet with Dave Burke and Dave Gerig to go through the list.

Charge or Church Conference

Jason said there are 3 ways to call a church conference:

1. Pastors may call, with District Superintendent permission
2. Ministry Council may vote to call, with District Superintendent permission
3. 10% of professing members may petition to call

Last year KUMC had a church conference. Jason and Estee stated at the conference that they intended to have a church conference for at least their first 3 years as pastors at KUMC. Their goal was to build trust, demonstrate transparency, and gather together. In a church conference, every member has voice and vote.

There will be a charge conference in our area on November 15. At a charge conference, only the administrative body (Ministry Council) has voice and vote. They can approve reports and paperwork without bringing the whole body together. The charge conference will be via Zoom. Every church in the district will attend and vote on paperwork.

Regardless of method, all paperwork goes to Ministry Council first. The MC votes whether to recommend approval to either the charge or church conference.

Judy asked how a church conference would be accomplished.

Jason said it would be similar to a Zoom meeting. It would require training, costs to upgrade software and would most likely exclude some of our congregants unintentionally due to technology issues. He recommends making all paperwork available to congregants, regardless of conference method.

Judy said she didn't feel voting was a significant part of last year's conference. Being informed was the most important thing.

Erik asked how information would be distributed and how questions would be addressed.

Jason said digital copies would be available to download and paper copies can be sent via mail as requested. Questions could be directed to him or to Estee.

Judy suggested setting up Zoom meetings for congregants to ask questions after they have reviewed the materials. This would reinforce the notion of transparency.

Dave said he is leaning toward a charge conference under the circumstances.

Keith noted that the annual conference was held via Zoom recently. It was not anyone's first choice, but it was efficient and the best choice under the circumstances.

Judy said a charge conference seems to be the best choice. It will not be difficult to explain to the congregation why there was a change in plans.

Judy called for a formal vote.

Lou moved to participate in the charge conference rather than have a church conference.

Erik seconded.

Passed unanimously.

Jason will send the minutes from this meeting to the conference to communicate our decision.

Lou recommended communicating to the congregation that the intention is to have a church conference next year.

Worship Ministry Update

Estee shared a Google doc with details for the yellow light phase (Appendix A).

Worship leaders had a chance to practice a hybrid style of worship last weekend with confirmands and their families in attendance.

Lou noted that at the upcoming outdoor worship opportunity, golf carts and additional handicapped parking spaces will be available.

Estee said nothing has been planned so far after November 1. It is possible to start open worship on November 8, or to continue targeting specific small groups.

Erik asked if November is too soon because of the possibility of having to reverse course.

Keith asked if worship would begin with all services, or one at a time.

Estee said the worship team has discussed the possibility of beginning with the 8:15 service and phasing in one service at a time. She said she and Jason have received a lot of feedback and it has varied. The recurring theme is that people are “ready” to be back, but it is more of a longing that thinking that KUMC should be open already.

Keith said data is currently moving in the wrong direction. How the data moves will drive decisions in upcoming weeks.

Judy said the consensus seems to be wishing things were different, but accepting of how things are.

Estee said the worship team is already considering different scenarios for Christmas Eve.

Erik noted that we must be cautious now for long term gain.

Toni said that watching the Livestream hybrid service she felt like she was there on Sunday.

Judy said it felt very smooth, more like sitting in a pew than in previous online services.

Estee said she was grateful for the feedback and asked that we continue to send it to her.

Erik asked if a decision had been made on Trunk or Treat.

Estee said Kristin is making plans, but it will not be a big community event as in years past.

Judy thanked everyone for their work.

Jason closed in prayer at 8pm.

Appendix A
Yellow Light Phase Worship plans

Confirmation Sunday - Sept 27

- Confirmands and families in-person in the Sanctuary
- First opportunity to practice worship leadership for what we're calling "hybrid" worship - in-person and online worship simultaneously. We want to maintain an intimacy for online worshippers rather than a remote and removed worship experience.

Vine and Branches Midweek Worship - October 1, 8, 15, 22 at 5, 6, 7pm

- Worship services to allow congregation Sanctuary time; opportunity for worship leaders and ushers to practice
- Reservations for Oct 1 currently:
 - 5pm service- 34 people
 - 6 pm service- 30 people
 - 7pm service- 7 people

Communion in the Garden and Prayer Stations - October 4

- Opportunity for people receive Holy Communion and engage in prayerful practices

Third Grade Bible Sunday - October 18

- Third graders and their families in-person in the Sanctuary for both worship services
- Second opportunity for worship leaders to practice hybrid worship

Outdoor Worship service - October 25

- Livestream worship at 8:30am
- Outdoor service at 10:30am - in the back parking lot - invite people to bring a lawn chair and socially distance

All Saints Sunday - November 1

- Invite those who've lost a loved one in the past year to come and worship in-person at either 9:30 or 11am
- Third opportunity for worship leaders to practice hybrid worship

November 8 - topic of conversation for Ministry Council