

Ministry Council Meeting Minutes

October 26, 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, Amanda Stansberger, Jules Plewes

Judy called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Estee opened in prayer.

Minutes From Previous Meeting

Judy called for a vote to approve the minutes from the special called meeting on October 19. David moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Keith seconded. Passed unanimously. Melanie will give to Carol to post on the website.

Finance Update

Amanda reported:

1. Giving in September 2020 was slightly less than in September 2019, but Quarter 3 for 2020 was still higher overall than Quarter 3 for 2019.
2. There is no resolution yet on the Paycheck Protection Plan loan. Melanie said that Judy has an appointment tomorrow to review the submitted documents.
3. Commitment cards are coming in and the budget is being put together.

Erik added that the Finance chairs sent an update as part of the pastor's email last Friday. Jason said he received positive feedback regarding the update.

Amanda said she is appreciative of the work of committees in preparing the 2021 budget.

Charge Conference Documents

Jason said he sent a scanned copy of the documents for Ministry Council members to review. Toni responded with a question about planning for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the church. Jason appreciated her planning, but explained that these documents are reflective rather than planning in nature. The celebration will be included in future documents.

Jason explained that some reports are optional. Keller UMC elects to fill out all required reports and all optional reports that are relevant. He went through each document:

1. Charge Conference Minutes – These are submitted before the meeting takes place.
2. Finance Report – No questions.
3. Trustees Report – The report asked if the church has done an accessibility audit. The marked answer was no, but we attached an audit. Melanie will update the digital document before submitting to indicate that the church has done an accessibility audit.
4. Accessibility Audit – Judy asked about the sidewalk leading to the front entrance and whether it requires handrails. Lou said handrails are available everywhere needed for accessibility except at the altar. The rise over run is so slight on the front sidewalk that handrails are not required. Judy asked what is called a ramp. Lou said the sidewalk is a ramp because it has an incline and enables those cannot use stairs to enter the building.

5. Candidates for Ministry – Abigail was approved as a candidate last year and this year is being recommended for continuance. This will be the last year Lauren is listed as a candidate. Next year her status will be considered by the conference board.
6. Local Pastor Report – Lauren submits since she is not ordained yet.
7. CE Reports from Pastors – no questions.
8. Retired Clergy – Estee said that Susan Trammell recently moved to the area to be close to family. She is retired and asked to have her conference membership located here with Keller UMC as her local church. Jim Chandler also supplied a report.

Jason explained that procedurally the Ministry Council is not approving the reports. The Council recommends the charge conference reports to the charge conference set for November 15.

Jason moved to recommend the documents as written. Lou seconded.

Jason explained that the District Superintendent will inform Keller UMC of who needs to attend the charge conference. Jason, Estee, and Lou will definitely be required to attend. Others may be required. All are welcome if they wish to attend.

David added a friendly amendment that the documents would have an edit, to change the accessibility audit performance question to yes.

Motion as amended passed unanimously.

Judy asked about communication regarding the charge conference to the congregation, particularly in reference to why we are having a charge conference rather than a church conference this year.

Jason said that once the district receives the documents, it will be appropriate to communicate. He will speak with Carol about the best way to publicize and will also consider making a video.

Children and Youth Ministries Update

Keith reported that re-opening Building Blocks has gone very well. There have been no incidents of illness or breaking protocols.

Children and 5th/6th Grade are continuing in the yellow light phase, with some small group activities.

Youth are also continuing in the yellow light phase, with Collide, a book drive, and Youth Council among their activities.

Staff members would like to offer more, but are moving slowly in the interest of safety.

Staff Update

Staff will meet next Tuesday, November 3, to determine next steps. They are still in yellow light phase and most staff members are back in the office 75% of their normal hours.

Lou has decided to “re-retire” from his role as volunteer Facilities Director at the end of the year. SPR, working with Estee and Jason, have eliminated one manager position and plan to promote Joey Gillaspay to Facilities Director beginning January 1. Lou will assist in the transition.

SPR is looking at other possible staffing changes for 2021 and plans to make more announcements after the budget is finalized.

Keith stressed that he and the rest of SPR are grateful for Lou's time as volunteer staff.

Judy said she saw a reference in another church email group to the church being "open", and asked for a clarification.

Keith said the building is not open to the public yet. Access is limited while in the yellow light phase.

Estee said some groups have been in. Requests are considered individually. For example, a prayer breakfast group began meeting socially distanced in a large room before most staff members arrive in the morning. A small yoga group is also about to begin meeting.

Judy recommended being more overt in communication to prevent misunderstanding. Perhaps send a reminder that the office is still mostly closed and in yellow light phase.

Estee said she would explore other ways to remind congregants.

Judy said Toni requested to discuss plans for a 125th anniversary celebration for Keller UMC. We will plan to do this at the next meeting since Toni was unable to attend tonight.

Ministry Council Budget Proposals

Judy said she received a request from Toni to add \$500 to the budget to transfer old tapes for the anniversary celebration. This was the only budget request she received.

Judy requested \$1000 for a Ministry Council retreat at the beginning of 2021, when new members join. Estee said she likes the idea of spending intentional time together.

Jason said Lay Leadership has utilized internal resources for a leadership evaluation, and they are not asking for a budget item for 2021. SPR has added a line item for coaching.

David reminded the Council that an idea was previously presented to bring in outside speakers.

Jason said 2021 is probably not the year to host big speaking engagements, but he is looking into utilizing technology to bring small groups together to watch recorded speakers, perhaps with a particular theme.

Judy asked if any funds are needed. Melanie said that publicity channels are already in the budget, but there may need to be a budget for books or other items. Jason said he anticipates using mostly open sources for speakers and does not anticipate adding a budget item. He also anticipates offering some educational resources regarding annual conference.

Melanie will add \$1500 total for the two requested items to the preliminary budget.

Charge Conference Documents Revisited

Jason said he forgot to ask earlier about the last item in the documents, clergy compensation.

Amanda asked how the timeline works.

Jason said clergy salaries have to be approved early as part of the conference process. If changes are needed later, Estee and Jason would bring a motion to the Ministry Council to make modifications.

David said he is comfortable adding this item to the documents as previously recommended by vote.

Jason said if things change as the budgeting process moves forward, he will notify the Ministry Council.

Communication Plan

Jason asked if the Ministry Council is still in general consensus agreement that hybrid worship will begin on November 8.

Lou said he was encouraged by the response to outdoor worship, but that the COVID statistics are still scary. He is worried about how the news that we plan to begin hybrid worship will be received if delivered during a spike in COVID cases.

Erik said his opinion has not changed, but that he would support a consensus to move forward.

Keith said he does not plan to attend in person himself and will choose to worship online. He thinks we should offer the choice to be in person for a small group.

Lou said there were 224 attendees at outdoor worship. In addition to other cleaning protocols, he has also ordered test strips to test our sanitation procedures in the building. He would like to see a choice aspect in communication – stressing that we are doing everything we can, but asking people to please stay home if they are at higher risk.

Erik said the optics are troublesome, right after an election when statistics are high. It seems like a postponement would make sense.

Estee said we could postpone to November 15. She plans to stress in communication that hybrid worship will not be a normal Sunday morning. It is just a way to offer an in-person experience for those who really want to attend.

Lou asked about the When Team.

Jason said the doctor on the When Team and other members have not changed their stances since the last report.

Amanda asked what would trigger shutting down hybrid worship.

Estee said the trigger would be Tarrant County going back to red status (currently orange).

Judy said communication is key, stressing that we are still in yellow light phase.

Estee said she would start with an email on Friday with details about worship, then follow up with a paper letter after hybrid worship begins. She is amenable to changing the start date to November 15.

Jason said the paper letter could also include stewardship results because of the timing. He is also planning videos to explain procedures and what to expect for both attendees and volunteers at hybrid worship.

Judy said there still seems to be support for hybrid worship, with several members leaning toward November 15.

Jason said in-person attendance may be suppressed due to the proximity to Thanksgiving, which is a good thing. He will meet with program staff tomorrow and report what the Ministry Council discussed. If staff members support November 15 as a start date, Estee and Jason will send an email to Judy to share with the Council.

Jason closed in prayer at 7:52pm.