

Ministry Council Meeting Minutes February 22, 2021 at 6:30pm via Zoom

Attending: Rev. Estee Valendy, Rev. Jason Valendy, Judy Belter, Melanie Grice, Emie Stewart, Bob Whetson, David Burke, Julie Sizemore, Sara Howard, Toni Bliss, Diane Whetson, Keith Bierley, Emily Stansberger

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

Estee led the group in a prayer of examen, a technique developed by St. Ignatius, who founded the Jesuit order. She invited us to prayerfully review our day, giving thanks, recalling the emotions of the day, and looking forward to tomorrow.

Finance Report

Emie reported that the Finance Committee was unable to conduct their regular meeting due to the storm, but they voted by email on three items:

1. Approve the minutes from the January meeting
2. Approve a debt reduction payment for \$14,807
3. Approve new rate schedule for electronic card processing

Emie thanked Jason for creating the form to make the electronic voting possible.

Lay Leadership Report

Jason reported that the team has decided to prioritize training, beginning with facilitators. They intend to put a plan into action by mid-year. The Ministry Council will be the “guinea pigs” to go through the training and provide feedback for subsequent years. This will be a long-term project with deep intentionality.

David added that the team talked a lot about how to engage and connect more people in ministry. This is a new focus for the group, moving beyond the basic nominating process.

Judy asked if people would be offered training before their terms begin when they are asked to join committees.

David said the vision is yes, training would be ongoing. The team would like to develop trainers who could keep the program going into the future.

Team Covenant

Judy introduced the idea of a team covenant, which is similar to ground rules in corporations. The covenant would cover how meetings should be conducted so that everyone knows what to expect. She asked everyone to offer their thoughts without worrying about anything else. This is a time to just gather all ideas. There will be time later to reflect and refine. We will commit to essential guidelines at the next meeting.

1. Julie – stick to the agenda and stay on track, leaving any new business for the end of the meeting
2. Toni – keep the idea of holy conversation in mind, be open to hear what anyone has to say

3. Bob – listen, there is more than one opinion on any subject, we can come up with the best solution with more input
4. Estee – prepare before gathering, read materials
5. Judy – prepare spiritually as well to be open to the Holy Spirit and to each other
6. Keith – be open to the fact that you might be wrong, open to varied points of view
7. Jason – we are faithful to the gospel when we are patient, move focus off accomplishments, Holy Spirit is not always on our timetable
8. Sara – treat people as equals, on the same level
9. David – respect in every aspect
10. Judy – pay attention to the speaker, receive all of the message, also keep a sense of humor
11. Diane – don't come to the meeting with pre-conceived notions

Judy thanked everyone for their contributions and asked that we reflect on all the suggestions.

Organizational Model

Judy said we spoke at our last meeting about some of the deficiencies of the model. She asked us to take a step back to consider the purpose of a model and what we want to communicate with it.

David asked the group to keep in mind as we develop a model that it needs to be clear and understandable to the congregation, a tool to help us understand our mission.

Judy asked for ideas on what values we would like to communicate.

1. David – ministry in the center rather than hierarchical charts, servant leadership where committees exist only to support ministry
2. Judy – the value identified is ministry as central focus, also value clarity, conciseness, transparency, and inclusion
3. David – stay within the guidelines of the Book of Discipline
4. Emie – remember that the Ministry Council is the implementing body between charge conferences, not a governing body
5. Estee – organization chart is bigger than just the Ministry Council, value of partnership rather than siloed efforts, dynamic – going somewhere, doing something
6. Judy – no sharp edges, flexibility, dynamic in the way the parts move
7. Jason – leadership of Christ is not apparent in the current model, value of centrality of Christ's influence as leader, also need to include "the other", those not part of the church or marginalized
8. Julie – represent those whom we serve
9. Sara – why we serve, for Christ, in God's name, make obvious why we do what we do
10. Bob – involvement of members of our congregation, build cohesiveness among members and others affiliated with Keller UMC
11. Estee – would like to see visual or metaphor representation, similar to the model of the Finance Committee using a house to represent our cash position
12. Emie – example of wheels on a multi-axle vehicle, moving ministries in the truck with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit driving
13. Bob – example of Olympic flag, where rings are connected and overlap, committees working together

14. Jason – used metaphor of a Mars rover at a previous church, likes idea of metaphor or guiding story, similar to Paul using the body of Christ this way
15. David – difficult to draw with so many moving parts, hard to show connections
16. Judy – conversation has broken through the barrier of what organization charts have to be
17. Estee – asked if the chart has to depict how the church is organized
18. Judy – chart or model should depict how we go about accomplishing our mission, how we organize ourselves, make obvious what we value and how we work
19. David – has found that a lot of people in the congregation have no idea what the Lay Leader does, need to figure out a way to keep it simple and communicate it
20. Jason – KUMC is a complex organization, but the challenge is not to become complicated and tedious, offered metaphor examples of a beehive and vineyards – organisms are created by God and organizations are created by humans

Judy said this is an opportunity to not jump in and define the model immediately, but call on the Holy Spirit for discernment. She thanked everyone for participating.

Roles/Responsibilities

Judy noted that the group previously defined the role of being a member of the Ministry Council. She took the opportunity during the storm last week to go through all the booklets for church committees to search for the individual responsibilities of each role. (Appendix A)

Bob requested clarification on the role of the Trustees since the list could be read to mean that Trustees have to bring all actions to the Ministry Council for approval.

Jason said there are a handful of things that require Ministry Council approval, such as the budget. Most of the items approved by the Council are part of charge conference forms. There are thresholds detailed in the Book of Discipline for very big changes, such as building projects. He and Estee as senior pastors are responsible for identifying those as they arise.

Emie provided an example from her previous church of adding a cell phone tower to the church steeple. This required the Ministry Council rather than just the Trustees.

Estee suggesting changing the wording to provide clarity.

Bob suggested that members consult with their committees for feedback before coming back to the Ministry Council with suggestions.

Keith said his job is to represent the views of SPR, not just his personal views. SPR strives to move by consensus. He said the Council will never be able to capture everything on paper. The point is to be as thorough as possible, then manage flexibly.

Bob said to apply common sense. If something significant arises in committees that needs to be elevated, the chairs will do so.

Judy said the goal is that all members of the Council generally understand the expectations.

Jason asked us to keep in mind that Keller UMC is far larger than the average UMC. The guidelines are written with smaller churches in mind. If there is a question in interpreting the Discipline, the

responsibility for this falls on the District Superintendent during the charge conference. If a question arises between charge conference, the responsibility falls to the senior pastors.

Judy asked that each member take what is currently written back to their groups to share and receive feedback.

New Business

Jason was on a Zoom meeting today with the conference finance committee. The conference concluded 2020 with a financial surplus. They are looking to earmark funds for churches coming back from COVID and returning to in-person worship. Jason asked the Council to prayerfully consider what might be helpful in guiding reconnection.

Jason also reported that when Randy Wild retires in June, Philip Rhodes will be appointed as the new District Superintendent.

Pastor Lauren is scheduled to go before the Board of Ordained Ministry next Monday to request commissioning, which requires a battery of interviews and paperwork. Jason asked for prayers for Lauren and all others going through this stressful process.

Closing

The Ministry Council closed with a group prayer at 8:01pm.

Appendix A

Ministry Council member responsibilities:

Each of the members of the Ministry Council (MC) represent an area or function of KUMC. Each has a unique role with responsibilities based on that representation. The “Guidelines” for each function define those links to the MC along with the responsibilities to the council.

We are following the “Church Council Guidelines.” Partners in Ministry (pages 24-25) summarizes the major functions of Pastors, Lay Leader, SPR, Trustees and Finance. However, the individual function booklets detail the responsibility of those representatives, as well as the additional five members, to the MC.

Below is a summary by function taken from the guideline booklet, with page numbers for reference. As we have defined our roles as general members of a team, we need to define specifically what the council can expect from each unique member function. Our forming stage of team development calls for clear definition of roles and responsibilities, with common understanding.

Lay Leader:

Bring broad perspective of laity to council.

Apprise the council of needs and opportunities for more effective ministry in the community.

Help to interpret the plans and decisions of the council to the laity of congregation.

Youth:

Recommend activities, program emphases and settings for youth.

UMW:

Represent mission of UMW through advocacy and service focused on women, children and youth.

Trustees:

Take recommendations of trustees to MC for approval and action.

Take recommendations and directions of the council back to trustees.

Work cooperatively to develop plans for providing buildings and equipment to support that program of ministry.

Coordinate building use policy with council.

Finance:

Submit periodic financial reports to council for approval.

Consultant to council on financial matters.

Annual report to council on all designated funds that are separate from the operating budget.

SPR:

Council receives recommendations on pastoral and staff salaries, benefits, pastoral housing, and other pastoral support needs and acts on them at charge conference. Between meetings, the council carries out the ministry decisions.

Submits recommendations to council on staffing needs and deployment.

Works with council to support healthy teams focused on disciple making.

Pastors:

Keeps focus on Christ's work in the world.

Steward of the Vision – who we are, what has God called us to do or be, and who is our neighbor?

Model and teach "first fruits living" in leadership practices.

Works with council on administration, leader development and team building to implement congregation's plan for making disciples

Enables and empowers lay leaders.

Stewardship:

Coordinates planning and implementation of Christian stewardship plan with council, that includes education, inspiration, and action for congregation.

Links council to congregational stewardship to fulfill mission of KUMC.

Lay Leadership Team:

Works with council to clarify ministry goals and set priorities.

Collaborates with council on leadership needs and leadership development as component of disciple formation.