

Ministry Council Meeting Minutes
March 29, 2021

Attending: Rev. Estee Valendy, Rev. Jason Valendy, Judy Belter, Melanie Grice, Toni Bliss, Diane Whetson, Bob Whetson, Emie Stewart, Dave Burke, Julie Sizemore, Mike Miller, Emily Stansberger

Guest Presenters: Rev. Lauren Christenberry, Cathy Dill

Agenda:

Opening prayer/scripture	Estee/Jason	10 minutes
Opening meeting	Judy	5 minutes
1. Visioning	Estee/Jason	30 minutes
2. Stoplight Worship	Estee	15 minutes
3. Stoplight Adults	Lauren	10 minutes
4. Serving Ministries	Cathy	20 minutes

Closing Ministry Council prayer All

Judy called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Jason read scripture regarding the anointing of Jesus (John 12:1-11) while Estee anointed the hands of attendees with scented oil. Each Holy Week we are invited to enter into the stories and understand from the different characters' perspectives.

Vision

Judy: This topic has been on the minds of Council members for over a year. The Council has solicited large amounts of input and divided it into categories. Judy has researched, thought and prayed about the topic as well. She relayed that we know a vision statement needs to be clear, concise, readily internalized and pointed to the mission. But it also has to be embedded in all ministries. She came to the conclusion that the vision really needs to originate with Estee and Jason as they will be the ones leading the congregation to achieve it. Judy discovered in many texts that vision statements change due to circumstances, so writing a perfect vision statement now to last for years is not realistic. Estee and Jason will now present their proposed vision for reaction from the Council.

Jason: Asked if anyone knows the UMC's mission.

Toni: The UMC's mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Jason: He and Estee operated under the assumption the vision statement must:

1. Be an image of an ultimate goal of where we want the organization to be
2. Be dynamic
3. Be consistent – align with values, be natural for leaders
4. Be memorable – short, concise and clear

Estee: The mission stays somewhat static, but the vision changes through the seasons of the church. She shared some vision statements from other churches, which varied greatly in length and style.

Jason passed out a proposal to the Council with the proposed KUMC Vision Statement of “Hearts turning to God and neighbor”. (Appendix A)

Jason: Noted that this proposed statement puts the heart forward rather than the head or the hands.

Estee: Noted that many other churches’ emphasized place, but she and Jason would rather emphasize process. It would be easy to incorporate this language into worship – “turning hearts” and also serving “neighbor”.

Jason: The proposed statement is short and “preachable”. He recounted the story of God hardening Pharoah’s heart. But if God’s love is like the sun as Origen says, Pharoah’s clay heart hardened when faced with this overwhelming love. Moses experienced a conversion, and then his heart was more like wax. The sun warms wax and melts it. The question of how to turn one’s heart from clay to wax becomes the focus, and can be accomplished with small group and serving opportunities.

Judy: Feels that the statement shows a two-way, reciprocal way of turning to neighbors as they also turn to us. She also complimented Estee and Jason’s gifts for speaking from the heart.

Toni: She previously served on vision committees and said she feels more excitement this time around.

Dave: It ties in to the greatest commandment, loving neighbor as self.

Julie: When she talks to others about the church, she always shares that our members reach out to others locally and internationally.

Lauren: She liked the statement immediately, but felt hearing the process of how they came up with it to be transformational. She suggested talking about the process with the congregation.

Bob: Suggested a long, slow process “water dripping on a rock” instead of a one-time sharing, with constant reinforcement.

Emie: Hearts turning rather than turning hearts says a lot about the emphasis. The action is happening with the congregation.

Dave: When we are moving toward our mission, we see hearts turned.

Estee: Suggested letting the statement sit, not deciding immediately.

Jason: Asked Council to use the statement in prayer practices.

Emie: Sees ways that the statement could be enacted visually with dance ministry, VBS, etc.

Judy: Council members can share as they like with individuals and groups to solicit feedback.

Dave: Cautioned sharing too much to move back to a huge number of ideas.

Jason: Suggested sharing with a close friend or two rather than groups.

Stoplight Approach to COVID Response

Jason passed out a summary of the approach (Appendix B).

Estee: Shared specifics of yellow light expansion, which will include discontinuing reservations after Easter. She does not anticipate a flood of people, but a continued trickling in.

Lauren: Received an email from a Sunday School class that has been very cautious. They are now fully vaccinated and are requesting to meet in person again. She brought the request to staff, which supported offering space, but only at the 10:00 hour and only for adults. Some classes will not be ready or may need childcare, but the ones that are ready to meet would be helpful to test the process for set-up and cleaning.

Emie: What would the policy be if a new person wanted to join a fully vaccinated group? Would we require proof of vaccination?

Lauren: Her vision is that we would start small communicating just with people already involved to test the system. We could expand later in the year.

Bob: Do we have enough space to allow social distancing?

Lauren: We do at this time without youth meeting.

Bob: Do we have enough equipment, such as foggers?

Lauren: That is the main reason for just one hour for meeting, so that the fogging could wait until a later time.

Emie: We need to anticipate that word will get out and other classes will want to participate.

Lauren: She plans to email class leaders to share the request from the original class and see what the wishes are for the other classes. She anticipates the biggest obstacle will be the lack of classes for kids and youth.

Estee: Kristin has offered to do a modified program for kids as an intermediate step that is just for those whose parents are in class.

Dave: If the 9:00 service ends at 10:00, Sunday School is late getting started. The class might also have to end early for those who want to attend at 11:00.

Julie: The current set-up is that all members of a particular class are going to the same service because classes used to begin at either 9:30 or 11:00.

Dave: Still concerned about the timing since worship is usually a full hour.

Lauren: Anticipates making revisions as meetings actually begin and we find out what happens when things are “messy”, figuring out how to do things in a different way.

Julie: Knows of members of her own class who are not vaccinated, but might want to meet.

Lauren: She does not anticipate requiring vaccinations, but the fully vaccinated class was the impetus that brought the issue forward.

Judy: The new rule requiring only 3 feet of space helps. Her class was previously packed and she wondered if they could have a larger space.

Lauren: Welcomed the feedback to know what kinds of questions to ask to make the plan work.

Bob: Asked whether we could accommodate more people in the Sanctuary.

Jason: Feels confident that we could accommodate demand, even with maintaining six feet between groups.

Julie: Is there a possibility of offering hybrid for some classes if some members are comfortable returning and others are not?

Lauren: Again welcomed feedback to know what questions to ask in case some groups need help.

Emie: Asked about communicating the need for masks in class or in hallways.

Lauren: We have not had any problems since the mask mandate was lifted. We expect to continue requiring masks in the building for now. She has spoken to Facilities about opening hallways as needed.

Jason: Noted that just as a vision can change, so too can the way we do worship and small groups.

Estee: The staff anticipates bringing more suggestions to future meetings.

Lauren: Requested a consensus to move forward, which she received.

Lauren’s next step is to take the feedback and send a memo to all class leaders to determine the level of interest for adult in-person Sunday School.

Proposed Plan for Resource Center

Judy passed out the proposed plan (Appendix C).

Cathy: She has been on staff since the Resource Center opening and has seen lots of growth and change. She reviewed the original plan and what services are offered today.

She was asked to join a meeting with Keller ISD staff and food pantries in the area. She heard what items and programs are most needed. The greatest need expressed that KUMC could possibly handle is for a clothing closet.

Cathy reviewed the nearby clothing closets, which are not able to serve everyone in the area.

Julie: Pointed out that the Community Storehouse was missing on the list of "Nearest Clothing Closets" and offers seasonal assistance to students in Keller ISD.

Cathy: Would like to be able to offer basic needs and referrals to meet other needs. She envisions continuing with current programs and adding a clothing closet. The portion of the Resource Center that previously housed the District Office could be transformed into a clothing closet. There is a designated fund that could cover the costs.

She shared a map of the RC to show where the clothes would be stored and where people could "shop".

Cathy proposed closing briefly after 3 years to evaluate and decide how to move forward. She requested feedback from the Council.

Judy: Asked where the clothes would come from.

Cathy: Clothing drive from congregants.

Bob: This initiative would require an ongoing supply.

Cathy: She works with the schools and other organizations and anticipates receiving donations from them as well.

Bob: Feels the "Resource Center" is disconnected from Keller UMC. Asked if there was some way to associate more closely the name with the church when dealing with clients. How do we tie RC with KUMC?

Cathy: Most clients definitely know the program is part of the church. Any printed publications do have the name of the church. She will think about how to communicate more effectively.

Lauren: Wanted to reaffirm the idea of accepting clothes. She has fielded many requests over the time she has worked here from people wanting to donate clothes to KUMC rather than to another organization.

Bob: Are there fixtures available from companies downsizing at a discount or donated?

Cathy: The plan is for full-price fixtures, but she does anticipate searching for better deals.

Judy: Have there been other requests to use the space?

Bob: It was used as the District Office. There was some discussion about leasing the space, but the idea was dropped because of COVID and the potential for problems to lease outside the UMC. His opinion is that we do not need to be landlords.

Julie: Suggested a space dedicated to sorting based on her experience at Community Storehouse.

Cathy: The costume space could potentially be utilized if another space can be found for that.

Judy: Would volunteers be utilized?

Cathy: Yes, already a lot of interest.

Julie: Concerns her that we would be duplicating services. Why are we considering spending energy and money on creating something that already exists in our area? Concerned not that clients would go to multiple places, but that organizations in the same area duplicating services offered when instead we could create something not available in our area and work together with the other agencies to refer back and forth.

Cathy: We are not allowed to have zip code restrictions for the food pantry since we are partners with Tarrant Area Food Bank. It would be possible to put restrictions on other services if needed.

Mike: People who visit multiple sites are not getting wealthy, but they need the items.

Jason: Agreed that there are a lot of issues and complicating factors, particularly involving mental health. We are all receivers of grace and want to be extenders of grace. Cathy is not requesting a hard decision tonight. This is just an introduction.

Dave: We can always find reasons not to do things. If it's the right thing, we should move forward.

Toni: She is excited about the program and feels she should not be the one to determine what someone needs. She was disappointed in her work as a volunteer at Community Storehouse when donations were torn, dirty, or from the home of a smoker and had to be discarded.

Emie: Suggested bringing initial donations to the Sanctuary to be blessed as an act of worship, similar to what we have done with other items in the past.

Bob: Any estimate on how long it would take to get shelving installed?

Cathy: No renovations needed, would be a matter of days. Moving furniture around would be the hardest part.

Emie: Suggested requesting donations in the summer, perhaps focusing on children's clothes for back to school.

Judy: Next step would be Trustees and Finance. Is the Council comfortable at this point for Cathy to proceed to committees? Consensus is support for the plan.

Team Roles and Responsibilities

Judy shared a handout, a list of the roles of the members and responsibilities of membership. (Appendix E)

Jason asked for clarification on posting alert to the congregation included in Recording Secretary role. Judy clarified that the sidebar in Quick News would note when new minutes are posted.

Team Covenant

Judy summarized the covenant adopted by the council as preparation in all matters, Holy conversation in all dialogue, and respect in all interactions.

Judy previously shared our proposed covenant via email and received no changes. Consensus achieved. She would like to have a poster with the team roles and covenant to refer to during meetings.

At 8:04pm, closed with the Ministry Council Prayer: Holy Spirit, Truth Divine, we surrender to you the work we've done. Give us clarity to see ourselves as you see us. Guide us as we seek your will above our own. Bless us in the name of Christ. Amen.

Appendix A

Vision Proposal to Ministry Council
March 29, 2021

Mission Statement of the UMC

To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

Proposed KUMC Vision Statement

Hearts turning to God and neighbor

Rationale

- Image - A picture of what mission accomplished looks like
 - The image of hearts turning is the mission realized. If hearts are turned toward God and neighbor then disciples are being made for the transformation of the world.

- Consistent - Aligns with the values of church and pastors
 - Rather than elevating the mind/intellect (orthodoxy) or the hands/feet (orthopraxy), this elevates the heart (orthocardia).
 - This also begs the question, “how are hearts turned?”
 - Aligns with values of pastoral leadership of what a disciple looks like:
 - Repent/De-center - move from places of comfort with the faith knowing that we are not alone, for God is with us.
 - Protest - resist the forces of evil in whatever forms they present themselves
 - Mercy - if given the choice between mercy and judgement, we choose mercy
 - Trust - foster relationships with one another and with God so that we have faith in each other
 - Kenosis - empty our egos, agendas and desires in order to seek out the desires of God

- Dynamic - Has movement and direction rather than a static list
 - It is assumed that discipleship is a process not a list of behaviors
 - Reflects who we are as Methodists and the Wesleyan way of salvation which is a process of sanctification or growing in God’s grace towards perfection in love

- Memorable - Easily internalized
 - Short enough to recall
 - “Turning hearts” strong enough to hold the variety of discipleship expressions

Appendix B

KUMC Stoplight Approach

In response to the COVID outbreak in 2020, KUMC adopted a stoplight framework as a graduated 3-Level reentry process from red to yellow to green status in an intentional and careful model of care and connection.

The broad framework is:

Red Light Phase, LOVE: Stop all non-critical gatherings. Essential workers only. This is the stay home phase of our ministry. Right now it is best to err on the side of distancing. In this phase we are *loving* through our commitment to shared sacrifice. *This phase began on March 22.*

Yellow Light Phase, KNOW: Cautionary return and transitional phase. We anticipate this will cover a number of months. We will focus on *knowing* how to do a new thing. We continue in our shared sacrifice of love, and gradually return to gatherings in a cautionary manner. The focus of this phase is creative and adaptive solutions that are designed specifically for this phase of return.

Green Light Phase, SERVE: When we finally reach this phase it will be because the virus is contained and people are safe. Now, we can return to *servicing* our community and the new needs that have arisen. This phase will begin when church leadership is confident in the safety of our community, based on government guidelines and CDC data. The green light phase will involve a resumption of in-person activities, but is more a restart than a return to normal. Things might not return to the way they were pre-Covid, as we carry with us learnings from the pandemic.

Chronology notes:

- March 22, 2020 - **Red Light Phase started:** worship online only
- Summer, 2020 - **Yellow Light Phase attempt:** one in-person Vine and Branches service held, then rescheduled due to virus spike - all activities moved back to **Red Light**
- October, 2020 - **Yellow Light Phase restart:** Vine and Branches services reengaged as a trial for in-person worship
- November 8, 2020 - **Yellow Light Phase expanded:** Hybrid worship started

Current - Yellow Light Phase status:

- Sunday morning hybrid worship: 40 reservation limit
 - Reservations on Sunday March 14:
 - 9am - 22 reservations, 68 people
 - 11am - 28 reservations, 60 people

- Reservations on Sunday, March 28
 - 9am - 31 reservations, 89 people
 - 11am - 35 reservations, 85 people
- Collide Youth Group meeting in-person on Sunday evenings
- Church staff working full-time in the offices, church office closed to the public ([details of church staff yellow light here](#))
- Building Blocks preschool operating on weekdays
- Resource Center operating on weekdays
- A few small groups meeting in the building: Men's Prayer Breakfast; Monday Yoga, Sisters of Sewing coming in April

**Next step proposal for Ministry Council Feedback on March 29:
Further Yellow Light Phase Expansion**

Sunday, April 11 - Discontinue hybrid worship reservation system

- People will not need to make a reservation to come to in-person worship
- Seating in the Sanctuary will remain roped off for social distancing
- Masks required for in-person worship
- Invite people to check in when they arrive for attendance
- Covenant for safety remains in place: all should wear masks, remain 6 feet apart, stay home if symptomatic

Sunday, April 18 - Resume Sunday Morning Nursery Care

- Care for babies and toddlers ages 0-3
- Reservations for nursery care will be taken during this transition as capacity will be limited

Adult Sunday School Classes - option to resume in-person

- One class that will be fully vaccinated expressed interest in returning at the end of April
- Discussion

Future considerations

- Children and Youth Sunday school and volunteers
- Sunday morning fellowship and service opportunities

Ministry Council Meeting, April 26

- Proposal for revised Sunday Morning Schedule from program staff at KUMC

Appendix C

Original Plan for the Resource Center 2017-2018

- Food Pantry
- ESL/GED Classes
- Benevolence/Emergency Help Assistance
- Health Services/Community Partner
- Medicaid, SNAP, & TANF application help

RC Today

- Food Pantry
- No ESL/GED classes – offered but no response Classes are offered throughout area free of charge
- Benevolence/Emergency Help Assistance
- Health Services/Community Partner
- Medicaid, SNAP, & TANF application help

Needs Assessment from Keller ISD & Requests from RC clients

- Clothing Closet especially for the homeless teens & lower income families struggling
- Emergency assistance – rental & utility assistance (Benevolence)
- Food
- Several needs outside our scope i.e. housing

Greatest Need

Nearest Clothing Closets

- Stepping Stones in Keller – small, non-profit organization at limited capacity, Keller ISD students only
- Donation House in North Fort Worth/Alliance corridor – unable to keep up with demand, open for anyone in need
- Clothes Connection – Birdville ISD students only on free/reduced lunch program completely funded by school district
- Community Clothes Closet Justin – open twice a month by appointment for anyone in need, currently not taking appointments
- First Street Methodist Mission Fort Worth – for homeless only
- Christian Community Assistance Fort Worth – currently not taking appointments
- Others: Grand Prairie Food & Clothing, Aledo Advocates Clothes Closet, Eastside Ministries (Zip Code restricted to East Fort Worth)

What can the RC do to meet the greatest need of our community?

- Meet basic needs of family, which includes food and clothing. This provides dignity & hope for families struggling to face other obstacles& circumstances.
- Clothing Closet to provide each family member with clothing needs which includes adult and school age children clothing
- Continue food distribution twice a week
- Continue with Emergency Assistance/Benevolence. Train others at the RC that help with intake about finding resources to help guests
- Continue with Health Services/Community Partner
- Train more Navigators to assist with application assistance

Estimated Cost

Transforming current “District Office” space to Clothing Closet

- Cost range \$6,000 - \$9,000
- Cost includes all shelving, drawers, and shoe racks
- No demolition or painting is needed
- Cost variance due to brand and installation costs

Funding

- Designated Fund for Community Outreach
- Remaining funds available approximately \$18,500

Long Term Plan

Re-evaluation period after 3 years

Shut down for slower months January-March to re-assess, re-organize & plan for the future

What does success look like?

If Clothing Closet is successful, items to consider would be:

More permanent staffing – possibly part time staff to serve as Resource Center Coordinator that would report to Director of Serving Ministries

Funding for staff position

- Asking for discernment and prayer
- Green light to pursue further

Team Roles and Responsibilities:

Member: Listen actively, participate with wisdom to know when to speak and when to be silent, prepare for meetings, prayerfully contribute, and courage to share feelings and opinions.

Chair: Create open and welcoming environment and protect the equal belonging of each member with nonjudgmental facilitation of meetings. See the following list of responsibilities as prescribed by the *Discipline*.

- Lead the council in fulfilling its responsibilities,
- Prepare and communicate the agenda of council meetings in consultation with the team,
- Review and assign responsibility for implementing the actions of the council,
- Communicate with council members and others,
- Coordinate the various activities of the council,
- Provide initiative and leadership for the council as it does planning, establishing goals and strategies, and evaluating.
- Participate in leadership training.

Spiritual Leader: Set *tone* for meetings and roles in church, direct focus to unity of purpose, establish the starting place for discussion and act as contextual guide.

Topic Leader: Resource on a particular topic, share information, lead council on discussion, providing input, offering feedback, etc., and carry outcomes to area of interest.

Recording Secretary: Record minutes of meetings, circulate via email to all members for corrections or additions, once finalized, circulate for approval vote via email. Post the minutes to *Quick News*, and post alert to congregation when minutes have been posted.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities based on function:

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.

Finance: Submit periodic financial reports to council for approval. Consultant to council on financial matters. Annual report to council on all designated funds.

SPRC: Bring recommendations for staff salaries and benefits on an annual basis or as the need arises. If SPRC requests a change in the SPR budget, we will work with Finance Committee to prepare a revised budget for Ministry Council approval. Conduct annual reviews of all pastoral and lay staff in accordance with Conference guidelines. Prepare compensation packages for all Pastoral Staff, which will be presented to the congregation at the annual Church Conference. Submit recommendations to the Ministry Council on staffing needs and personnel changes.

Work with the Pastoral and Lay Staff to provide a work environment that aligns with the overall mission of Keller UMC.

Board of Trustees: To be determined.

United Methodist Women: Represents mission of UMW through advocacy and service focused on women, children and youth. UMW President acts as Topic Leader as needed.

Pastors: Keep focus on Christ's work in the world. Steward of the Vision – who we are, what has God called us for or to 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. Provides interpretive ruling on *Book of Discipline* between charge conferences.

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.

Stewardship: Coordinates planning and implementation of Christian Stewardship Plan with council, which includes education, inspiration, and action for congregation. Links council to congregational stewardship to fulfill mission of KUMC.