

Ministry Council Meeting Minutes
April 26, 2021

Attending: Rev. Estee Valendy, Rev. Jason Valendy, Judy Belter, Melanie Grice, Diane Whetson, Emie Stewart, Dave Burke, Julie Sizemore, Keith Bierley, Emily Stansberger

Agenda:

1.	Opening preparation for seeking God's will	Estee/Jason	10 minutes
2.	Follow up reports and clarifications	Judy	5 minutes
3.	Alignment of Responsibility/Accountability/Authority	Estee/Jason	20 minutes
4.	Vision	Estee/Jason	5 minutes
5.	Re-opening	Judy/All	20 minutes
6.	Congregational Survey & Team work on Communication	Dave, Judy	30 minutes
7.	Closing Ministry Council Prayer	All	

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

Estee spoke about the Prayer of Indifference, being indifferent to anything but the will of God, and gave biblical examples. The Serenity Prayer used by Alcoholics Anonymous is a Prayer of Indifference. The Serenity Prayer is attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr, a famous German theologian. Estee shared the original, longer version as the opening prayer.

Judy pointed out the team covenant, which has been printed on a poster.

Follow-Up Reports and Clarifications

Judy heard from Lauren with a follow-up on Sunday school classes. She sent 11 invitations: 5 have already started, 3 plan to return, and 1 new class will begin soon. The classes that decided to return were mostly motivated by the vaccine. Julie did not hear from Lauren, but will follow up regarding her class.

Judy and Julie both followed up with Cathy regarding a new clothing closet. Julie discussed the possibility of the Community Storehouse providing clothes or the Resource Center providing vouchers to use in resale stores.

Cathy and Jason did a tour at Community Storehouse to clear up misinformation and find out about their services. Judy said Cathy said she feels very positive about developing a collaboration with Community Storehouse.

Cathy also feels positive about having sufficient funds with an available designated fund. She is working on Trustees in developing a plan. She will return to Ministry Council with a proposal. Cathy

misunderstood one point, thinking that Ministry Council needs to be involved in approving the use of space. Only Trustees need to be involved in that aspect. Judy asked if anyone had other thoughts.

Jason said Trustees wanted Ministry Council to know about the change in plans since there was some potential previously for renting out the space. Melanie clarified that the approved budget did not include potential income from rentals. It was just discussed, but not added to the budget. Jason said Cathy's motivation was just to keep everyone informed and not override any previous decisions.

Alignment of Responsibility/Accountability/Authority

Judy shared her business experience and finding that the root of many problems was misalignment – for example, an employee not having authority to do a task and then holding that employee accountable for the task. Staff members usually question roles when leadership changes.

Estee said she, Jason, Dave and Judy have been in conversation about this topic.

A hand-out titled Pastoral Authority Model at Keller UMC (Appendix A) was distributed. Jason shared the type of leadership that he and Estee feel called to as pastors (Liberate and Serve).

Jason briefly went over the 4 sections in the Book of Discipline that are basically a job description for pastors, and then discussed how he and Estee interpret them and intend to implement them. He shared a metaphor for each of the 4 areas. Cartographers, for example, help visualize a world yet unseen. Midwives assist in birth, guiding the mother on when to push and when to rest. Part of leadership is knowing the rules and understanding limitations. Knowing how to break rules properly so that no harm is done is also important.

Jason posed the question, using the midwife metaphor, who does the birthing? Ideas are conceived by the Holy Spirit and birthed by the body of Christ. Committees, church members, staff members, are all the body of Christ.

Estee said she feels that she and Jason are asked often to operate as a funnel, to hear and approve all ideas. She wants to be part of a bigger channel, not a bottleneck, so that new ideas are not so staff-driven and pastor-driven.

Jason said bringing new things into being is usually messy and loud. The midwife with authority and perceived legitimacy is there to guide the process.

Judy pointed out that if the Pastor's integrity crumbles with one person, there is not necessarily a change in the perceived leadership of the church or the authority of the senior pastors. There must be many times when opportunities are not realized because people believe they need the blessing of senior pastors. She understands the model, but wonders how the entire congregation could be liberated.

Julie said it is learned behavior. Historically everything had to go through the pastors. How do we let the congregation know that a change has happened?

Dave said transformation is confusing. Our job through the various committees is to help people understand when and where to go to help bring their ideas to the committee or group that could help bring the ideas to fruition.

Julie said it's important to spread the word on where to go for assistance.

Judy said she believes that people will serve when they understand that they are liberated to do so.

Dave said the Discipline was designed for congregations to administer a church even without a pastor. We need pastors, especially for spiritual guidance, but they do not need to be involved in every decision. The guidelines already exist, just need to get people in tune with that.

Julie said she thinks there should be a wide broadcast rather than waiting for people to ask for guidance.

Judy encouraged everyone to spread the word in the areas where Council members have influence.

Estee said she and Jason need to be more direct in spreading the word.

Julie said the process for UMW collecting pocket change was cumbersome. She thought there were a lot of barriers to collecting money for a good cause.

Diane said many members have a general idea of committees, but don't know where to take a particular idea.

Julie suggested providing examples: fundraiser idea, new ministry, etc. with guidelines on where to go and what to do.

Judy asked Council members to start gathering ideas to help spread the word.

Jason stated emphatically that the church is not an organization. We are an organism, a body. When flow charts break down, we have to be merciful to people. Efficiencies do not lead to intimacies. Intimacies cultivate a relationship. If an idea doesn't take off, it doesn't mean the church doesn't love you or that the system is broken, it may just not be the right time.

Judy said as we model the guidelines in the Discipline, we will naturally move away from being overly structured. Until we have a common understanding of how to get where we want to go, we will have hard feelings and unmet expectations.

Dave noted that most of us have dealt with top down organizations our whole lives. He encouraged Jason and Estee to continue using words and language to help us with a new understanding.

Julie said that all staff members, not just pastors, need to know that it's OK to empower congregants and avoid putting up roadblocks.

Jason said staff recently changed a column on a form from "approved" to "discussed". Just need to know that information is correct and has been discussed before publishing.

Vision

Jason asked if anyone remembered the proposed statement. Several raised hands. Hearts turning to God and Neighbor.

Judy asked if the proposed vision is appropriate for this point in time.

Estee proposed announcing on Pentecost Sunday on May 23, then preaching about it all summer.

Diane said when she first heard it, she wondered about what it meant. She has grown to love it over time because of the openness that allows for interpretation and growth.

Emie sees the connection with the leadership style. They are both action-oriented, encouraging change in both heart and spirit.

Jason said the prescription of what a heart turning looks like is not defined. It could be repentance, but depends on where the disciple is on the journey.

Judy asked about next steps. Dave said Ministry Council as a representative body of the congregation could move forward and begin talking about it in committee meetings.

Jason sees the whole summer as a transition time as people hear the new vision and members report back to Ministry Council how they responded. He sees it as more of a diffusion process rather than one big announcement.

Dave said infrastructure needs to be set up in advance with communication channels so the new vision can be launched soon after Pentecost. He offered to be the key person to put procedures into place.

Emie suggested that the new vision be in all written communications in the footers.

Re-Opening

Judy asked previously for the Council to research where we are with COVID to help with decisions to be made as far as moving from yellow light to green light phase in re-opening.

Council members were asked to write down what they learned on sticky notes, which were placed into categories for discussion.

Reviewed Cleaning/Disinfecting: Recommendation to go back to normal standard of cleaning? Keith had one exception: staying with current standards through the end of Building Blocks, about 30 days. Dave said they could continue with different procedures from the rest of the church as long as they like, even in the fall. Emie inquired about the HVAC filters. Julie found in research that the filters did not make a difference.

Consensus to go back to normal standard of cleaning with exception of Building Blocks and keeping Sanctuary doors open for air circulation.

Reviewed Mask Policy: Range of opinions on the sticky notes. Julie recommended a class by class decision if everyone in the room is comfortable. Continue to recommend/require masks in passing areas or larger groups. Keith and Diane both concerned with idea of taking off masks once seated in Sanctuary.

Consensus to recommend masks in passing areas, large groups, or the Sanctuary. Allow to take off in smaller groups only by unanimous consent.

Keith concerned about lack of uniform policy if different groups decide different policies.

Emie talked about the constantly changing situation with the possibility of needing booster shots every year.

Judy clarified that we are not making policy, but are following the re-opening plan developed by the Ministry Council and approved by the Conference Superintendent. Need to state where we expect people to wear masks since expectations continue to change in other locations.

Reviewed Social Distancing: We have not been very specific on distancing in the Sanctuary, but have just relied on the roping to distance groups. Judy said we could ask Joey to look at changing the ropes for a smaller amount of space between groups to accommodate more people returning to worship. Julie noted that in Texas the organization/business decides on capacity, so the church is free to do that.

Reviewed Healthy Behaviors: Continue to encourage frequent handwashing, staying home if feeling sick. Estee said that the church only sent two notifications about active cases that were reported after attending worship. No subsequent cases were reported.

Estee noted that the only big change is not fogging between services. Dave noted that the other change would be no masks required for outdoor worship. Jason said guidelines are to pick two of three: outdoors, distance, masks. If outdoor service is distanced, masks not required. Judy said people seem to have learned healthy behaviors, including allowing space in public places.

Jason proposed adding some of this information to this Friday's pastor email.

Congregational Survey

Not enough time to completely discuss. Emie was concerned that survey results would counteract the work already done. Estee said it was more about structure rather than the details of returning to worship related to safety protocols.

Judy asked each Council member to write an introduction or rationale to encourage people to fill out the survey.

Melanie shared results of a previous paper survey in which nearly all respondents had some access and comfort level with technology.

Jason expressed concern over making paper surveys and taxing resources for staff. Instead of producing a paper survey, he suggested calling those who are less comfortable with technology to develop relationships and make sure everyone has access to the survey.

Jason asked for comments and words of invitation for the survey to be sent to Judy by Friday to allow time to edit. Judy will send to Melanie. Melanie will work with Carol to communicate to the congregation, hopefully by Tuesday for Quick News with a reminder in the Friday pastor email message. There will be a separate one-time communication to publish the survey.

Diane clarified that the survey is intended to gather feedback from each person, not just each household.

Judy said the intention is to do a survey annually.

Closed with Ministry Council Prayer at 8:22pm.

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

Desire to abandon command and control style leadership

- Problem of command and control culture that looks like permission/approval seeking.
- This is not the type of leadership we feel called to

What sort of leadership do we feel called to?

- Command and Control
- Equip and Empower
- Liberate and Serve

Book of Discipline's work, role and authority of the pastor

¶ 340. Responsibilities and Duties of Elders and Licensed Pastors-

1. The responsibilities of elders are derived from the authority given in ordination. Elders have a fourfold ministry of Word, Sacrament, Order, and Service and thus serve in the local church and in extension ministries in witness and service of Christ's love and justice. Elders are authorized to preach and teach the Word, to provide pastoral care and counsel, to administer the sacraments, and to order the life of the church for service in mission and ministry as pastors, superintendents, and bishops.

2. Licensed pastors share with the elders the responsibilities and duties of a pastor for this fourfold ministry, within the context of their appointment.

a) **Word and ecclesial acts:**

(1) To preach the Word of God, lead in worship, read and teach the Scriptures, and engage the people in study and witness.

(a) To ensure faithful transmission of the Christian faith.

(b) To lead people in discipleship and evangelistic outreach that others might come to know Christ and to follow him.

(2) To counsel persons with personal, ethical, or spiritual struggles.

(3) To perform the ecclesial acts of marriage and burial.

(a) To perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved and in accordance with the laws of the state and the rules of The United Methodist Church. The decision to perform the ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor.

(b) To conduct funeral and memorial services and provide care and grief counseling.

(4) To visit in the homes of the church and the community, especially among the sick, aged, imprisoned, and others in need.

(5) To maintain all confidences inviolate, including confessional confidences except in the cases of suspected child abuse or neglect, or in cases where mandatory reporting is required by civil law.

b) **Sacrament:**

(1) To administer the sacraments of baptism and the Supper of the Lord according to Christ's ordinance.

(a) To prepare the parents and sponsors before baptizing infants or children, and instruct them concerning the significance of baptism and their responsibilities for the Christian training of the baptized child.

- (b) To encourage reaffirmation of the baptismal covenant and renewal of baptismal vows at different stages of life.
- (c) To encourage people baptized in infancy or early childhood to make their profession of faith, after instruction, so that they might become professing members of the church.
- (d) To explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper and to encourage regular participation as a means of grace to grow in faith and holiness.
- (e) To select and train deacons and lay members to serve the consecrated communion elements.
- (2) To encourage the private and congregational use of the other means of grace.

c) Order:

- (1) To be the administrative officer of the local church and to assure that the organizational concerns of the congregation are adequately provided for.
 - (a) To give pastoral support, guidance, and training to the lay leadership, equipping them to fulfill the ministry to which they are called.
 - (b) To give oversight to the educational program of the church and encourage the use of United Methodist literature and media.
 - (c) To be responsible for organizational faithfulness, goal setting, planning and evaluation.
 - (d) To search out and counsel men and women for the ministry of deacons, elders, local pastors and other church related ministries.
- (2) To administer the temporal affairs of the church in their appointment, the annual conference, and the general church.
 - (a) To administer the provisions of the Discipline.
 - (b) To give an account of their pastoral ministries to the charge and annual conference according to the prescribed forms.
 - (c) To provide leadership for the funding ministry of the congregation. To ensure membership care including compliance with charitable giving documentation requirements and to provide appropriate pastoral care, the pastor, in cooperation with the financial secretary, shall have access to and responsibility for professional stewardship of congregational giving records.
 - (d) To model and promote faithful financial stewardship and to encourage giving as a spiritual discipline by teaching the biblical principles of giving.
 - (e) To lead the congregation in the fulfillment of its mission through full and faithful payment of all apportioned ministerial support, administrative, and benevolent funds.
 - (f) To care for all church records and local church financial obligations, and certify the accuracy of all financial, membership, and any other reports submitted by the local church to the annual conference for use in apportioning costs back to the church.
- (3) To participate in denominational and conference programs and training opportunities.
 - (a) To seek out opportunities for cooperative ministries with other United Methodist pastors and churches.
 - (b) To be willing to assume supervisory responsibilities within the connection.
- (4) To lead the congregation in racial and ethnic inclusiveness.

d) Service:

- (1) To embody the teachings of Jesus in servant ministries and servant leadership.
- (2) To give diligent pastoral leadership in ordering the life of the congregation for discipleship in the world.
- (3) To build the body of Christ as a caring and giving community, extending the ministry of Christ to the world.

(4) To participate in community, ecumenical and interreligious concerns and to encourage the people to become so involved and to pray and labor for the unity of the Christian community.

How Estee and Jason understand, interpret and implement all of the above in order to lead in the way we feel called to lead at KUMC

1. Authority - Perceived legitimacy

- a. Authority is maintained through spiritual disciplines and practices
- b. Authority is maintained through integrity of word and action
- c. Authority is maintained through relational trust within the body

2. Power - Influence of control

- UMC pastoral power resides within four areas, Word, Sacrament, Order and Service
- While all of these areas are important, it seems what we are being asked to speak to directly is the area of "Order"

3. Four areas of power: corresponding metaphors and defining actions

- Area of power : Word
 - Corresponding metaphor : Cartographer
 - Defining actions:
 - Visualize a world yet unseen
 - Inspire exploring new lands
 - Promote the good, true and beautiful
- Area of power : Sacrament
 - Corresponding metaphor : Poet
 - Defining actions:
 - Craft rituals for milestone events
 - Distribute sacraments
 - Model spiritual disciples and practices
- Area of power : Service
 - Corresponding metaphor : Sheepdog
 - Defining actions:
 - Serve within the body (not behind or in front)
 - Nip at the heels of the flock
 - Protect the whole and recover the individual
- Area of power : **Order**
 - Corresponding metaphor : **Midwife**
 - Defining actions (and examples) :
 - Birth the new
 - Tell when to push, when to rest, reading kairos time
 - Transition into death
 - Provide space for dignity in dying, honor the past
 - Liberate one another to follow the Holy Spirit
 - Encourage creativity within the rules, learn the rules well enough to break them properly

Moving from Command and Control model into liberate and serve.