

**First United Methodist Church**  
**Charlottesville, Virginia**  
**Minutes of Church Council Meeting**  
**Monday, November 16, 2020**

The Church Council meeting was a Virtual Meeting – Zoom with 42-44 persons present.

The Church Council meeting was opened by Matt At Lee.

The opening devotions were given by Bill Clarke.

The minutes of the October 19, 2020 Church Council meeting were circulated in advance by email. Since there were no comments or discussion, the minutes of the Church Council were unanimously approved. Rev. Heaton had a follow up report on our slate of officers since Charge Conference. Ida Cummings has agreed to be the Recording Secretary for Church Council in 2021.

**Trustees Report** – Guy Moffett. There was no news to report.

**Endowment Report** – Evelyn Kessler. The balance in the endowment funds as of the end of October was \$2,278,158.67. A distribution of \$35,000 from the Thomas Bequest Fund is being processed to go towards the church budget. A distribution of \$20,000 for the Trustees' Contingency Fund is also in process with \$10,000 coming from the Conway Trust Fund and \$10,000 coming from the Thomas Bequest Fund. We have received a request from Paige Lindblom, Nurture Chair, for \$15,000 to be used towards hiring an interim director for the Preschool to help the preschool with the aim of having it up and running in September 2021. The Endowment committee is scheduled to have a meeting on November 23<sup>rd</sup> to discuss the Preschool request but is asking for Church Council's consideration although they don't need the funds until early next year but they need to know soon if they will be available. These funds would need to come from the Thomas Bequest. Already set aside for distribution but not distributed is \$15,000 approved for possible budget support and another \$30,000 set aside for budget but not approved by the committee. These possible distributions have not been requested yet.

Paige Lindblom spoke regarding the Preschool. The Task Force has been meeting to discuss the possible opening of the FUMC Preschool. We can open in a limited capacity next fall and should be able to do that with some help from the church. Our long-term plan is solid. Starting the school year 2022-2023, we have a great financial plan and an expansion plan for the Preschool. Our financial plan for 2022-2023 depends on the preschool being full. We can cover the teacher salaries next year, but not the director. The following year we will do much better.

Endowment brought forth a request from Paige Lindblom for a disbursement of \$15,000 from the Thomas Bequest Fund, to be used towards hiring a director for the Preschool. A vote was taken, and it was approved by Church Council.

Matt At Lee stated the ground rules for the next section – Finance. We are not voting on the budget for the church and we are not voting on our pastor partnership or the number of pastor positions. We want to hear comments regarding our leaders of the church and what your priorities are for the church and where you want to see us going in 2021. We will vote on some type of budget at the December Church Council meeting. On January 12 or 13, 2021 the conference and district will require Staff Parish' recommendation regarding our pastor appointments for the 2021-2022 cycle. Our Task Forces (FUMC & Wesley Memorial) continues to meet, and they are talking about what is best for our churches together. We will be listening to them and SPRC, as they have their recommendations to make.

**Finance Report** – Jim Berlin. Regarding the pledge campaign, we have received 64 cards with about \$250,000 pledged. Last year we had 105 cards with pledges amounting to \$410,000. We will see where we are the middle of next month and make some follow up calls. Regarding revenue and expenses, we have spent \$125,626.17 less this year than last year. Our income last month was \$31,703.00. Our giving in the last two months (Sept & Oct) has been the lowest in the past three years. The finance committee is a little concerned about this. We are going to see how the rest of the year goes. We really want to exit the year with at least \$200,000 because our giving is slim the beginning of a new year. We only had to pay 72.77% of our apportionments this year, which is a big savings to every church. We did take the PPE loan and that has helped us, but about \$6,000 of the loan will be paid back when the time comes.

**SPRC** – Jim Campbell. Regarding our staff positions now and what is being looked at for 2021. Kathy Berkley is retiring at the end of the week. Lindsey has resigned, effective Nov 23. We are now without an administrative position and facilities. There are no plans to fill the administrative position or the facilities currently. We have in our budget for next year \$21,000 for a Youth Director. A communication person has been eliminated from our budget. Our pre-school employees were furloughed. Over the course of the year, we did a 20% staffing cut for all the staff except for the pastors. We did an additional cut. We cut the administrative positions down to \$21,000 and the program managers (Carolyn & Kevin) to \$25,000, base salary. Carolyn took the biggest hit, but we have given her a bonus of \$4,000 because of all the wonderful work she has done during COVID-19 to help her out. Going forward these are the baselines we are looking at. Regarding the pastor salaries, their salaries were set last year at the charge conference. Those salaries began on July 1, 2020 and go through June 30, 2021. Rev Heaton was very generous. He took an \$11,000 cut in his salary when he went on his sabbatical. If we were to reduce Rev. Heaton's salary it would affect his pension. We also looked at their housing allowance. Rev. Woodson was given a \$30,000 housing allowance so he could live in Charlottesville. Under United Methodist rules, both pastors must be given the same allowance, so Rev. Heaton's allowance was raised. Depending on what we do regarding

our pastors, we do have the ability to re-set the salaries in the future. SPRC did not want to reduce the staff salaries but had no choice because of the budget.

Regarding the children's ministry Carolyn McGee and Paige Lindblom will handle this for 2021. We do not have extra money in December, because we are giving Kathy and Lindsey their salaries through the end of the year. This is done because of the service to the church. Kevin White thanked everyone, and he loves working in the church. He has volunteered to help with some of the facilities area.

Matt At Lee would like for everyone to speak from your own experiences and what has been a part of your life and where the church is going. The floor was opened for discussion. Some of the comments include:

What is communication? Phil is doing a lot of this now and spending a lot of time to put together the Sunday services and the mid-week update along with many other things. If we go to one pastor, then we might need a communication director.

Youth is a real priority and how do we engage them. Megan Eddy has been working with the youth. She will continue this until the end of the year. This is in discussion now as to what to do next year. It is important to hear from the youth. We need to figure out how to get more youth into the church. We need to attract young families and young adults. Need to have small groups and connect with each other. Carolyn McGee has done a fantastic job with congregational care. We need a Youth Ministry.

We do need to focus on Nurture. We need leadership that nurtures. We need to stop focusing so much on worship services.

We should not lose sight of Church Administration. When looking at staffing for 2021 maybe we should look at hourly rates rather than salary? The staff really spends a lot of time working and people do not realize how much work the staff does. What are we going to do when we have no one to answer the phones and do other chores? Perhaps SPRC should do job descriptions and see how long certain tasks take? Are folks spending too much time with the worship service? It is nice to see so many different people in the worship services. No one has mentioned anything about how much money we are spending. Are we going in the right directions with our budget? We know we cannot fund at the level we were but are we afraid we will lose what we have. We do need administrators in the church.

When can we have church services? Trustees are listening to the worship team. Most people do not want to be inside until there is a vaccine. Worship by phone is available. Maybe we could open the church to some small groups to have some interaction. Maybe redirect some worship energy?

Matt At Lee asked - Does anyone have in their experience, something we should focus less on than we do now? Should we direct some energy or finances in another direction?

We have not mentioned folks in the church of advanced age. We have mentioned other ages but not the older generation. Many older folks keep in touch with their peer groups. Many older folks feel left out of the church during this COVID-19 time. We do have an intergenerational church but how do we build bridges between young people and older people?

The size of our budget is a concern because our membership is smaller. Our budget should reflect that. Maybe we should compare our budget with other Methodist churches.

It was mentioned that our building needs constant and expensive maintenance and repairs.

Our next topic of discussion is Pastoral Partnership. We have two pastors serving FUMC and Wesley Memorial. Pastors are appointed by the conference. We did not have a lot of time to consider this partnership in the beginning. On January 12 or 13 our SPRC will make their recommendation regarding the pastoral leadership. The pastors will communicate with the conference to give their recommendations, as well. Before Covid-19 we did a survey and received 108 responses. 2/3 of the responses said we only needed one pastor and 75% of the responses said we could only afford one pastor. In 2018 our membership averaged 264 per Sunday, in 2019 our average attendance dropped to 217 – we did receive 41 new members - but our attendance still dropped. In 2020 we have had a net loss of 63 members. Regarding Wesley Memorial from 7-1-2020 to 6-30-2021 we are getting \$45,000. Wesley has agreed from 7-1-2021 to 6-30-22 to up their amount to \$60,000. Our Associate Pastors salary is a total of \$81,000 if you include health benefits- \$12,000, that is \$93,000. If we receive \$60,000 from Wesley, we still must make up \$33,000.

Gary and Phil have both done amazing things. We have no control over whether they are appointed to our church. We are not going to talk about the individual pastors in this meeting. The church has not always had two pastors. The church can run with one pastor. The church is going to look so different after Covid-19.

Matt At Lee would like to focus on the following: We have been cooperating with Wesley in a way we never have before. We can always work with Wesley or any other church in the district. What are some of the benefits you have seen working with Wesley? What are the challenges? What do you want SPRC or the Task Force to know?

Rev. Heaton reminded us about the drive thru celebration for Kathy's retirement. Lindsey does not want anything. Regarding the partnership, Rev Phil, Rev Gary and Rev Isaac Collins made a video back in April. We might want to revisit what was said at that time because we were sailing into some uncharted waters on what it means to be church. This partnership has been an experiment, with a lot more questions than answers. The duties of the pastors have greatly changed since Covid-19 began and there is nothing to compare these times to. Wesley

Memorial has some unique ministries going on and it was going to be hard to find someone who was familiar with their sanctuary ministry.

Matt At Lee once again opened the floor for conversation:

It was mentioned that some folks do not know how we are connected to Wesley. Wesley has invited the Task Force and others to join their Sunday morning classes. This was a good way to get to know some of the Wesley folks. We have had opportunities to invite each other into fellowship, communion, Sunday School and youth group.

If we are going to continue to have two pastors, then the pastors will have to take on some other jobs (youth ministries and other ministries). Our Associate Pastor is paid way over other Associate Pastors in the district or state. We have lost members and our income is down. If we are going to keep two pastors, then we are going to have to find a way to cover one pastor from some where else. We cannot cut staff anymore. Our building cost money to operate. It is good to have someone always there for you and know the people. We may not what to do a partnership if we are having financial problems. The Task Force has talked to Wesley to let them know that FUMC would want \$60,000 more. Wesley is proceeding as if they are going to get a full-time pastor. We are not able to subsidize a pastor for Wesley. The partnership is a great deal for Wesley but not for FUMC. We need to nurture our own congregation. The short version is we do not love it. Our biggest challenge is that we have not been financially responsible. We need to change our focus and do what we can afford.

Matt At Lee closed our meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Harriet Lambert

Recording Secretary

Church Council