



Mission - Love God and Neighbor, Build Community - - No Limits

Church Council Meeting

Meeting Date: Tuesday September 24, 2024, 7:00-8:30

Meeting Place: In Person, Wesley Hall

- **Opening Devotion and thoughts for tonight's meeting-** Dick Eisenbarth
 - Psalm 46 -Jesus calling references to overcome anxiety
- **Council Meeting call to order-** Dick Eisenbarth
- **Approval of the Council Meeting notes July 23, 2024** (see attachment)
 - Minutes approved.

- **Committee Reports:**

- **Generosity-** Jim Clark

I wanted to recognize the members of the Generosity committee Kim Ginter, Jen Holmes, Jeff Hayes, Andrea Vrtikapa, Charlie Rankin, Sandra Clark, Jim Clark, Judith Cordero, Britt Gilmore, Nieke Oglesby, Dick Eisenbarth. This is probably one of the best committees I've been a part of. Everything you see coming out, you can see the touch of the hands of these people. Generosity Committee is having a good year to date, doing well with giving. Going in with a positive ending, it does look like it will be. Annual campaign is under way until Oct 6. When we look at the year, they are ahead. There's about \$18,000 (or more) towards the 150th gift. Next quarterly update will be after the 150th celebration. Next focus areas we're looking at are strategic giving, emergency funds, capital giving and memorial giving and planned legacy. I'm excited to see where God is going to lead us. Britt helps guide us through it and we appreciate that. The 150th gifts are going into the principal for the debt reduction.

Finance-John Lewis

We have been having a good year, even though summer slows down. The overall budget has looked good. Year to date through August revenue was \$1,640M, 22,800 ahead of budget. Increased by \$251,290 from the same period last year. Year to date expenses \$1,741M, \$16,000 below budget. Operating deficit is \$101,000 compared to the budgeted deficit year to date \$140,000 Pledges year to date \$590,000, \$5,000 ahead of budget. Receipts increased by \$86,000, non-pledged contributions were \$200,000 ot \$14,000 ahead of budget. MUMC pledged and non-pledged contributions were \$608,000 or \$44,000 ahead of budget. Longleaf pledged and non-pledged offerings were \$124,000 or \$17,000 below budget. Total



contributions were \$804,000 or \$19,000 ahead of budget, Contributions increased by \$129,000 from last year. Learning Ladders revenues were \$547,000 or \$14,000 ahead of budget. Checking account balance is good \$346,000. Working capital funds in the Fidelity account is doing well. Total working capital \$285,000.

Trustees- Andrea Wheeler

- Brazilian Church requesting space rental, Room 851, they've looked at and we offered that no one uses right now. They would be there on Sundays from 11:00-12:30pm. Kids will be upstairs and spoke with Angie and Andrea with child youth protection and no issues. Hope to grow, if they grow will move to Room 304. Current SS class in there so would have to shift their times. They are a 501(c) 3 nonprofit and their main campus is in Marietta, GA. 15-20 people at this point. Have everything ready for us to allow them to rent from us. 1.5 hours for \$150 per week. Trustees want to move ahead with it. Not the same group that rented with us before. Do we pay taxes for that? No. Is there a term on that lease? We would create one in the rental. Generally a year. And there's a clause if there's an issue either party can get out. Will the rental fee increase if they grow and changes rooms? They also want to do an opening ceremony which would depend on our schedule. They were interested in the Worship Center. And we can charge them a separate fee for that. Second option would be Sanctuary. Church Council approves.

Staff Parish Relations-Mike Overton

In the annual budget process. SPR submits budget recommendation, staff increases and clergy compensations. One thing we had to wrestle with was that the Federal Dept of Labor sets standards for workplaces. Salaried employees are exempt from getting paid overtime if they make over \$35,000. On July 1st the Dept increased that to \$43,888 and then it will go up to \$58,656 January 1st. As an employer we are responsible for following those rules. There were multiple lawsuits in Texas to put it on hold, a judge put it on hold for the state of Texas only. It became active July 1st for the rest of the country. We had 2 staff members below that number so we felt it was important to bump up the salaries to that level. We are waiting to see what to do January 1st. Some think a judge will strike it down because a Dept of Labor does not have the authority to set these kind of rules. That's part of our budget for 2025, so waiting to see what happens for 2025.

The other thing is the annual minister effectiveness – a conference process where we meet with the clergy, do an evaluation of ministry goal setting and submit that to the conference. What we had been doing, we renew that every year. Most people found it cumbersome and not helpful, but it's required. We started a new process where we do that and an optional seasonal conversation, meeting every quarter where a team will meet with each pastor and look back at goals, are they effective, do we need to change them? How is it with your soul? Talk to the pastors, work life balance, how are they doing? Over the course of the year, build a connection with the clergy person, what they are doing weekly, monthly. It's an ongoing process. Beginning of year, late spring, early summer, then submit to conference. Helping the clergy be effective in their ministries. Are those teams rotated? The team stays with the pastor for the whole year. As we get new people we will change the teams. We may think we know what pastors do on a daily basis, this will help us understand better.

Dick – taking the Know, Grow and Go values we've established and using quantifiable measures to evaluate them.

150th Anniversary preparation update- Linda Hurley

You've seen tidbits. Taylor Mathis putting it together and pastors incorporating them. Ward Clayton has been contacting Jax dignitaries to see if they will come. Contacted old pastors and hoping some will be here. They will be incorporated in the celebration at 11:00. Bringing BBQ in and then church members will do the sides (covered dish). Kind of old-fashioned feeling. Taylor Mathis is asking for testimonies. Type up something and send it to her. If you've got a favorite memory from the church or how the church has impacted your life and she can incorporate that into something we are putting together. Adam is writing a special song, all choirs performing, and gathering all memorabilia. If you have something, let Linda know. We are putting everything out. We have enough directories and please no clippings from newspapers with no date on it. If you have questions contact Suellen.

- **2025 Budget Draft -Generosity /Finance Staff Parish, End of Nov.**
First reading of budget 2025. Wide gap at the beginning and then try to close the gap. In December we will have a budget that we want to recommend to go forward. We are optimistic and concerned with the annual conference grant. Great if we got 200k. We will probably get something but not sure what it will be.

- **Announcements and updates:**

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- Pastors Report – Pastor Britt

We have coming up on Saturday the annual charge conference. Once a year a charge conference is the time we would approve leadership for the following year, pastor salaries for the next years, different items of business, renewal of candidates for ministry and financial policies. Saturday morning the charge conference is going to be a cluster conference with other churches at First UMC of Jacksonville at 9:15am. A sense of celebration of ministry for the area and a time of business. If there are questions, now is the time for them. The Bishop has said that all the charge conferences are church conferences, all church members are welcome to attend.

Nominations and leadership group that invites people to serve in leadership positions for the coming year. Current status of the work for 2025. I have gratitude for all those who serve in our church. The list of names of everyone serving on different committees is just the tip of the iceberg of what make our ministries possible here. Hospitality for funerals, kitchen crew, musicians, children's ministry, etc. All the people that help I'm reminded that you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it. It takes all of our gifts and efforts to share love – know gods love and share that with the community.

Progress on this, but a few conversations still happening and a few positions to be filled out. Church Council, At Large church Council members. A number of you are part of the class of 2024. Currently 30 were part of that whittled down from a larger number because of the tensions we were going through. We traveled with a larger than normal size Church Council for the last few years. This past year the council has turned their focus to mission and vision and we are a little smaller in size. 30 people rotating off. The committee thought let's try to aim for about 15 people that would be At Large members – 5-6 people in each class. With that aim in mind, there are 13 names in the At Large Church Council members. Had conversations with people that were part of Class of 2024 asking to serve another year. Looking at some who are newer to community and inviting people with fresh perspective. Some who had served previously and inviting them back in. A little arranging to have those classes be more even. A couple of names still thinking about it, maybe the committee would still be open to others if people were interested in serving. That gives context to the At Large Council members. The top section is the chairs of committees. Dick Eisenbarth has been Chair for 4 years, extended time and now rotating off. There's still a couple places where Dick will help serve in leadership. Mike Overton is willing to chair this body moving forward into next year. Elaine Goleski and Jeff Hayes are willing to continue for a 3rd year as Co-Lay Leaders with Ashley Williams as Chairperson for the Longleaf Core



Team. Lay members to Annual Conference. Janson & Suellen had been to Annual Conference previously and went for the first time in a number of years and Rick and Pat Smith have agreed to do that. Usually we end up with 6 District Representatives, there is an opportunity for a couple more. With Mike rotating off of SPR Chair, which is not finished yet. Andrea Wheeler was Trustees Chair but has agreed to do one more year as Chair. The Generosity Chair is one area where we're also looking to finalize. John Lewis is finishing a 3-year term on Finance – he is accepting from Rick Thomas the UMM President. Alex O'Connor is willing to be Chairperson of Finance. Wayne is usually at our Church Council meetings as Treasurer, Kathy had surgery today. Surgery went well but Wayne is by her side. Sandra is current UWF President. Steve Calvarese is Representative to Residing Hope (Children's Home). That is an overview. We have a further Church Council meeting to properly recognize their service at the end of the year. This represents the work of the nominations and leadership committee over the past 6 weeks. A combination of newer people coming into leadership roles and other transitions to different leadership roles.

Do you feel good about this slate of names moving forward? Yes.

Annual Church Conference Sept. 28th 9:15 AM

Cluster Conference Sept. 28 First UMC Downtown Jacksonville
Leadership Nominations Report and status

Pastor Salary review

At charge conference they finalize pastor's salaries. Mike Overton – clergy and staff compensation is approved at charge conference. We submitted the recommendation but knowing we cannot finalize it yet. There's no increase going into this charge conference. We will address that when we get Generosity numbers.

Membership Report

Membership Audit. New members are joining this Sunday. Some families here just a few months and are very involved. We also have people we lose touch with over the course of time or become inactive. If people do become inactive, we send a letter to reach out to them. Before this would happen, a pastor can reach out if someone has been inactive and hasn't been in worship for a longer period of time. We bring these names to the Church Council in case someone knows the status of any of these people. There is also a second year that the names are listed before they are removed from

the rolls. Please look through the names and let us know if you have any information about any of these individuals and a way to connect with them. You can reach out to any pastor or Andrea Vrtikapa and we will connect with them. Otherwise this is the list we will submit with our charge conference report.

No new candidates for ministry, but 3 ongoing candidates up for renewal. Emily Lorenzen approved back in May. Enrolled in Candler. She is encouraged at her first semester and has a role in youth ministry. Church Council approves to renew her candidacy. Grace Rogers has a history growing up here. In second year at Candler. Had great experiences in first year doing chaplaincy in a local prison there. Church Council approves her renewal. Daniel Wiekert worship leader at Longleaf and doing next stage to prepare to apply as local pastor. Church Council approves renewal.

Renewal of financial policies. One element we were looking to make sure we are in line. Received an audit in the spring, as we do every year. That audit was brought to charge conference, as well as a copy that we want to renew financial policies and procedures. Report from trustees that is signed off on.

- **Core Values, Mission and Vision-Britt to kick off**

Handout from our last Council meeting for further reflection (attached)

Defining our Discipleship Path of Know, Grow and Go.

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- Pastor Missy-GROW in God's love
- Pastor Kevin-KNOW God's love
- Pastor Britt- GO in God's love

Missy Kevin and Britt bonding as a new pastoral team and each of them will begin leading discussions with staff and other groups. Each would lead one of those areas. Missy is focusing her efforts in Growing God's love. Kevin will be leading us in Knowing God's Love. Britt Going in God's love. We are going to think a little bit about next steps.

Missy – We want to look at how we tie key values to this Vision statement. Grow in God's love – identified through the conference to have an emphasis on Wesleyan rootedness and we are using Wesleyan rooted themes. You will hear more about this in a sermon series and churchwide bible study to study

deeper what each of these values mean to us moving forward. Put together a value statement for each of these circles. Growing: “No matter how long any of us have followed Christ, there is more of God’s amazing love to integrate. We will intentionally engage in practices and rhythms of life that broaden and deepen our relationship with God.” We want to continue to engage this value statement. We gathered a team together and looked at the value statement and each underlined and bold word we looked to see what was important to us and came down to agree this is the value statement we want to move forward with. We wanted to develop an assessment guide for initiating new efforts (new bible studies, activities). Does it fit within our values? We wanted to evaluate our current efforts, are they still working? Retire the efforts not meeting the values. Identify strengths of our church. What are we doing well? Talented people? What are our resources and are we using them well. Develop training and to use those resources. Adult Discipleship and many other areas of church have people who lead and we wanted to train them well and make sure they fit within the values. Have an annual conversation with each individual to see if there are changes to be made. The next step we will do during our next meeting with the Grow Team is to come up with assessment questions when we meet with the different ministries of the church. Ask how do you intentionally engage people to grow in their faith? Examples. How do you intentionally engage people to read faithfully. How do you intentionally engage broader individual practices? How do you intentionally engage deeper individual practices? How do you intentionally engage broader group connection? How do you intentionally engage deeper group connection? How do you encourage intentional integration of God’s love into the rhythms of your participants? They can probably answer one or two or three and give examples. What would you like to work on more? Go deeper? More people (expand)? How can we support you and what strategies can we adopt for that to happen?

Kevin – Knowing God’s love and what it looks like for our church. Definition: Open ourselves to god’s love personally and as a community. We affirm that God desires for all people to come to a knowledge of the love and forgiveness found in Jesus Christ. Tell someone near you the name of a person who helped you to know God’s love when you were young. I know the people I’m thinking of, I think of the way they treated me and the way they made me feel. That’s how God’s love works. When we experience the values it flows from God’s love for us. When you think about it, it’s always a person/relationship. We want you to give the same gift to others. The Wesleyan rooted theme is Embrace Widely. This is coming soon to a pulpit near you. I thought the image of Jesus embracing people, and people Jesus might have encountered in the gospels, Jesus embraced these individuals. Disciples, the Samaritan woman, Roman soldier, untouchable leper. I also love the way the church shaped the value



statement in 2 different directions like broadening and deepening, and also knowing God's love is individual and communal.

Britt – Who in the room can juggle? Dropping balls doesn't happen with these discipleship values. They all go together. Love Actively and Serve Impactfully. Scriptural stories of people being called to go. Like Moses in the burning bush with his sandals off and God said to him, "I have seen the misery of my people. I care about their suffering," and then he sends him. In the moment of knowing he's also being sent, he's learning that loving God and loving neighbor are intertwined. That part of our mission statement are intertwined. I know I'm supposed to love God and neighbor, but I want to know who is my neighbor. This is an image of the good Samaritan. There is another man who saw the injured man and is moved with compassion and he acts. He loves actively. The value statement that goes along with this, as we are loving and serving and guided by the Holy Spirit. What is God's mission and what's our way to take part in it. We will strive to deepen our friendships and connections with our neighbors. Where can we get to know people better? Where can we build relationships where connections are strained. The idea of meeting with a small group together that went between the two campuses. We are looking to see if there can be a Go Team to bridge the two campuses and use the assessment questions. We talked about having some of those questions that relate to Know, Grow and Go. Missy shared about some of the ways that can be used. We also thought it would be appropriate as SPR is in seasonal conversations with clergy, we want to redevelop in a new season good goal setting in our staff. The goals can be labeled with some of these questions. We will be asking the staff what will link in with our vision.

- **Focus on Council input and defining Ministry Action Plans (MAP) Examples-** Dick
- **Where can we begin to develop Ministry Action Plans for each Discipleship Path?** Feedback from Council. – working on this for next Council Meeting

Dick – some examples of Grow are current studies and new studies on Wednesday nights, etc. Know is building relationships with each other like our interaction with Freedom Crossing, teacher appreciation lunch with Chick Fil A. Go is the Ruck, Homeless Coalition, Cup of Love. We have MAPs (Mission Action Plans). What is the vision? This puts it all together in one document for evaluation. When I became Council Chair, I realized how the different campuses had different names for their committees and I kind of pushed to get them blended into one. Hopefully



we can get a plan going forward after the next Council meeting for the first of the year.

- **Next Council Meeting: December 3rd**
- **Adjournment**-Dick Eisenbarth
- **Prayers of Praises and Concerns** – Pastor Missy

Piper (Don and Darlene Carter's niece) battling cancer passed away Sunday, 11 years old.

Prayers for Ellen Whitmer's brother William Anderson in Atlanta health issues related to smoking

Jim (Mike Overton's brother-in-law) stage 4 melanoma

Gibson family (Alice Gibson in hospice) daughter Nancy in membership class

Emma Langley back surgery dealing with pain and father recently passed away.

Alan, friend of Catherine Henry, had a brain tumor removed and prognosis not good

Kathy Crowell's surgery

Anyone in the path of Hurricane Helene, and parents traveling to FSU to get children home before the storm

Neighbor of Jack Downey who is deeply depressed and is also going to be baptized at end of October. Inviting to church

Jean Ehrlich hip replacement and doing great