

MINUTES
Church Council Meeting
September 15, 2010

The regular meeting of Church Council of First United Methodist Church, Williamstown, West Virginia, was called to order on Wednesday, September 15, 2010, at 6:45 p.m.

In attendance were Chip Pickering, Church Council Chairperson; Cathy Engle, Mission Team Chairperson; Jon Dehmlow, Finance Team Chairperson; Cyndi Pyles, Staff-Parish Relations Team Chairperson; Cyndy Goldsworthy, Communications and Prayer Teams Chairperson; Kriss Bodnar, Program Ministries Team Chairperson; Pam Middleton, Member-at-Large; Steve Gedon, Pastor, and Betty Ball, Church Council Secretary.

At this point, Steve Gedon, Pastor, and Cyndi Pyles, Staff-Parish Relations Team Chairperson, left to meet with a group that is organizing a choir outside the parameters of the church's policy.

The minutes of Church Council Meeting of August 11, 2010, had previously been submitted to those concerned. Motion was made and seconded to approve those minutes as submitted. Motion passed.

Trustees - Kriss Bodnar reported for Chairperson Steve Bodnar that they are still waiting to hear from the firm that will repair the stained-glass window. It should be taken care of within the next month.

Chip Pickering stated that with respect to the property next door, he had talked to the owner's son who said he would not be finished cleaning the house for another two or three weeks. He did indicate that he was getting someone in to do an evaluation to establish a price and value for the home. After he gets the evaluation, he will be OK with a Letter of Intent and let us proceed to move into the backyard for a playground area. Chip hasn't heard anything back since that conversation. He will try to stay on top of this issue. Children's Ministries have set up the playground equipment in the Multi-Purpose Room for the present time.

Finance - Jon Dehmlow reported that Shirley Mills, Financial Secretary, has resigned effective September 30, 2010. The Finance Team met last week and Ed Engle, Church Treasurer, has graciously offer to be interim Financial Secretary. We have a job description for this position but this allows Ed to see the nuts and bolts of what we actually need that person to do. We have asked Staff-Parish Relations Team to post this job as a permanent position but Ed plans to work with Shirley Mills until the end of the month. This is a paid position. The yearly salary is \$3,800. We have asked Staff-Parish to pay Ed the pro-rata amount of that for his work. Kianna Anderson pays the bills; the Financial Secretary posts bills in the different categories. Kianna and Ed have been working with the Internal Revenue Service on the notice that some tax was due from 2006 and 2007; the IRS W-2 and W-3 forms didn't match up. Of course there are some

penalties. Kianna did a tape on the W-2 and W-3 forms and found no discrepancies, so is asking Ed to check the work. Pam Middleton said they might want to check the 941's. The issue was identified but our numbers weren't in line with theirs.

Our giving to date is sufficient to pay the operating expenses. We were \$6,000 over the operating expenses but that doesn't include the part that we would pay from the budget toward our annual expenses this year. Some ministries are doing a really good job this year and some are not spending as much as they thought they would. We are not in a bad situation but we are not able to fund the ministry teams as we wanted. We will have a challenge in the next fiscal year. Chip wanted to know if the ministries have not spent because they are not doing what they wanted to do. Kriss said the Children's Ministries Team depends on fund raisers and the youth have done fund raising. Time was when teams were fully funded. Pam asked how do teams know that they are not supposed to raise it. Kriss said we have been getting financial reports and teams have gotten used to tightening their belts. We are not operating on full power, but are managing.

Jon Dehmlow said we have talked about a stewardship campaign during the year and that was their focus during their meeting last week. This involves a book, "Treasures of a Transformed Life," and a 40-day Bible study that Pastor Steve Gedon has talked about to us. Evan Bohnen and Jon met with Steve on, "Where do we go from here?" We will get small groups up and running. One of the things mentioned is getting used to talking about what it means to be a steward, not just asking for money but time and talent as well. Right now a great majority of giving units give less than \$100 a year to the church; a surprising amount do that. We rely on the other 10 to 20 percent to give the vast majority of the money to the church. Some may not have grown up in a church where giving was expected or done. It was bred into some people that you tithe. We need to find a way to reach those folks so they will give on another level and we hope this stewardship campaign will do that. All the things we do require money as well as time and talents. We need to get away from "someone else will pay for it." Everyone will not give the same amount, but people who can't invest can give time and talent. That is the direction we would like to go. We want to have a Ministry Fair sometime in November. It would be set up in the MPR so people can look at the opportunities available. Finance wants to be a part of that. Budget season is fast approaching. Kriss noted that Program Ministries met last week and the team was warned that budget season is upon us and sheets would be available next month. Jon said teams should review their dream scenarios and look at that. We will start that process in October and the Pastor needs his salary worksheet by October 1st for the Charge conference, which is October 20th. We have been working with him and Staff-Parish on that. That is a big element in the church budget. Chip asked if Council has to approve that. Jon answered that Staff-Parish does that and Finance works with them on that. Question was asked when the budget is due. Jon answered that if he could get everything voted on in November that would be good. Kriss said last year we said end of October or first of November.

Cyndy Goldsworthy referred to the Ministry Fair and the fact that the November issue of Tidings goes out November 7th. If wanted, she will do the articles on what each individual team will be sharing at the fair. Kriss said we haven't had time to talk about it specifically. It was questioned whether we wanted to invite regional (outside) teams or just our church. Jon said we want to invite people from the Foundation in Charleston and it would be good to invite people from the regional units as well as being open to people from other Methodist churches in the area. Hearts and Hands was mentioned. We need to know people and know what the ministries are, plant seeds. We need to start thinking about this. Cyndy said if we let her know who is involved, she can talk to them and devote the entire Tidings issue to their comments if that would be helpful.

Chip asked if the stewardship campaign will have a pledge commitment. Jon answered that the program has a pledge commitment, not just financial giving, but other things as well. Evan Bohnen and Jon Dehmlow talked to Steve Gedon about pledge cards. They don't have strong feelings about this but feel it would be good if they just get a 20% return of cards. We could offer automatic withdrawal, have that type of opportunity available for people, or do some kind of pledge card for money purposes. It would be designed to get people to think about this as a weekly or monthly commitment they have made. Kriss said maybe instead of "pledge" cards, they could be "commitment" cards, commit to faithful attendance, commit to participating in church ministries. Jon said that is what the pledge cards look like. He feels "queasy" about people saying they will be here three out of four weeks. Kriss said we could have a commitment card, committing to be more faithful, a commitment between them and God, not between them and a team or their wallet. Jon asked the feeling of Council. There were no adverse feelings toward pledge or commitment cards.

Cyndy Goldsworthy noted that we are spoiled and have the idea the money will always be there because it always was there. Churches do not function as they should without the money. We have to convince the congregation that the days that the money was always there do not now exist. We have to step forward and support this church. We have a major concern about stewardship where money is involved. She hopes that we can be very transparent and open with the congregation, talk about commitment and prayer, but the integral part is financial stewardship. Be clear it is financial stewardship; don't cover up saying that it is something else and then at the end say, "We want your money." Kriss said we need to know the big picture, time talent and resources. Cyndy said we need to be open and really honest. Our definition of stewardship should be all-inclusive or it will create problems for the church and Steve Gedon.

Staff-Parish Relations - No report, but they have been meeting.

Jon Dehmlow said one of the things people have been bringing up is that the handbell choir director should be paid. We are limited on finances. Kriss Bodnar said that this job is no more important than any of the work of the other teams and there are dozens of people in this church working hard and not asking for pay and usually not even getting any thanks. If we have people who have gifts and talent, they should volunteer them. When Barbara Maconaghy was here, she took piano lessons so she could play for the Sunday evening service. It is wonderful to have an awesome choir but it is also great to have three people singing off key if they are passionate about it. Jon said the choir we had was wonderful and he didn't realize that people were griping that we were not in robes. Pam said she enjoyed everything about it. It was worship.

Ministry Teams - Kriss Bodnar, Chairperson. The church has a mission to make disciples and make a difference. We are to use all our resources - time, talents and money to fulfill that mission. How will we do this? We have this mission and it has to funnel through on how to make disciples and make a difference. There are no major updates on the ministry teams. We had the church picnic. Next meeting is October 4th at 7 p.m. We want Jon Dehmlow to attend to talk about the budget.

Mission Team - Cathy Engle needs guidance from Church Council on what the Mission team should be doing to go with the mission statement. There are six special offerings each year and the team would like to do more locally. If we get the house next door, would like to use part of the garage to have available large furniture items such as beds, perhaps a refrigerator, have one of what most people might need. The garage would be good for the clothes closet as they need more space. Should we be working more locally? Kriss said if the need is local, look through the lens of time, talent and resources, get something done. Steve Bodnar has a passion for starting a handyman's job group with people who have time and talents and will pool together what resources they have.

Jon said the Ministry Fair could be partly set up for local missions with sign-up sheets for people to work at the Community Breakfast, etc., as well as regional things to inform people. Until reading Cathy Engle's Mission Team Guidance sheet (copy attached and made a part of these minutes), he had never heard of the House of the Carpenter. Steve Gedon said one thing we are beginning to see is that often we think of this church being for Williamstown but we have more regional people. What are we doing for people in Marietta? We do assist the Women's Care Center and the EVE Shelter. Kriss said the tradition is to give of our resources, but time and talent are the next step. Someone has a broken window; we need to find someone to fix that. We need to be more intentional, get hands-on, involved, solving a problem, when you get a chance to be Jesus for them. We just need to take that in hand. Jon said we probably don't have any idea of some of the organizations that people help with that we don't know about.

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New Business - Property Expansion - The need should be defined. We need a list of

what we are not doing because we don't have the space. This could be outlined at the Ministry Fair.

The Bishop will visit with laity on October 24th, 3 p.m., at a location to be announced. He will meet with Pastors the day after that.

This coming summer there is a youth event of the UMC at Purdue University. Gary Nelson, Pastor of Sand Hill UMC, is trying to get a group together. Cost is \$400 per person.

There is always a problem getting people to step up or get involved in different ministries. We know people are busy but some of the things should not be left to languish. We need people to be nominated for Staff-Parish and Worship. We need to do some things for leadership development. It is really tough getting people to come out for a meeting like this. If anyone knows of people you think would be interested, let Steve Gedon know. Trustees, Finance and Staff-Parish are required for rotation. Jon asked what positions are needed at Charge conference. Steve Gedon said we need three for Trustees, three for Staff-Parish and a Lay Leader. Cyndi Pyles asked what is involved in Lay Leader. Steve Gedon said it is not a Staff-Parish issue. This is a person who says what is going on, is spiritually guided, respected, not part of any team. The Pastor is in balance with the Lay Leader of the church. We have Church Council and different bodies to provide balance. We need someone who comes to church regularly, is in tune with the church and who has the voice of the congregation. Steve asked that we make a recommendation to the Nominating Team and we ask if the person attends church and that nomination is then presented to Charge Conference where it is voted on. Lay Leader, Chair of Trustees, Chair of Finance and Chair of Church Council must be members of the church. If anyone has recommendations, let Steve know.

Fall Stewardship Campaign - We need to kick off the stewardship program; this is very important. We need to focus our energy in that direction. Toward the end of the year, our spirits usually get lifted higher. We will be meeting in small groups and have an opportunity to tell people that we know they are hurting and maybe don't feel as comfortable as they would like. Steve Gedon said our mission is making disciples. Some people think his job is to grow the church, just as long as he doesn't change anything. We are seeing two paradigms coming in conflict in the last couple of years. In the last four or five years, the 9 a.m. service has grown into a competitive level. Before, everyone was in one service, had one style, everyone knew everyone else. Now we have a group coming at 9 a.m. for a different paradigm, and people coming at 11 a.m. who have been in their mode for decades and they don't want a common ground. They want it "my way." 9 a.m. feels that as well. There are two different paradigms, whether to "serve God or myself."

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Jon Dehmlow said the only solution for people to grow into a disciple of Christ is to have the heart of a Christian. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? We need the mind set

of the Beatitudes. We need to say, “If I can be a small group leader and do a Bible study, I will do it.” The only approach is commitment. We need an attitude of gratitude and be thankful for this church. We want to worship together and don’t want it torn apart because God would be and is very displeased. Steve Gedon said when differences arise, it is God working within us. We have visions and we have passions. There is always a “back to Egypt” movement in any church and there will always be that tension of “what can be” with “what was.” The good thing is that we can have that dialogue and leave with some sense of, “What do you want to leave for your children and grandkids?”

Meeting adjourned on motion at 9:32 p.m. and closed with prayer by Pastor Steve Gedon.

Next meeting of Church Council is tentatively set for Wednesday, October 13, 2010, at 6:30 p.m.

Betty Ball, Church Council Secretary

Attachment:

Mission Team Guidance Sheet (2 pages)