

Manchester United Methodist Church
August Leadership Board Meeting
Minutes
August 11, 2024 / 3:00 – 5:00pm

Attendance: Pastor Andy Blacksher, Pastor Ron Beaton, Sara Bebee, John Miller, Kelly Wicks, Jennifer Forsythe, Joe Elstner, Doug Christopher, Joy Parisien, Dave Divjak, Craig Looney, Kandi-Karger-Robinson, Suzanne Shimkus, Mindy Brinkhorst, Sue Beval, John Heskett
Guest: John Himple

Opening

Call to Order - 3:04 pm

Minutes – Suzanne Shimkus

Devotion – Jennifer Forsythe

Joys and Concerns

- Sneakers for Soul was a tremendous hit! Thank you to all who helped and donated.
- Kelly's stepfather was severely burned. Surgery tomorrow. Months of recovery.
- Pat Chambers diagnosed with terminal cancer and opting for no surgery.
- Jennifer Forsythe's mom is being diagnosed with Alzheimer's after some final testing.
- Joe Elstner's grandson completed an engineering internship, thanks to a fellow congregant.

Congregational Input

Approval of Minutes from May, 2024 - John Miller motion, Sara Bebee 2nd, all approved
Rev. Ron Beaton - Introduction and Opening Comments -

Reports

- Finance Report – Kelly Wicks and Rev. Blacksher - - Acceptance Requested
 - July was a good month, above-targeted budget number.
 - Hope that new pastoral leadership will show an increase in giving in the next few month.
 - June of this year was worse than June of last year.
 - If our current trend continues, we shouldn't be "too far" behind by end-of-year, especially with holiday giving.
 - Current debt - \$211,000 which will come up next year
 - 1 Edward Jones CD matures this month. Mary will likely pull that \$100,000 to add to checking account.
 - Days of operating funds should be 90; June got just below 88 days. July should hold even.
 - Question about "Trustees" line costs - roof work was included
 - Money from sale of the house (\$200,000) has not yet been reported to us - should show up in a building maintenance fund, not seeing it, seems "missing" from report. Have spent about \$40,000.
 - Kelly shared a 6-year report that Mary created that she really liked.

- John Heskett shared that maybe there is too much information in the financial packet. Discussed what do we want, possibly sit down with Mary to determine what would be best for us.
 - Motion to accept by Joy Parisien, 2nd by Doug Christopher. All approved.
 - Do we need an additional request for giving? Pastor Ron would like to “wait and see” for a bit and not immediately ask for money. He also is hopeful that we will see a positive trend in the next few months.
 - Questions about online attendance - is FB the best avenue? Pastor Andy believes it is
- Circle of Friends Budget 2024/25 - Rev. Blacksher - - Approval Requested
 - Need to come back to after Pastor Andy shares document
 - Enrollment down a bit which affected their budget
 - Revenue projections summed up in one document - \$568,000, down \$15,000
 - Budget projection - \$499,360
 - Projecting to break even
 - Paid half of carpet and for new playground equipment, but all budgeted for
 - Will scan and email, vote by email
- Request Related to Sale of 220 Creve Coeur Property – Dave Divjak and Rev. Blacksher - Approval Requested
 - Purchasers were disappointed that the house was represented as copper wiring but was actually aluminum wiring. Sent a letter to church and board asking for payment to change it to copper, about \$7000.
 - Lawyer’s response is that they waived an inspection and agreed to selling “as is.” Our stance is that they accepted the risk.
 - Owner made it quite clear that they want their own electrician to do the work.
 - Craig and Kelly question “what is ethically the right thing to do?”
 - General feeling is to split the difference - about \$3500, as a sign of good will, being neighborly
 - Motion to pay the total with a letter that that it - Sara, Jennifer 2nd, all approved
 - Dave will reach out to attorney to draft a response letter
- Nienaber Consultation August 25 and 26– Rev. Blacksher
 - 12:30 start time
 - Jimmy John’s sandwiches after 11 service
 - About 3 hours, 3:30 end time
 - Not sure what she will do with all of us
 - Has been zooming with current staff, some former staff and former board members (those whom left under duress)
 - Meeting with Board before meeting with the staff
 - Goal - to talk about what led us to this place, why is it that the system of MUMC allowed “all of this” to brew and fester
 - Only meeting with current board and current staff in person

- Plans for Fall Kick Off – Sept. 8 – Rev. Blacksher
 - All locations are flipped from last year
 - Band in different location with food and bingo nearby
 - Loud noisy things will be on cemetery side of parking lot
 - No water activities
 - All food served inside, United Methodist Men will be cooking and monetarily providing some of the food
 - Ethan Massey is managing the sign-up link
 - Donations (to the church) can be made after the event
 - One service that day!

Leadership Board Appreciation Gift for Pastor Kurt – Sue Belval

- Gave \$200 gift card to Twisted Tree with a thank you card

Discussion

- Follow-Up from the discussion regarding Congregant's Concerns
- General Discussion – John Heskett
 - Small group from Board met with this congregant regarding his concerns
 - Concerns: not calling for a congregational vote, no transparency with the board, concerns about staffing changes within the last year
 - Possible new procedure - assign a board member to sit with someone who brings an issue to the board. Identified a need for follow-up with those bringing forth the concern.
 - Need for a more formal way to bring concerns regarding the status of the church
- Formal Follow-up following Congregational Input – John Heskett
- Annual or Periodic Report to Congregation regarding “Status of our Church” – Rev. Blacksher
 - In past, there has been an annual LEAD meeting. Andy envisions something similar. Any interested would be able to attend to hear from the different staff/programs/missions.
 - Ron could come out at the end to give his thoughts on where we are heading/vision. Need to rebuild trust within the congregation/community.
 - This could be the start of our end-of-the-year campaign.
 - Idea seems well-received within board.
 - Also put together a year-end report around Feb, on the web site. Can be a “touchpoint.”
 - Thinking first LEAD meeting will be held in late October.
 - Ron’s thoughts moving forward: Love God and Love one another.
 - Acts of Justice and Acts of Compassion
 - Worship, Devotion, Compassion, and Justice
 - 3 concrete goals for upcoming year: worship (creating a culture of invitation - measure those that come and come back again), devotion (unique individuals who are involved in small groups throughout the week), justice/compassion (amount of hours that people have served at our local community missions)

- Keep a scoreboard to measure those numbers, office will nail down the logistics of how to measure exactly
- Looking for things to celebrate within the next year
- Joy would like to have a Parish Directory again! Joy was given permission to look into these businesses.

Closing Prayer – Kandi Karger-Robinson

Motion to end - Joe, 2nd by Sue, all approved