

Manchester United Methodist Church
October Leadership Board Meeting

Minutes
October 13, 2024 3:00-5:00pm

Room 311 / Zoom 925 6848 4101 / Passcode 177678

Andy Blacksher, Ron Beaton, Sue Belval, John Heskett, Kelly Wicks, Joe Elstner, Doug Christopher, Dave Divjak, Joy Parisien, Kandi Karger-Robinson, Suzanne Shimkus
Zoom- Sara Beebe

Opening

- Call to Order - 3:02pm
- Joys and Concerns -
 - Dinner at Sue's house with Bishop on 11/1 - brisket provided, side dish sign-up
- Closing Prayer – Craig Looney
- Minutes - Suzanne Shimkus
- Approval of Minutes
 - Need to amend minutes from August meeting. Tried to do this in September in Closed Session. Shouldn't have happened.
 - Clarification: All legal matters can and should be held in closed session.
 - All discussion about the sale of the property will be moved to the Executive Session minutes. Joy motion, Joe 2nd. All approved.
 - John Heskett is keeper of Executive Session minutes.
- Motion to approve September minutes, without Closed Session notes. Joy motion, Dave 2nd. All approved.

Reports

- Financial Report - Rev. Blacksher
 - Mary P is trying to pull out money for property enhancement, from the cash reserve.
 - Total Revenues for the year were at halfway mark from what we expected, but expenses have surpassed that. \$150 - 200,000 behind where we should be.
 - Good news - September was strong. Large gift from a generous repeat giver.
 - Question - should we believe that more substantial gifts will come in this year to help balance the budget?
 - Typically, in the last two months of the year, we bring in 24% of the annual budget through giving.
 - Trend is Q1 and Q4 are the biggest terms for giving.
 - Rev. Blacksher believes we may still end up about \$200,00 below budget.
 - Will likely bring in about \$700,000-800,000 to end the year.
 - "What are views for a push for 'above and beyond' giving for end of year?"
 - Concerns about Pastor Ron's "newness" still, a push now is probably not the right thing to do

- Pastor Ron is meeting with some of our most generous givers in November, acknowledging the difficult season of the church but with their generosity, we have a bright future.
 - Could the quasi-endowment fund help during a time like this? Isn't that what it's there for?
 - How are bequeaths in the will accounted for?
 - Anything over \$10,000 is put in this quasi-endowment fund.
 - Less than \$10,000 goes into the General Fund unless noted in will.
- Budget planning for the new year. Pastor Andy is concerned about where to go from here.
 - Raises for staff? Need to address cost of living and possibly some causes for merit pay raises. Pastor Ron would like to meet with Pastor Andy for further discussion.
 - Can wait until February to approve a budget. Staff raises have also been given retroactively after the budget was approved in Feb.
 - Programming is a minor piece of the budget. The majority of the budget is in Staff.
 - Underspending on maintenance for years. Some consideration for that.
 - Possible to approve a budget regarding salaries and deferred maintenance, but willing to amend that budget in Q1
 - Often with a new pastor, attendance goes up and hopefully, giving will follow.
 - September attendance 24 was better than September attendance 23.
 - Conclusion from the discussion was to proceed with budget development by allocating up to 4% of the Personal Service line item in the 2024 budget. Hold other expenditures at 2024 levels until January/February at which time we will know total receipts and expenditures for 2024 and be able to predict with greater certainty the expected receipts for 2025.
- Pastor Ron Reports
 - Plans for the October 20 "Preparing the Path"
 - Pastor Ron shared the agenda for the "service/meeting"
 - Prayers, hymns, scripture, finance update (budget), Leadership Board update, reports from Kevin, Tiffany, Mary Beth, Ron's hopes and dreams, short time for Q&A, baptismal renewal service (hopefully 2 hours at most)
 - Goals - 5% increase in small group participation, 5% increase in engagement in mission and justice, 60 newly-engaged members of the church
 - Write questions on cards to be collected and categorized for the Q&A
 - Sara and Kari suggested having an update from the preschool also for the younger families
 - Contemporary Worship Space - Short-Term Improvements/Mid-Term Thoughts
 - How to enhance the Modern Worship service
 - Does it stay in Fellowship Hall?
 - 150 - 200 in attendance for average Modern Worship
 - Consideration of Requests to Purchase Chairs and Tables for Fellowship Hall - Approval Requested
 - \$45 - 55 per chair
 - Perhaps a small capital campaign to "buy a chair for you and a friend"

- Motion to approve Ron's request to congregation money for chairs
 - Jennifer motions, Doug 2nd. All approved.
 - Pastor Andy Reports
 - Updates / Highlights from The Church of the Resurrection Conference
 - John Himple attended as the lone congregational rep plus half of the full-time staff and some part-time staff
 - Lots of good ideas generated from this time, Ron asked everyone to share just one thing they learned or took away from breakout sessions. "Could have been there all night."
 - Rearranging the lobby came from an ah-ha moment there
 - Pastor Andy brought back book "Crucial Conversations," recommended to all supervisors (lead team), working through a book study for the next few months
 - Our church seems to be "behind" other churches our size, like with technology and improvement strategies
 - Some staff had never been in the same room with a colleague in a similar role at another church. It was exciting to have those conversations.
 - Request to disperse Endowment funds for specified program areas - Approval requested
 - Money can be used for facilities, directed by Board
 - Request to direct those funds to Andy's direction, approximately \$25,000 in fund
 - sprucing up the lobby - painting and putting up new artwork and design
 - List of small projects that need money that have added up
 - Motion to approve the distribution of those funds to Andy's discretion
 - Doug motion, Kandi 2nd. All approved.
- Joy Parisian
 - Update regarding Photo Directory of church members
 - Company - Re:Member
 - April 7- April 12, 2:00 - 8:30 pm, rooms set aside, link provided for appointments or sign up for information center, about 40 people a day, can extend days if needed
 - Participants will receive a free 8x10 and directory
 - Ethan and Joy will attend a kickoff meeting, 6 weeks of promotional materials
 - Questions, call Joy Parisien 636-399-6062
- Pastor Ron
 - Does not believe having a hybrid model for Board meetings, would like to move that we only have in-person meetings, doesn't want members to feel that we have to log in on vacation etc
 - Sara shared that with a baby on the way, it is helpful for her
 - Decided to keep a virtual option, but know that if we can't be here, it's ok!

Move to Executive Session

- Sue motion, Kandi 2nd. All approved to go to Closed Session.

