

ST. THOMAS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

February 20, 2018

Members Present: Bill Coppa, Brian Johnson, Pat Dodson, Renee Kinnear, Don Rickerson, Caleb Mathews, Pat Brown, George Anderson, Natalie Martin, Hank Heuser, Marian Ludlow, Lori Perez, Mervin Lyle, Joe Steen, Bill Bixby (SPRC), and Janie Russell.

The meeting was called to order at 7:17 pm by Bill Coppa. Brian Johnson gave the opening prayer.

Devotion: Bill Coppa – *“That you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* Romans 12:2. God has a plan for every Christian. Every circumstance is for your good. The writer’s wife, Ruth, wanted to be a missionary but God had other plans for her life. God revealed His will to her and she was happy where He placed her. Look for the will of God for your life to be revealed.

Motions: None

Visitors/Congregation Time:

- Two church members read a letter regarding the Holy Conferencing presentation during the January 21st and January 28th church services.
 - They felt the presentations were too long. Sunday services are to worship God through song, the spoken word, prayer and other activities to bring glory to God. The information could have been more appropriately shared during a town hall meeting.
 - They were also unsure as to the purpose of the presentation.
 - They requested that future presentation that are lengthy be presented in a town hall or in a letter, rather than at worship.
- Council discussion after the letter was read included some of the following points:
 - There was no right way to present the material but it was important for all to hear.
 - This is a way to start a conversation about difficult issues.
 - In reality, unless something is presented in church, most people won’t hear/read it.
 - This is a dialog that needs to continue as the principles are core values of our faith.
 - Some follow up activities are planned.
 - Not just our church is looking at this. The United Methodist Church is taking a hard look at LGBTQ inclusion.
 - Haymarket approached the issue head on; Manassas did not. UMC is trying to find a different way forward where we don’t have to agree with everything but can still work together for God’s kingdom. We need to make it about God.

Minutes: The January minutes were approved by e-mail.

Celebrations:

- Lori said Meghan has been accepted at four graduate schools and two are offering full scholarships. They are leaving tomorrow to go to Alaska to see the Northern Lights and then will visit Marcus.
- Caleb announced that he and Linda are expecting a baby boy this summer.

Bi-District Meeting Reports:

Several people gave reports about the sessions they attended at the Bi-District Meeting. Reports are printed at the end of the minutes.

Pastor Time: David was not present but sent the following report.

David Forrest:

Nancy and I are at Myrtle Beach, SC for a 3-day planning for retirement event put on by the UMC pension board. We will be home Wednesday night. I want to thank Pastor Brian for filling in for me at Tuesday evening worship tonight.

Thanks to all who submitted devotionals for our Lenten Devotional this year. They are a blessing to all of us.

We had a total of 100 people in worship at our two Ash Wednesday services on Feb. 14th.

There are a number of upcoming district and conference events in the few weeks:

The first is the “Anatomy of Peace” event tomorrow night, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. led by Rev. Brian Brown at Annandale UMC. The book of the same title is recommended by the Way Forward Commission.

Also this week is Bishop Lewis’s “Chat ‘n Chew” this coming Saturday, February 24th at Ebenezer UMC in Stafford. She will be discussing the report of the Way Forward Commission on human sexuality. Please let the church office know this week if you wish to carpool to it—we’ll meet here at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Saturday, March 3rd is the daylong seminar on “Understanding the Upside Down World of Teenagers” at Central Presbyterian Church in Towson, MD. Please let Nancy Forrest know if you are interested in going.

March 3rd is also the Men’s Day Apart at Grace UMC in Manassas, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., which includes breakfast and lunch.

Saturday, March 10th, is the 5 Talent Academy event, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., also at Ebenezer UMC. on Faith Development, led by Rachel Billups. Registration on the VAUMC website by February 28th. Cost \$35, includes lunch.

“How to Develop Intentional Discipleship” with Phil Maynard on Thursday, March 15th from 9:00-3:00 p.m. at Floris UMC, cost \$10, includes lunch.

Brian Johnson:

- Leadership team retreat was Saturday.
- Confirmation Classes are ongoing.

Status Reports:

Communications: Joe Steen

- We had hoped to get the directory back to proof but haven’t received it.

- The Communications Committee has 3 full time members plus a number of people with specific jobs.
- We are trying to be less traditional; we need more platforms. We are on YELP now.
- Website: Very dated. Cathy Campbell is looking at a way to improve it.
- We would like more help from the congregation.
- We also need an IT Committee. Frank Wald is doing some of it but he needs help.
- We need to look at methods of communications; need to stream services, although the Wi-Fi here isn't very good in the sanctuary.
- We've been offered a good camera.

Lay Leaders: Mervin Lyle

- We met last week and discussed Holy Conferencing, what comes next.
- We discussed the Call to Service Fair. We will partner with Missions for a Mission Day.
- We also discussed ways to support the new pastor that's coming.

Missions: Lori Perez

- We paid the missionaries for all of 2018.
- We approved funds for Drive Through Nativity to improve scenery.
- April 29th is a Mission Day. Several possible jobs: paint Food Pantry; gardening at Mullen Elementary; shoe collection; "Sole Hope" – making shoes out of old jeans; craft type things for VBS.
- Gainesville UMC has a "Feeding Friends" program every Tuesday and Saturday to feed the homeless.

Finance: George Anderson

- January Finance report: General offering was \$72,777.71. Income from all sources was \$82,802.71. Total expenses were \$102,779.52, with a deficit of \$12,390.39.
- We have reconciled the pension deficit.
- Ron Mentzer talked to the Finance Committee during the February meeting. James Eads CEO of the United Methodist Credit Union also presented. This credit union will help people with severe financial problems.
- Our next meeting will be a working meeting.
- Lori is looking into our credit cards, including any rewards programs.

Education: Children and Youth: Caleb Mathews

- The children will be doing the Back Pack Snack Attack at 9:40 and 11:00.
- March 31st we will have an Easter Egg Hunt and crafts for the children.
- Feb. 2nd and 3rd was a youth retreat.
- On March 3rd the Confirmation Class will help with the Food Pantry.
- March 18th is Confirmation Sunday.
- We are also planning a Creative Arts ministry.

Trustees: Don Rickerson

- Columbarium: plans are on schedule for April 15th.

- We are looking at a shade for the stained glass window to “darken” it when it’s sunny. It’s an electric shade.
- Studio quality camera has been offered to the church.
- April 21st is “Yard Day”.

Stewardship: No report

Outreach and Evangelism: Renee Kinnear

- We have decided to do Family Movie Night on fifth Fridays. The next one is March 23rd, which is not a 5th Friday.
- We are working on a budget.
- We are forming a committee with people who went to the conference on church structure. We’re collecting information on what type of evangelism each group is doing.

Sunbeam Children Center: Natalie Martin

- January 28th 20 children sang at the 9:40 service.
- Registration opened on February 12th.
- Staff: SPRC has hired a new director to replace Sandy Collins. Veronica McGuin was hired. Sarah Hayes is the new Assistant Director. Zach Quintana has been hired as a part time Music teacher.
- Current enrollment is 85 Day Care students and 23 Preschool students.

Worship: Marian Ludlow

- A certificate was presented to Bryan Spencer for making the two beautiful tables for altar flowers/offering plates.
- Caleb presented a handout “*3 Free Ways to Double Your Christmas Eve Attendance*”.
- Anything hung on the walls in the sanctuary should be presented to the Worship Committee for approval, with final approval from the Trustees.
- Upcoming events:
 - Feb. 13 – Shrove Tuesday dinner and evening worship.
 - Feb. 14 – Ash Wednesday services at noon and 7:00 pm.
 - Mar. 25 – Palm Sunday – Cantata at 8:15 and 11:00. 9:40 – children process with palms.
 - Mar. 29 – Maundy Thursday – 7:00 pm Communion.
 - Mar. 30 – Good Friday – services at noon and 7:00 pm.
 - April 1 – Easter Sunrise service at 6:45 (Praise Band) followed by breakfast.
 - April 1st – services at 8:15 and 11:00 – Communion and also choir with brass. 9:40 – Communion, Praise band.
- Easter flowers will be on sale Feb. 25th through March 14th.
- Paula Harper mentioned that the cross for the Narthex (old Christmas tree trunk) should remain for several weeks after Easter. The wire cross for flowers is being reworked or rebuilt by Bryan Spencer. Maybe we should drape it with a black cloth for Good Friday until Easter Sunday morning.
- The usher table is a staging area for the ushers and unrelated materials should not be placed on the table but relocated elsewhere so it could be more readily seen. The

Welcome Table also has too much literature that is not directly related to welcoming visitors and new members.

- Next meeting is March 18th at 12:30.

SPRC: Bill Bixby

- We have hired the new Preschool Director.
- We met with the District Superintendent regarding David's replacement.

UMW: Pat Dodson

- We are putting together health kits for DC Homeless.
- JNS will do a yard sale but UMW will not.
- We will have a tea the Sunday after Mother's Day.
- We made \$18,000 on the Bazaar. Crafters are already starting on items for next year.
- The Sight and Sound trip will be October 27th.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements:

- Chris Alger is looking into handouts regarding church giving.
- Bill Coppa used Holy Conferencing information in his Small Group.
- Lori announced a Conference and Livestream on Finance: "*Protect, Sustain, Grow: Best Practices for Handling your Church's Money.*". See Lori for more information.
- Pray for HM as they look for a new worship leader.
- If you see someone new at worship, go over and greet them.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05. Brian gave the closing prayer.

The next meeting will be March 20, 2018 at 7:15 at Manassas.

BI-DISTRICT MEETING REPORTS

Pat Brown:

“The Passionate Church”: Mike Slaughter

Four areas of focus: Developing principles Christian leaders, engaging in ministry with the poor, create new and renewed congregations, abundant health. Under developing Christian leaders, he spoke of the steps of discipleship: seekers and “sacramental consumers”, volunteers, find your calling, Kingdom servants, and leaders of leaders. Under create new and renewed congregations, he says there is too much focus on expanding one space (several site locations) He said that sometimes we need to get out of God’s Way

“Gleaning from an Aging Dreamer”:

Don’t underestimate small/what God can do; allegiance to Jesus supersedes all others, we have a clearly defined mission: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Success is any activity that brings glory to God.

Mission structure – triangles. Leaders dream, develop and deploy.

Neal Christie, Assistant General Secretary of the General Board of Church and Society. Booklet: Revised Social Principles of the United Methodist Church 2017-2020, Difference between mercy and justice. Mercy: acts of compassion, focuses on scarcity, temporary fix. Justice: focus on abundance, often looked on as political, long term.

Galilee UMC – GROW Hour:

9 am Service; 10 am Grow Hour; 11 am Service.

Grow hour is for small groups. They feel “Small group is where big things happen.” Small groups can be short term or long term. Goal is to provide intentional “on-boarding” to involve new members in the life of the church. In four sessions they connect new attendees to pastors, staff and leadership; do a spiritual gifts assessment, provide practical and real ways to become involved. This program is modeled from the Growth Institute at the Church of the Highlands in Birmingham, Alabama. Town Hall sessions are occasionally held (1-2/year) during the GROW Hour to address issues such as finance, Holy Conversations, Organization of the church.

Pat Dodson:

Volunteers:

Why do people volunteer? Someone asks them.

Why don’t volunteer? No one asked; they think someone else will do it.

A good job description helps recruit volunteers.

Intentional Discipleship:

Get involved in prayer, scripture, service, etc. which leads to making us more Christ like.

David Forrest:

Besides hearing Mike Slaughter in the afternoon as well as the general session in the morning, I went to the class led by Hugh Welchel entitled, “How Then Should We Work? —Rediscovering the Biblical Doctrine of Work.” I also have his book of the same title. His basic point is that the Bible knows nothing of the modern distinction between the sacred and the secular, but rather all of life belongs to God. We all have the same primary calling—to follow Jesus—but then we all have our secondary calling to serve him in the world in different ways. However, the missionary’s calling, for example, is not any higher than that of a businessman or mechanic or teacher or whatever it may be. The watchword for us is Colossians 3:23—“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for

the Lord.” It was a good reminder that God can use any honest labor to his glory. I’ll be glad to lend the book to anyone who would like to borrow it.

Leslie Oakes:

CHURCH SAFETY & SECURITY Bi-District Training

Presenter: PAUL WERRIES **Facility Analysis and Security Training 703-969-0062**

Member of Christ Church. Former Marine. Retired Police Officer.

HAVE A PLAN !!

BE OBSERVANT

Does a person who walks in—FIT IN ?

Does something look unusual? Say something.

Observe EXITS routinely. Post a person at all exits on Sundays.

Who are the EMTS—Doctors—Nurses in the congregation?

WHAT IF? something happens

Are First Aid Kits—AEDs—Trauma Kits up-to-date?

The mindset of the church is: Open Doors. Open Arms

Every church should have a HADDER PLAN

Hostile Activity Detection Disaster Emergency Response

- Select a Security Leader
- Develop HADDER Plan (a trainer would do this)
- Coordinate church members who can participate
- Consult other HADDER plans in the community
- Annual Refresher Training
- Background checks

Develop Standard Operating Procedure SOP

TRAIN all Staff & Leadership & Sunday Volunteers

There should be routine—Unannounced—building evacuations including Sunday morning

CAMERAS in our building are helpful—but are only watched during the weekday.

St. Thomas must research avenues of establishing a SAFETY PLAN—whether through Mr. Werries or the Manassas Police Dept.

They would IDENTIFY our areas of concern & inform re: training involved.

Paula Renfro:

Spiritual Deepening (Lead by Janet Salbert)

The first session I attended was on **Spiritual Deepening**. We were introduced to several forms of Spiritual Deepening. All forms of Spiritual Deepening use a form of prayer. Spiritual Deepening feeds discipleship. The main points were:

- The more we get to know God, the better our witness
- When we spend time in prayer and communion with God, we draw closer to God and each other.
- Prayer is about enhancing our relationship with God.

The types of prayer included:

- Body Prayer
- Centering Prayer
- Intercessory Prayer
- Contemplative Prayer
- Prayer Walking & The Labyrinth

We spent most of our time on Contemplative Prayer. Several “doorways” to Silent Prayer were described

- Overcoming the fidgets
- Using a prayer word or image
- Stillness of mind

Centering Prayer (Lunchtime session. Lead by Dr. Janie Mitchell)

Centering Prayer usually involves a minimum of 20 minutes of silence, but we were encouraged to start with 10-minute sessions and to work our way up.

Things to keep in mind about Centering Prayer:

- Silence is a non-negotiable for Centering Prayer, so you need to ensure you can find a time and place that will ensure you get that silence without interruptions.
- It is not about the mind, it is about the heart.
- It is about surrendering – letting go.
- Your aim is to be deeply available to God. You need to be open to how God will become available to you – no preconceived ideas. You must let go of all attachment to an outcome.

We were given a list of locations and times in United Methodist churches in the Northern Va area where we can practice centering prayer with others.

Prayer Walking (Lead by Dr. Sarah Calvert)

There are many reasons to consider Prayer Walking:

- To see God at work
- To add more prayer to your life
- To exercise
- To be mindful of your body and your life
- To meet and build relationships
- To get to know neighborhoods and their needs and to pray for those neighborhoods

There are four types of Prayer Walking:

- Meditative Walking - in this type of walking you are being mindful of
 - where you are
 - the movement of your body
- Communal Walking (walking with others) – in this type of walking the whole group
 - walks in step with each other
 - senses each other’s movement
 - sets a rhythm together, as a community
 - must stay aware of all those around them and each person’s part in the movement of the group
- Walking with a Spiritual Purpose – as you walk you can
 - say a certain prayer (e.g. The Lord’s Prayer) over and over
 - recite scriptures in your mind to memorize scripture (breaking it down word by word)
- Prayer Walking in the Community – walk areas of your community, praying for the things you see
 - Pray for problems you observe

- Pray for each person you see.
 - Stop and ask
 - if you can pray for them
 - hear their prayers
 - Accept rejection if that is what happens

Marian Ludlow:

The Passionate Church – Mike Slaughter

Four Areas of Focus

Developing Principal Christian Leaders (filled with the Holy Spirit and wisdom). In Baptism you are dead and buried and you are now in the Army of Christ, and surrendered all control of YOU. We are to be in community. Select capable, God fearing people as local church leaders.

Engaging in Ministry with the poor – Isaiah 61: 1-2. You have to release it for God to increase it. We are the distribution for the Kingdom of God.

Create New and Renewed Congregation - The first church of Jesus was 120 people and leaders were created from these leaders. The New Testament example was not expansion but multiplication.

Abundant Health – affects every area – 60% of the US is overweight and we lead the world in Type II Diabetes. Get healthy physically, financially, mentally and spiritually.

The Generous Church – Tom Berlin

Start with the Theme of Generosity, establish a mind set and a culture of generosity. Don't get in the way of those called to generosity. Generous in Time (calendar), Talent (gifts, service), Treasure (look at your bank statement). People's lives must be involved in service to become a generous church.

How become more generous:

- have a mission
- clergy and laity partnership
- convince them Jesus is right
- the pastor must make this a personal value
- offer them help – enable and educate them to be generous; 'comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable'.
- give people an experience, preferably personal – sermons, bank statement summary to show where personal funds go, small group curriculum and ideas. Use a 'Clean out challenge' of home/life – simplify; get rid and pass on usable items to others. Clean out your calendar to spend more time with others.
- plan it – identify your plan and this makes generosity a commitment.
- create investor conference – offering, budgeting, good reporting, make it easy to give.

Jan 12, 2017 at Floris UMC: Tom Berlin and Mike Slaughter

Commission on the Way Forward

- Problems are predictable for the church, the outcomes are not.
- Minimize 'brick', maximize mission
- 20% want out of the UMC
- the power is in the local churches
- people are looking for meanings and not meetings
- We are bound by the Holy Spirit and not doctrine
- be courageous – find how to encourage more people. Don't be discouraged about what is going on in the UMC at present.
- The UMC as we know it now will die. What will the changes bring?
- 84% live in urbanized areas; 74% are serving in the area of brick and mortar
- Preach Christ and Christ crucified only – our stand is Jesus and everything else is a conversation
- the local church has to teach the institution to dance to the music of the local church
- pastors are not called to manage what is broken; they are called to lead change

- Christ supersedes the Discipline
- Work a network rather than connectional
- What do we see the 'new' church becoming? Restructure; go back to the roots – Wesley and the Bible to transform people's lives
- Many professions of faith but not doers
- Amazon model – deliver to the people wherever they are. They don't come to church – we go to the street, bar, internet, coffee bar
- What other issues besides LesbianGayBi-sexualTransgenderQuestioning? Our methodology has become our theology. Book of Discipline is not our Bible.
- We are dying of terminal politeness. We must be courageous and meet the needs of our community.
- God doesn't need us. God's work will be done no matter – with or without me.

Bill Bixby:

Bill attended SPRC Training.

Very informative.

There are lots of resources on the website.

We should have a member on the Committee who is under 35 years of age.

Intergenerational Church:

Discussed older church that partnered with another church.

Caleb Mathews:

Children's Ministry: explored ways/ideas for youth and children partnering with schools. We need to find things the schools actually need.