

## **November 21, 2021 UMC Congregational Meeting, 6:30 pm**

**Present:** Cathy Bresee (Congregational Chair); Terry Yoder (Assistant Chair); Pastor Kate Heinzl; Ken Litwiller (Secretary; Minutes) and Laura Litwiller; Jim Rosenberger (Treasurer); Karl and Evelyn Bartsch; Vonda and Doug Yoder; Rick and Kathleen Stehouwer; Jessica, Paul and Amy McCormick; Rosita Derstine; Joel and Krista Weidner; Kwadwo and Fran Osseo-Asare; Meredith and Ben Wideman; Mary Derstein; Nel Kopp; Marvin and Joyce Hall.

**Opening:** Cathy called the meeting to order on time then read from 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (NRSV)

<sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

**Review and Approval of August 15, 2021 Minutes:** Cathy referred to the minutes which have been posted on the UMC web site. There were no corrections to the minutes. Joel moved to approve the minutes and Nel seconded the motion. All present approved of the minutes; there were no objections.

**Discussion on Church Around the Table (CATT):** Laura welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked who had seen the results of the CATT survey; many had read them. There were 32 responses to the survey, a very strong result. She then reviewed the three questions that were in the survey. She noted that many UMC participants had missed one or more Sundays of the four week CATT experience.

Laura welcomed persons to share about their experience including several people who had agreed ahead of time to share.

Doug Yoder spoke as one of the CATT hosts. He noted that their group had children who enjoyed the yard. Initially he was hesitant to enter a small group experience. However, he enjoyed a more structured group experience.

Jessica and Paul McCormick also enjoyed hosting the CATT sessions. There was intimacy and opportunity to hear from a variety of voices including those who may not speak in a large group setting. The children participated freely including reading of scripture. There were some limitations of weather and work schedules. Church was experienced in a different way; many were more actively involved. Amy liked the opportunity to read and to play afterwards. Group members who did not have children were very gracious in interacting with the children. In the future there could be groups structured without young children as an option for those who prefer an adults only group.

Nel noted that the groups could have been larger for various reasons. Some persons chose not to participate. Others missed for work or personal reasons. This meant that for some sessions their group was quite small. Nel suggested that in the future, persons could be asked in advance whether they would be interested in a CATT experience and the groups structured accordingly.

Karl noted that the smaller group size allowed all members to participate in the discussion.

Jim noted that the smaller group led to intimate and personal sharing. The children could attend and participate freely.

Rick Stehouwer noted that they were not hosts but were able to attend three of the four sessions. Everyone participated freely. There were some challenges with the group being smaller with people absent for sessions. COVID-19 brought restrictions on sharing of food and drink; hopefully we could do that in the future. He affirms holding the CATT once per month with some mixing of the groups periodically.

Cathy noted that she enjoyed being in a group with children, noting that this question was not asked at the beginning.

Evelyn affirmed changing the composition of the groups after three or four sessions.

Rosita added that some persons at UMC have an aversion to small groups so that changing up the composition periodically could bring opportunity to meet with a variety of people.

Pastor Kate noted that CATT was an experiment that was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. She is grateful that people were willing to try this new initiative. The first round with structured feedback will allow us to make CATT even better in the future.

**Treasurer's report:** Treasurer Jim Rosenberger was travelling in a car with a good driver and pleasant travelling companions. He acknowledged and thanked last year's committee (Jim, Marvin Hall, Molly) and this year's committee (Jim, Karen Brandes, Rebekah Saxena).

Cathy helped to screen share the Finance Committee Report for the meeting. Jim noted that giving appears behind schedule so far but usually increases in December. He encouraged members to read the details of the report.

Jim then reported on the UMC response to the fire which destroyed the hair salon and fabric shop of a Ghana Mennonite church member, Esther Nartey. Esther participates at Somanya (Ghana) Mennonite Church which Mary Derstine and Laura and Ken Litwiller visited in May 2013. The pastor of SMC is Pastor Augustine Tetteh whom UMC supported in his studies at Good News Theological College and Seminary (GNTCS). Jim showed pictures of Pastor Augustine Tetteh and Esther receiving the contribution from UMC of over \$2,500. Esther has sent a series of pictures of her rebuilt shop with deep gratitude for the assistance from UMC members. Jim has included these pictures in his report.

Jim reported that the visa for Ndunge Sefu has not come through so has not been able to use the funds provided by UMC for study at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS), which came to over \$11,000. The AA group which meets in the UMC building gave a donation of \$200 which has been forwarded to the Park Forest Day Nursery.

Jim welcomed suggestions for using excess funds from UMC reserves. Pastor Kate noted that UMC may be receiving over \$35K from the Allegheny Mennonite Conference (AMC) sale of the International Guest House in DC (IGH); perhaps we could add the excess funds to that contribution for addressing a larger project in the future.

**Elders Report:** Meredith noted the focus of the elders has been on evaluation of CATT and setting up the faith exploration class which began this past week. The first session was held this past week with a good mix of new and longer time UMC participants.

**Old Business:** Rick noted the Covenant with Pastor Kate has not been signed. He asked if the past moderators would sign or the new officers. Osseo suggested that all could sign the document. We agreed to back date the covenant and have last years officer sign the document.

**Other reports:** the following have posted written reports on the UMC Web site: Finance Committee; Elders; Worship Committee; and Children and Youth Committee.

**Closing:** Cathy noted that we are ending early; this was appreciated by the participants. She wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving. She concluded by reading several verses from the hymn "For the Fruit of all Creation" (HWB #90):

For the fruit of all creation, thanks be to God.  
For the gifts to every nation, thanks be to God.  
For the plowing, sowing, reaping, silent growth while we are sleeping,  
future needs in earth's safekeeping, thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labor, God's will is done.  
In the help we give our neighbor, God's will is done.  
In our worldwide task of caring for the hungry and despairing,  
in the harvests we are sharing, God's will is done.

For the harvest of the Spirit, thanks be to God.  
For the good we all inherit, thanks be to God.  
For the wonders that astound us, for the truths that still confound us,  
most of all, that love has found us, thanks be to God.