

UMC Congregational Meeting (Quarterly)

Sunday, August 20, 2023, 11:20 am to 12:30 pm

Present:

Terry Yoder (Assistant Chair);
Pastor Kate Heinzl;
Ken Litwiller (Secretary; Minutes); Laura Litwiller;
Jim Rosenberger (Treasurer); Gloria Rosenberger
Carolyn Brubaker; Rodney Brubaker;
Hope Brubaker;
Mary Derstein;
Nathan Derstine;
Diane Gingerich;
Carmen Groff; Tim Groff; their neighbor, Lex;
Marvin Hall;
Becky Kephart;
Faith King;
Jean Landis;
Doug McPherson;
Doug Miller; Sue Miller;
Hal Kunkel; Molly Kunkel;
Amy Sattler;
Ankit Saxena;
Ndunge Seifu;
Bethany Spicher Schonberg;
Ruth Kitchin Tillman;
Joel Weidner; Krista Weidner;
Ben Wideman;
Leah Witzig;
Doug Yoder; Vonda Yoder;

Evelyn Bartsch; Karl Bartsch; ?

Zoom

Sarah Jeh and Hoyeon Hwang;
Nel Kopp;
Fidele Lumeya; Leah Lumeya;
Evelyn Stauffer;
Rick Stehouwer; Kathleen Stehouwer;

Absent with apology

Cathy Bresee (Congregational Chair);

Welcome: Terry Yoder welcomed the participants and opened in prayer.

June 11, 2023 UMC Congregational Meeting Minutes: Approved.

Church Life Cycle Workshops with Consultant Tom Beers: The discussion was led by Doug Miller. The outgoing and incoming Leadership Team held a meeting with Tom several weeks ago. Doug reviewed and condensed Tom's PowerPoint.

Key questions: What is our story? Who are we? Who is our neighbor? Why are we here? Each of us has a story. UMC has a story: A story that includes all of our individual stories. What will be UMC's future story?

Doug then reviewed the suggested process for UMC. We would form an empowered team and engage in a 6 to 8 month process. Tom Beers would lead 4 workshop days with the team. Between workshops the team will lead activities and exercises with the larger group:

- A. Project 3-5 years into the future in time and brainstorm a list of possible future scenarios of the congregation.
- B. Identify 3 scenarios which move the heart and stir the spirit.
- C. Each team scenario will become a story.
- D. The team will share their stories with the congregation.
- E. Move from 3 stories to one story that stirs our heart – perhaps a combination of the stories.
- F. Write the first draft of our future story based on the scenario.
- G. Rework the story until it has “juice”.
- H. Brainstorm and develop the fulfillment actions for “living into the story”.
- I. We all live into our story together.
- J. Reaffirm the story through regular and intentional celebrations.
- K. Update the story as our journey becomes clearer.

Decision elements:

- Should we do this?
- Costs: \$2,000 to Tom Beers for facilitation
- Suggested team: Pastor Kate; 1 elder, 1 chairperson, 4 from general congregation

We then engaged in discussion on the proposal:

- ❖ How would the team be selected? A combination of nomination and self-selection; variety of ages, time at congregation; balance of who we are.
- ❖ Need to engage with our community as much as possible. There is a context outside of our walls. How can we radically engage with our neighbors? Think about how new threads would be incorporated into the story.
- ❖ Find one good way to identify what someone could find at UMC (Chinese church furniture sale, for example).
- ❖ A combination of Who we are and what we are about.
- ❖ This is evolving process, not a binder on the shelf.
- ❖ Whose story takes priority? What happens when we discover different visions? Tom's outside facilitation is a key for this.
- ❖ Every person in the congregation needs to see where they fit into the story. Bring together diverse stories, traditional and innovative.
- ❖ We listen to an engaging story, like Allison's children's lesson this morning.
- ❖ We each need to work on our listening skills.

We approved moving ahead with this proposal by standing.

UMC Annual budget for Sept 2023 to August 2024: Jim Rosenberger reviewed the year to date income and expenditures compared to the 2022-2023 budget. We have about \$31,000 in checking and about \$110,000 in our brokerage account. The brokerage account includes about \$40,000 of the special International Guest House funds from Allegheny Conference. We are on sound footing.

Jim then presented the Sept 2023 to August 2024 budget. He explained details including support for our ministers, Kate and Ben.

There was vigorous discussion on the allocations for supported ministries in the 2023-2024 budget. For example, what is the relation between UMC member involvement in the ministries and the level of support. It was suggested that the Finance committee send on updated survey showing 2022-2023 numbers and UMC representation on ministry board and activities.

Molly moved to approve the budget with understanding that the local giving will be revisited before the November meeting. We approved the budget by Aye vote.

Proposal to Create Space in the Sanctuary for Children's Activities: Bethany Spicher Schonberg led this discussion.

We are committed to intergenerational worship and nurture. How to engage the children within the worship service beyond children's time? Many churches place tables for children to work with craft materials, perhaps following theme of the morning; some place the tables at the front of the sanctuary, many place them at the rear.

This would be in addition to the nursery which serves up to age three. The tables in the sanctuary would be for ages 4 and up plus parents or guardians. There could be space for adults as well.

We discussed where to place the tables: be inclusive; realize the the children could be under observation; level of involvement.

The proposal was affirmed by Gloria and Molly; Jim moved to explore this further and move forward based on what works best. Approved by Aye vote.

Closing: Terry Yoder and Jim Rosenberger led us in singing the last two lines of "Blest Be the Tide That Binds" with memories of Paulette McLane and Mark Peachey and other loved ones. This served as our prayer for the following fellowship meal.