

Church Council Minutes
Messiah United Methodist Church
June 25, 2018

Opening:

- Chair Brenda Weston opened the meeting at 7:20 pm.
Attending were John Ailes, Paul Bouley, Sherry Bouley, Tracey Briggs, Ronald Richardson, Joanne Scichilone, Richard Underwood, Pete Wells, Brenda Weston, Kathy Willson, Maurice Wilson and staff members Jessica Irish, Robin Ringler, and Reggie Tuck.
- Reggie led the opening prayer focused on the children's nursery, the location for the meeting, and those who serve in ministry there.
- Minutes from the May meeting were accepted as submitted by acclaim.

Sunday School Survey:

Results of a survey from the parents of children who attend 9:30 Sunday School were discussed, particularly those who did not want the 9:30 worship service to be discontinued. One said the reason they went to Messiah was that it was one of the few that offered Sunday school and worship at the same time. Others did not want to spend two hours at church on Sunday or thought it was too long for their young children. Reggie mentioned that attendance and finances are both going down. Will a new emphasis on disciple formation lead us to weaken something that is a source of strength? If we lose too many more people, we may have to cut staff.

There were several main strands of discussion:

- The real problem may not be what we're doing inside the church but that we're not doing enough to bring new people in. The church is known in the community for missions and outreach, but many of those who know of the church don't think about the worship or discipleship. Ideas for reaching out included reaching out to people in the Giant parking lot when they're having fireworks at the country club, reaching out to non-members who pack backpacks on Wednesday, military families moving to the area (and people moving into the neighborhood in general) and families bringing children to CEP and Accotink Academy.
- How do we make Sunday School/discipleship classes/the relationships you build the big draw for people? Can we have interesting and dynamic offerings? Will we have enough teachers? Will this be too much demand on the staff? Could we add classes on Wednesday evening instead?
- What is the problem we are trying to solve? We're measuring worship attendance, but is that the right metric to measure success? If attendance and money are declining, if we keep doing the same thing we can't expect to reverse that trend. We need to reflect more on what the real problem is.

Website:

The church website was discussed. Laura will be adding a section for congregational care, as well as a drop-down menu with small groups and Sunday school, with the small prayer groups. And comments or requests should go directly to Laura.

Committees:

- **Finance:** John Ailes reported that the finance committee had a much earlier financial review this year from Owings & Company, which also conducted a procedures review. Owings had several recommendations to tighten procedures: improving internal control over the signature sheet, having two signatures on the cash counting sheet and review concentration of bank accounts with more than \$250,000, the FDIC limit.
- **Building committee:** Ron Richardson reported that the committee will meet with Jessica Irish, director of music ministries, and Rob Wilkerson and Severt Shands of the communication committee in July and the worship and welcoming & connection committees in the summer. They committee hopes to have a report ready in the fall.
- **Board of Trustees:** Pete Wells reported that the railing to the left side of the dais will be installed June 26, the emergency lighting has been installed in the CEP hallway and the fencing at the parsonages and the church playground are being repaired. Roof repairs have been delayed by funerals.
As a new lay delegate to Annual Conference this year, Pete learned a lot about how the conference is run and moved that we pick two new lay delegates to accompany the lay leader each year to spread the experience throughout the congregation. After some discussion about how the lay delegates are chosen and how many the church gets, the motion was amended to say that at least one new delegate would be chosen each year. The amendment passed, 11-1, and the amended motion passed unanimously.
- **Congregational Care:** Sherry Bouley reported that 67-68 people attended the most recent faith luncheon. They have been successful to the point that some are getting intimidated that their own faith stories are not as dramatic.

Closing:

- Brenda announced that the next meeting would start at 7 pm July 23.
- The meeting was closed with a prayer at 8:33.