

**CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING  
ST. PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
OCTOBER 26, 2016**

**ATTENDEES:** Barb Barnett, Matt Carlson, Hayden Davidson, Barb Duclos, Keith Duclos, Lindsay Fairman, Carol Falke, Steve Falke, Dave Flick, Virginia Flick, Kelly Grimes, Jen Gruendler, Jane Harris, Jeff Helffrich, Bob Johnson, Bonnie Johnson, Amy Marshall, Becky McGee, Greg Milinovich, Evie Mugridge, Jeffrey Mugridge, Judy Pressler, Lee Pressler, Sue Rubba, Kevin Sikorski, Adam Smith, Joan Stroemel, Darrin Thornton, Kelly Uchneat, Alice Wambold, Jim Wambold, and Joan Zimmer

**CALL TO ORDER:** D. Flick called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**DEVOTION:** S. Falke read from the prologue to "A Mile Wide: Trading a Shallow Religion for a Deeper Faith" by Brandon Hatmaker.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:** The minutes for the August 24, 2016, meeting were approved.

**PASTORS' REPORTS:** B. McGee reported the following:

1. Since arriving at St. Paul's in September, she has visited the following facilities, focusing on pastoral care: Foxdale Village, Juniper Village, The Atrium, The Oaks, and Centre Crest.
2. She is also focusing on church vital signs. She shared a chart showing St. Paul's average weekly worship attendance from 2002 to 2015. In 2002, attendance averaged 770 per week; in 2015 it averaged 444. She stated that attendance has steadily declined at all mainline Protestant churches since the 1970s, and that St. Paul's attendance has followed that trend. She noted that many predict this trend is reversing.

G. Milinovich reported the following:

1. His transition to St. Paul's continues to go well and feels like a natural fit for him. He's still taking stock, getting to know St. Paul's culture by listening and learning.
2. He's looking forward to the "Growing Effective Churches" consultation in January as a way to shape St. Paul's vision for the future. A steering team has been formed and is gathering information for the consultants.
3. A question that recently arose was whether or not the consultation had been approved by Church Council. In reviewing meeting minutes, he discovered that had not been approved and stated that he did not want to move forward without Church Council's approval. He said the consultation usually costs \$7,000, however, it is being offered to St. Paul's at a reduced rate of \$2,300. The State College District has agreed to pay half, so the cost to St. Paul's is \$1,150. The value of the consultation from his perspective is two-fold: (1) the consultants will see things that we don't see because we are too close to the situation, and (2) the consultants have the expertise and experience to recommend viable solutions.

**Motion 1:** The following motion was then made and seconded: That St. Paul's move forward with the "Growing Effective Churches" consultation at a cost of \$1,150.

**Discussion:** K. Duclos asked about the consultants' credentials. G. Milinovich stated the team is led by Dennis Otto of the Susquehanna Conference. B. McGee stated that Dennis and his team did a consultation at her home church in Hollidaysburg several years ago and membership has since increased

from 120 to 400. D. Thornton stated that he didn't remember the consultation being optional. D. Flick said it was strongly suggested by the Conference. G. Milinovich stated that the Conference would never expect a church to undergo a consultation without prior approval by its church council. A. Marshall and K. Uchneat voiced their support of the motion based on their experience at the pre-consultation info session held in April. L. Fairman asked if all voices in the church would be represented during the consultation. G. Milinovich responded that the consultation includes a congregation-wide survey before the consultation weekend, but that only church leaders participate in the face-to-face weekend activities with the consultants. A. Wambold noted that she and her husband will be out of town at that time and asked if they could still have input. G. Milinovich responded that they would be given that opportunity.

**Vote:** A vote was then taken on Motion 1; the motion passed unanimously.

**PRESCHOOL ACTION ITEM:** A document titled "St. Paul's Christian Preschool Advisory Council Guidelines," which included revisions recommended by Church Council in August, was emailed to Council members prior to the meeting. K. Duclos announced two additional changes to be incorporated into the final document:

1. In Article III-1-A-d, the word "representatives" in Line 3 will be replaced with the word "representative."
2. In Article IV-IV, the words "a lay person" in Line 3 will be replaced with the words "the Church Representative."

**Motion 2:** The following motion was then made and seconded: That the document titled "St. Paul's Christian Preschool Advisory Council Guidelines" be approved as revised.

**Discussion:** B. Duclos shared three changes proposed by J. Wambold:

1. Article III-I-A should be changed to read "APPOINTED MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL (4 VOTING)."
2. Article III-I-B should be changed to read "EX OFFICIO MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL (2 NON-VOTING)."
3. In Article IV-IV, the word "voting" should be inserted before "Advisory Council members" in Line 1.

J. Zimmer expressed her concern that the Preschool has been operating with a deficit for the last couple of years and that this is having a negative impact on St. Paul's missions budget. She proposed that someone be appointed to monitor the Preschool's finances to help get them in order.

D. Flick noted that J. Zimmer's comment did not affect the vote on Motion 2 and stated that it would be discussed during the Finance Committee report.

It was agreed that J. Wambold's recommendations would be included in Motion 2 as a friendly amendment.

**Vote:** A vote was then taken on Motion 2; the motion passed unanimously.

**CAMPUS MINISTRY REPORT:** J. Gruendler reported the following:

1. Abba Java renovations are now complete and the heating system in Wesley will be fixed in the upcoming week.
2. The number of visitors to Abba Java so far this semester has increased about 25 percent compared to last year.
3. Sower's Harvest has been added to the list of businesses donating leftovers to Abba Java through the food reclamation program.
4. This year's interns are doing well; last year's interns are now in leadership roles.
5. The Wesley Leadership Team is revising the by-laws; these will come before Church Council for approval once they are complete.

**STAFF MINISTRY MOMENT:** V. Flick discussed her role as St. Paul's Administrative Assistant for Member Care. Her duties include maintaining St. Paul's database, handling bulk mailings, maintaining St. Paul's official books (the official record of members, baptisms, marriages, and deaths), coordinating the Safe Sanctuaries Program, and overseeing memorial gift acknowledgements. She also makes sure everything is in place in the Sanctuary for baptisms and serves as a member of the nominations committee.

**VOLUNTEER MINISTRY MOMENT:** L. Pressler talked about the duties and responsibilities of being an usher. There are two usher categories at St. Paul's: Sunday worship service ushers and ushers for special services (i.e., funerals). Sunday ushers are led by a head usher, who serves in that position for three months. The head usher is responsible for recruiting additional ushers. Two to three ushers are needed for the 8:00 a.m. service; ten are needed for the 9:15 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. services. Sunday ushers greet worshippers, hand out the bulletin, serve as acolyte (when needed), collect the offering, distribute Communion elements, count the number of people in worship, clean up after services, and retrieve misplaced items. For funerals, two to three ushers are needed. Their responsibilities include lighting the altar candles and serving as pall bearers. All ushers are trained in CPR, AED, first aid, and building evacuation.

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:**

**Finance:** K. Uchneat reported the following:

1. The preliminary 2017 budget was shared with the Finance Committee last week. A more formal presentation will be made at their December 7 meeting.
2. A review of St. Paul's audit process is underway. K. Sikorski compared St. Paul's audit procedures to those recommended in the UMC Audit Guide using 2015 numbers and found no discrepancy.
3. Recommendations from Charlie Smith's review of St. Paul's accounting practices are still being prioritized.
4. Identification of dormant accounts is underway.
5. John Ake has completed the IT inventory; evaluation of various church management software packages is underway.

K. Sikorski reported the following:

1. The September giving total (\$83,138) was not quite at budget, but spending for the month was below budget.
2. The Operating Cash Reserve balance is still negative (-\$53,860) due to monthly giving shortfalls, however, he expects this to be made up in December.

Returning to J. Zimmer's question about the Preschool deficit, K. Sikorski stated that St. Paul's has not yet received some Pre-K grant funds. He will work with J. Stroemel and K. Duclos to summarize these. D. Flick asked K. Sikorski to share the information with Church Council once complete. K. Sikorski agreed to email it to Council members in November. K. Duclos stated that there are at least three grants currently outstanding, totaling \$22,900.

**Stewardship:** B. Duclos reported that postcards announcing the Spiritual Check-Up sermon series were mailed last week. The sermon series begins on November 6. A letter and pledge cards will be mailed to members before Consecration Sunday, which is November 21.

**Staff Parish Relations:** A. Marshall reported that the SPRC is focusing on caring for staff and is implementing a staff liaison program.

**Nominations/Membership:** V. Flick stated that total membership stands at 1,393 as of October 20, 2016.

**Trustees:** K. Grimes reported the following:

1. A new heating system has been installed in the Park Hills Avenue parsonage.
2. The Endowment Fund is up 6.3 percent for the year; the current balance is \$1,244,500.
3. Steve Elbin has joined the Investment Committee.
4. Hayden Davidson did a beautiful job constructing the patio on the Locust Lane side of the church (his Eagle Scout project).

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** The UMW's 2016 Marketplace and Silent Auction will be held on October 29 in the gym. A lunch to welcome Amanda Gutierrez, the Nicaragua missionary, will be held on November 6 in the Social Room.

**ADJOURNMENT:** D. Flick adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Harris, Church Council Secretary