

Grace United Methodist Church

Simplified Accountable Leadership Team (“SALT”) Inaugural meeting

June 12, 2023

Attendance: Heather Myers, Mary Lou Vinson, Bob Richards, Chris Walls, Jacob Manchester, Reverend Eric Falker, Peter Larsen (Rae Vaught planned absence)

Pastor Eric opened the meeting with prayer at 7:05, and then offered a brief meditation on Jethro and Moses relationship.

Following the meditation, we transitioned into the topic of Training and FAQs for the newly founded SALT. The organization model and principles we are enacting is inspired by the book, “Mission Possible: A Simple Structure for Missional Effectiveness”, by Kay Kotan.

In addition to the voting members of SALT, there are also ex-officio members including the Pastor, Treasurer, and Financial Secretary of Houghton Grace UMC. It was also discussed that we have vacancies for a designated youth and a young adult slot on SALT. Nominations are encouraged, and it was noted that directly-related family members are not allowed to serve on SALT at the same time.

Direction was given by Pastor Eric, with discussion and affirmation by the membership, of how each of us is on all of the traditional UMC committees, since the SALT functions as all of these put together. So, when someone needs SPRC, Finance, Trustees, etc., they can speak with any of us to raise questions or concerns, and then that person will bring this to the SALT for consideration. It was further discussed that Pastor Eric would like to see a SALT member function as liaison for various mission teams at Grace UMC.

A discussion regarding structure was next, including the need to elect a chairperson. It was noted that SALT member terms will run on the calendar year, so the first chair will serve until January, 2024. Primary duties of the chairperson will be to work with Pastor Eric to set the agenda for and lead SALT meetings. Pastor Eric further explained that the SALT chair will also serve as the chair of Trustees, which is an individual position that is required to be filled. Delegation of duties is highly encouraged to avoid burnout.

Next, the topic of how we plan to conduct votes arose, with the main candidates being traditional voice votes and approving motions by consensus. Discussion around this topic ensued, all seemed to be attracted to the simplicity of consensus voting, and concerns were shared that, if not well-defined, this structure could lead to one member of SALT holding up business. Therefore, it was decided that the SALT will vote/approve motions by consensus, with the chairperson asking for consensus/dissent, and motions passing when there is no dissent. If there is dissent, more discussion may be warranted, and then a voice vote will be called with a simple majority deciding the vote.

Having settled the matter of consensus voting, we took our first action to nominate Heather Myers as the inaugural chairperson of the SALT. Heather's nomination was approved by consensus, electing her as our chair, to serve a term starting immediately and ending in January, 2024.

It was noted that VBS will be coming soon and could use a SALT liaison. Mary Lou volunteered and was appointed by consensus.

Remaining time was spent with a time of sharing suggested guiding principles for the group. Some discussion ensued, clarifying that this structure has been properly authorized and encouraged by the church under UMC discipline, and that we have broad authority to determine the specifics of how we conduct our business in support of our ministries at Grace UMC.

- Ideas for guiding principles included:
 - Commitment to have discussion (spirited, if needed) at the meetings, and to voice any dissent during the meeting, rather than holding back and making undermining comments after the fact
 - Praying before/during/after meetings, for the group and each other
 - Openness to share opinions and questions, leave behind all pretense, we are all doing this together for the first time – questions are good!
 - Mutual respect
 - In general, we'll try to meet in-person, and virtual attendance is also acceptable when necessary, including participating in consensus/voting for approval of motions
 - Work-life balance is important for church jobs too, the flexibility to attend remotely should not be interpreted as an expectation to join when you're on vacation, etc.

Chairperson Heather Myers closed us with prayer at 8:34