

Grace United Methodist Church
Simplified Accountable Leadership Team
Meeting Minutes November 13, 2023

Present: Heather Myers, Chris Walls, Pete Larsen, Lezley Heldt, Rae Vaught, Bob Richards, Caryn Heldt (treasurer, ex officio). Mary Lou Vinson was traveling. Jake Manchester joined by Zoom in progress.

Opening:

Heather called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Heather led a time of prayer for the church and for our work as SALT members.

Financial Discussion:

Heather opened the meeting by noting the importance of SALT members being familiar with the finances. Caryn is here tonight to help us understand the finances and the situation of the church. The current budget and giving information were presented (attachments available). The basic categories of general fund, "pass through" (special offerings), special designated funds, and the pastor's discretionary fund were discussed. Currently, giving is short of the budget although there is not as much of a deficit as earlier in the year. Typically, year-end giving is higher but not likely to be enough to cover the entire deficit if prior patterns hold. We discussed how many of the items in the budget are fixed costs (e.g., utilities). Bob Richards noted that if the renovation of the city apartment building next door (Heritage Manor) goes through - with associated parking lot changes - that might be an opportunity to negotiate with the city on more snow removal, including the potential for sidewalk snow. Nothing is certain, of course, but that might provide an opportunity for further discussion. Heather brought up the issue of the unpaid ministry shares and also the previously discussed idea of an AED. Do we still want to buy the AED given the current financial situation? What do we want to do about district and conference ministry shares? 4

Consensus is to pay the district ministry shares in full over the remainder of the year and revisit the conference ministry shares in mid-December. Heather asks: do we want to take the budget shortfall in front of the congregation so they know the status? Bob noted that financial information is in the bulletin. Consensus is to revisit this as the year progresses.

Another idea related to finances would be to offer the church a chance to buy specific items (like the AED) for the congregation as a gift. Regarding the AED, Heather will ask Zach & Karen DeYoung about recommendations and then we can explore possible grant funding or a special gift for the purchase.

Rae asked how the budget was set. Caryn noted that the budget is basically set from last year's expenses with known changes (e.g., pastor's salary & benefits). There is not much discretionary funding at this time so the budget doesn't change much from the expenses. Caryn will prepare a draft for us for the new year. Caryn will also need access to the pastor's new salary for next

year for budgeting and to work with the payroll service. Pete noted he would try to find the official paperwork from the church conference and send it to all.

Follow up to the SALT Coaching opportunity:

Heather asked about the training/coaching opportunity for the SALT that we discussed with the potential coach. Do we want to order the suggested books? Do we want to pursue the training at this time? There was discussion about the perceived value of the training, our time commitments, and our priorities. Several members of the SALT were concerned about the time investment and cost. Consensus was to put the coaching on hold for now. We were in favor of buying one book to see how the “small church” concept is presented. Rae is willing to read it first and then we can discuss, share ideas, and pass the book to others for review.

Additional Agenda Items:

Heather: What do we need to talk about at our next meetings? Heather reminded us to send agenda items in advance.

Additional discussion items:

- SALT lunch discussion: Bob noted that we kind of ran out of time but there was good discussion. Rae said that one good outcome was the reinvigorating of the Little Brother’s Christmas meal. Chris indicated that Melanie Walls is Servsafe certified (which is required to run the kitchen for this and related events) but that certification will expire at the end of the year and she is not planning to renew. This is something to think about in the coming year if we wish to continue these ministries. Pete noted that Anna Walls is also certified but she may be part of the same class and thus also about to expire.
- Heather suggested that maybe we should offer regular opportunities for the congregation to envision future ministry. Bob suggested it would be good to hear updates at the next meeting about how ministry planning is going, learn if ministry leaders need any more help, etc. For now, Chris will check with Melanie to ask what she needs on our behalf for the Little Brothers dinner.
- We discussed the building use request that Heather received from the local fraternity for their brotherhood week. Heather contacted them for additional information but hasn’t heard back yet. Jake suggested that we have some sort of agreement with them even if we don’t charge a fee. Jake will follow up with them. If they wish to use the facility the consensus is that we would ask them to fill in a building use agreement, provide a returnable deposit for when we get the key back and give them the opportunity to make a donation if they wish.
- Pastor Jeff Paulson asked Pete, Heather, and Jake if the church would be willing to part with the leftover sanctuary ceiling boards that are stored in the ceiling of the storage room downstairs. To the best of any of our knowledge, they have remained there untouched since the church addition in the early 1990s. Pastor Jeff offered to make a donation to the church in return for them. Consensus was to accept his offer. We discussed whether we need to save any for possible repairs and determined he could have them all as repair of the ceiling would be difficult if it ever were to be needed.

- Heather provided the child protection policy that Rae and Heather went through for revisions. It is slightly updated from what we had. We should review this before the December meeting for approval at that time. One thing to think about is whether any special situations (e.g., the memorial garden or the elevator) need to be addressed specifically. We should all read and discuss in December.
- Minutes from September and October were presented in the meeting packet. Consensus from the team was that they are accurate as published.
- Heather noted that in December or January we should officially approve the Pine Ridge mission trip (led by Zach DeYoung) and decide how we will support it. Pastor Eric also noted that we should think through the active ministries of the church (in the meeting packet). We should discuss these next time as well.
- Heather also presented a form for the congregation to use to get an item on the SALT agenda. We should all review this and be prepared to approve it next time.
- Pete noted the great work going on in the youth group and welcomed Lezley to the SALT.

Jake Manchester prayed to close the meeting at 8:25pm.

Respectfully submitted by Pete Larsen