

Gainesville First United Methodist Church
Tuesday, June 13, 2023
Church Council Meeting Minutes

Laity in Attendance: Mark Alexander, Amy Britt, Robert Bruner, Pam Cameron, Doug Carter, Heather Chandler, Tom Cole, Susan Daniell, Sally Darden, Cathy Dyches, Leslie Frierson, Nat Hancock, Lee Highsmith, Nancy Story, Ron Stowe, Frank Waggoner, Mary Wall, Robbie Westbrooks

Clergy and Staff in Attendance: Michelle Alexander, Ginnie Highsmith, Mark Klein, Mary Lina Pardue, Jamey Prickett, Jim Reavis, Sandy Skinner, Brad Shumake

Guests in Attendance: None

Welcome

Church Council Chair Susan Daniell welcomed all to the meeting and introduced new Church Council member, Heather Chandler, Chair of the Endowment Trust Committee. She thanked all for their attendance at the meeting.

Missional Focus and Opening Prayer

Rev. Sandy Skinner opened the meeting with a focus on community building and Adult Discipleship opportunities. Wednesday Night Dinners are returning on a trial basis for the Fall beginning August 16th and going through November 15th. They will now be known as “Midweek Meals,” served from 5:00-6:00 featuring both adult and children’s meals. Cost is \$10 per adult and \$5 per child, with a family maximum of \$30. During the trial period the Finance Committee has designed some funding to offset the caterer’s cost, and the Adult Discipleship program is also committing funding. Weekly menus will be posted in advance; reservations are necessary, and online payment is encouraged. All are welcome! A target audience is families who might not have come previously because there was no time to feed their children or themselves before coming to church. Those families who have previously just dropped children off for Bridges can come a little earlier for dinner and now stay for their own study.

The ministry of Adult Discipleship is to provide opportunities, resources, and encouragement for GFUMC members in order to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus and others. By attending a Sunday School Class and/or Bible Study, we increase our biblical knowledge and become more well-equipped to represent Jesus confidently in our everyday lives, allowing us to not only “build” bridges but to actually “be” a bridge to Jesus for others.

The Discipleship Catalog will be available in mid-July. Most classes and groups begin the week of August 14th. A very diverse and engaging variety of programs are planned for Fall. Efforts are ongoing to support Sunday School Classes and encourage those not currently in a class to become involved. Each adult class is recording a video “invitation” describing their class. The videos will be on the church website and featured on Sunday mornings. It was also announced Woven – Women’s Night of Worship is scheduled for Friday, September 15th at GFUMC.

Chair Daniell asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2023 meeting. **Motion:** Doug Carter moved to approve the minutes. Leslie Frierson seconded. All in favor, none opposed. **Motion carried.**

Finance Committee Report

The financial report was distributed with the minutes of the April council meeting. Mark Kline reported for David Barnett. As of May 31, 2023 revenues are \$1,268,000 (compared to \$1,264,000 at the same time in 2022), and expenditures are \$1,312,000 (compared to \$1,300,000 in 2022). All expense categories are within normal ranges of our 2023 budget for this time of year. Reserve funds remain strong with approximately \$1,000,000 total in the three funds (Operating, Restricted, and Employee Tax Credit). **Motion:** Frank Waggoner moved to approve the finance committee report. Ron Stowe seconded. All in favor, none opposed. **Motion carried.**

Trustees Report

Tom Cole reported the Trustees met and May and will meet again in July (the committee meets every other month). The major project of replacing the roof is complete. The stained-glass project is now nearing completion. Trustees are awaiting a proposal from Scroggs and Grizzle for necessary repairs on the Scout Cabin. It is anticipated the cost could exceed \$100,000. House Lights are being replaced in the Modern Worship Area, that work should be completed soon.

Staff Parish Relations Committee

Frank Waggoner shared there is no report from SPRC.

Endowment Trust Committee

Heather Chandler reported that as of January 1, 2023 was \$943,896. The balance as of June 13, 2023 is \$950,860. A total of \$48,505 has been designated as follows: \$16,505 – Children’s Worship Center sound equipment, \$12,000 – UNG Wesley Center operations, \$8,000 – Hope for Hall inclusive playground, and \$12,000 – Preschool Scholarships. The Chrisner Fund balance is \$113,774 and has been committed as follows: \$31,500 – Stained Glass Windows project, \$16,057 - Children’s Worship Center sound equipment, \$16,585 – Choir Room sound equipment, and \$74,003 – Organ repairs (this will not cover all organ repair expenses).

Lay Leadership

Doug Carter reported that the Lay Leadership Committee is beginning the process to identify potential members to fill open slots on GFUMC’s many lay-led committees and teams in 2023, as many currently serving will be rolling off. The committee will begin meeting in September, culminating in the presentation of their recommendations to the Church Council at the October 2023 meeting. Those interested in serving or who know others who would be good candidates

for consideration are asked to contact Doug or Jamey. Doug asked Church Council members to engage in intentional prayer for the lay and clergy leadership of our church.

Columbarium and Memorial Garden Committee

Nat Hancock reported that all columbarium projects are complete, and the committee is very pleased with the results.

Boy Scouts

Robert Bruner many Scouts from the GFUMC Troop will be participating in summer camp in North Carolina. Outreach activities continue to attract new members.

Ministries and Missions Reports (Celebrations, Challenges, Engagement Opportunities)

Congregational Care and Senior Adult Ministries

Jim Reavis reported all is going well with GFUMC's activities in nine senior living personal care locations. Volunteers are always needed and welcomed. Adding another site, bringing the total to 10, is likely to happen soon.

A new Caregiver Support Group will soon begin weekly, facilitated by Brenau University School of Psychology graduate students. Forget Me Not Care ministry is preparing packets of cards for distribution to members who will then send a card monthly to homebound and/or older members of GFUMC. This is an ongoing ministry of GFUMC and is so meaningful to those who can no longer join us in person for worship and other church activities.

Worship Committee

Though an outreach initiative, Mary Wall reported we are again provided weekly groceries for 25 Baker-Glover families. Each family receives two full bags of groceries each week (both perishable and non-perishable). These groceries are such a great help to families during the summer. Each week while school is out (mid-May through July) volunteers shop, package, and deliver the groceries. Volunteer sign-up is on the GFUMC Events webpage.

Young Adults Ministry

Ginnie Highsmith reported the first GFUMC Young Adult Mixer was held on Wednesday, May 3rd was attended by over 60 young adults ages 18-40. Many in attendance have not previously worshipped at GFUMC. Another mixer is planned for Fall. "Midweek at Midland," an informal summer gathering for all ages will be on Wednesday evenings at Midland Greenway. The movie Narnia, based on C.S. Lewis' book The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe will be shown in the GFUMC courtyard on Friday, July 28th with free popcorn and ice cream provided. All are welcome. Deep-Dive is returning on Wednesday evenings, as well as an Adult Life Hacks class. Details are forthcoming on the GFUMC website and various social media outlets.

Worship Arts

Michelle Alexander reported that Worship Arts recently celebrated our Lakeshore Carillon

Ringers for another year of providing wonderful music for Classic worship. We also celebrate several new members in the Chancel Choir. The choir has a heart for outreach ministry in our community and sings at many community events. The annual Patriotic Concert is June 25th. This is a great opportunity to bring friends and neighbors with you and introduce them to GFUMC.

In the fall, we will celebrate Keith Jeffcoat's 30th anniversary at GFUMC with a music-filled Classic worship service September 24th. This will include a new work for choir, organ, and brass that is commissioned in Keith's honor by composer Michael John Trotta. Please put the date on your calendar and join in celebrating Keith's amazing ministry at GFUMC.

Michelle also reported that many GFUMC members have participated in the Butler Center reopening, expanding our local outreach. Michelle is a member of the Butler Center Restoration Steering Committee.

Student Ministry

Jamey reported for Ric Clark that Student Ministry's "Summer of Service" will kick off soon with three days of JumpStart Serves. Several GFUMC students are participating in GAP (Gainesville Aid Project), which will be June 21st -25th. The Mission Trip to Memphis, TN, is July 16th -21st. Dockside Bible Study will also meet several times throughout the summer. Upcoming in the Fall, the "Off the Grid Fall Retreat" will be at Strong Rock Camp in Cleveland, GA, October 20th -22nd.

Outreach, Evangelism, and Hospitality Committee

Sally Darden, Chair of the Outreach Committee reported on many celebrations and outreach activities. On Sunday June 4th we celebrated 5 years of the PATH Project having their own building within the Baker Glover Community. On that Sunday around 100 members of the Hispanic community that live at Baker Glover attended our 11:00 worship service. In order to make them feel welcome we sang hymns in English and Spanish. After the service Outreach hosted a pizza lunch for all the families. It was a great day of celebration and at least three individuals have expressed interest in volunteering with Path for the first time as a result of the celebration.

Coming this Fall, Habitat for Humanity is working on the last two buildings in their current community. A GFUMC Sunday School classes has taken a Saturday in July to volunteer for a build day, and we are working towards a few church-wide build days in the Fall.

Children's Ministry (First Kids) and Preschool

MaryLina Pardue reported on many fun end-of-the-year Pre-School festivities, including Pre-K Graduation and Bike Day. Looking forward to summer camps starting soon. In 2022 we had three classes per camp – this year we have five classes per camp!

Over 300 children from throughout the community attend VBS. Over 100 volunteers and staff members supported the wonderful week of VBS. It was a fun week for all! Grow Day Camp, an

extension of Camp Glisson is again at GFUCM this summer. The camp is full, with 36 kids participating. First Kids is looking forward to expanding Sunday School and Wednesday Bridges in the Fall - more kids...more fun!

Foster Care

Jamey Prickett reported on the Foster Care Ministry. We provided 30 Easter Baskets for foster children in April. We recently rented Frances Meadows Splash Zone Pool and had 22 foster families join us. We have provided a foster child with a laptop for school, a washer and dryer for a family, and a car part for a dad all through the Care Portal. We also received a \$3,000 grant from Jockey for a back-to-school bash for foster families. The Back-to-School Bash will be on July 27th.

Pastoral Update, Reflection and Vision Casting

Jamey Prickett provided a membership update since January 2023: 1) transferred out (death, moved out-of-town, joined another church) – 105 individuals (71 transferred to Asbury Chapel); 2) received into membership – 39 individuals; 3) professions of faith – 18 (the goal is 20 by end of 2023).

The weekly attendance average for in-person worship for January–March 2023 was 617 individuals; for January-June 11, 2023 the average in-person attendance was 625 individuals. Our goal by the end of December 2023 is to average 800 individuals in worship in-person each week. This is possible! Continue to invite and welcome others to attend with you. The weekly attendance average for online worship for January-June 11, 2023 was 262.

Jamey shared the following devotional to close the Church Council Meeting:

What is your approach to life, business, and family? Are you proactive or reactive? A reactive leader is controlled by the crisis and incapable of turning vision into reality.

Proactive leaders don't ignore the moment. Rather they choose to focus on the outcome and make forward-thinking decisions.

We can either be someone who shapes the future or merely reacts to it.

In Ephesians 1:11, Paul says, "We were destined by the plan of God, who accomplishes everything according to his design." God has a plan. God sees the end from the beginning and works for the greater purpose.

How are we proactive?

1. We refuse to be distracted and lean into God's greater purpose.
2. We stay consistent.

Zechariah 4

The vision indicates that future Israel will be a blessing to all the nations of the world through an abundant supply of the Spirit of God as the result of the coming of the Messiah, who will unite the offices of priest and king in Himself.

Zechariah 4: 8 - 10: Then the word of the Lord came to me: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me to you. "Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the Lord that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel?"

"Who dares despise the day of small things"stay consistent!

Little by little, a little becomes a lot.

We will prioritize consistency. We need habits of consistency that make it possible to deepen friendships.

Our communities are hungry for proactive leaders who refuse to be distracted and lean into God's greater purpose. Are you the person to guide us?

Jamey closed with prayer.

Adjournment

Chair Susan Daniell thanked all for their attendance and reminded all about future meeting dates. The meeting was adjourned.

Next Church Council Meeting

August 8, 2023

at 7:00 p.m.

Future Church Council Meetings

October 10, 2023

December 12, 2023