**CUMC/WESLEY FOUNDATION**

**CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES**

**July 23, 2020**

**Minutes of Meeting**

**Members Present:** Brenda Allen, Mary Lautzenhiser Bellon, Adam Faeth, Jennifer Plagman-Galvin, Jen Hibben, Mitch Hoyer, Jane Jacobson, Jason Janssen, David Orth, Mary Wickham, Steve Williams

**Members Absent:** Gerry Kennedy

**Staff Present:** Lindsay Drake

**Call to Order**

Chair Orth called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.. Pastor Mary Lautzenhiser Bellon introduced herself. The attendees took turns introducing themselves and sharing an answer to the question, “How is it with your soul?”

Chair Orth asked the council to review the minutes of the June 25, 2020 meeting. Faeth shared the suggested changes he received from Wickham and Jacobson after sending out a draft of the minutes.

**A motion was made (Jacobson) and seconded (Wickham) to approve the minutes with the suggested changes. Motion passed.**

**Strategic Planning (first 3 of 6 questions)**

Chair Orth said that at the February 27, 2020 meeting, Pastor Coon shared a set of six questions from Twila Glenn to ask before starting to create a strategic plan. At the April 23, 2020 meeting, the council agreed to discuss some of these questions at the start subsequent meetings.

**Q1: Why is it important to establish a shared strategic plan at this point?**

Plagman-Galvin said that COVID-19 has given the church an opportunity to examine how we can be more purposeful or intentional and write it down. She said that having a strategic plan is more important than ever because the church will not return to business-as-usual. Drake said at this point, we are living in the middle of a pandemic that will change what church looks like.

Hoyer said that with all the transitions and uncertainty going on, a plan would help to influence decisions the group needs to make to live out our purpose and mission. Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said she thought it would be good to go over the programs and ask if there are things we want to let go of, and new things that we want to pick up that would be exciting to us. Jacobson said we need to know where we want to go, and we need a way to prioritize ideas and opportunities as they present themselves.

Allen said that a strategic plan would help to narrow down the focus from the purpose statement, which is broad. She said it would prioritize what we work on and provide a way to hold ourselves accountable to what we wrote down. She said this group gets caught up in what we are working on, but others may not know what we are working on. A strategic plan might be a way to share what we are working on with others who are not on the committees and clusters and help engage others in the church. Jacobson said she thought the word “shared” was critical, and to make this work it must be owned by many people.

Wickham said there are tools for strategic planning that cover some of the things that were discussed so far. She said that everyone might have different ideas of what a strategic plan looks like. She said that a successful strategic plan requires engaging with the whole organization. She said there is also a difference between a strategic plan and implementation plan. She also said that a governance process is also important to evaluate what we are learning as we start to implement the strategic plan.

**Q2: How can we leverage the talent/strengths in the church to write a shared strategic plan?**

Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said that the leadership always knows the strengths and weaknesses of the leadership. She said this is a great opportunity to query the strengths and talents of the people who are not necessarily the go-to people that we already know. She said this would be a good opportunity to identify those people and invite those people to bring their strength and energy toward us.

Allen said there are lots of people who have experience in creating strategic plans that we might be able to ask for help about how to write a strategic plan. Wickham said that another group we might want to involve are the people who do not come to church. Chair Orth said we might want to think about people who we might want to be a part of the church.

Jacobson said we need to involve people of all ages, especially youth because they are our future. She said we also can benefit from the wisdom of people who have lived through other disasters. Pastor Hibben said that youth may also include college students. She said that Wesley Foundation had their funding cut again this year, so part of the plan might be what our congregation’s support for Wesley foundation might look like in the future. Pastor Williams said that we should think about how to be inclusive as we move forward.

Hoyer said there may be all kinds of opportunities to facilitate small group discussions that feed into the overall discussion. He said that would help more people feel like they are part of the process, and build that buy-in. He asked whether there were opportunities to give more people a sense that they were in-charge, rather than just ask for their thoughts.

**Q3: What would we hope to accomplish by writing a shared strategic plan?**

Chair Orth said writing a shared strategic plan might help find some steps to live in our purpose. Allen said it could create some excitement because if people are engaged in the process, that can increase vibrancy. She said if it does provide some concrete actions, it may provide something to rally around, building connection and increasing buy-in. Jacobson said it defines or brands us for the outside community.

Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said if we have a concreate plan, it leaves more room to be surprised by our hidden talents. Plagman-Galvin said if there is a way that many people can help live out the plan, from youth to college students to young adults, and families, that everyone feels like they can contribute to moving it forward in some way, shape, or form. Drake said there is power in common language. When we use common language, we will move people together better than if we did not have a common way to talk about it.

Wickham said a common answer to this question is that a strategy is a big decision that you make that makes all of the little decisions easy. She said it helps in the communication of what is important.

Allen said the process of writing the plan helps us to understand and own our purpose better. By going through the process, people have to wrestle with decisions, and ensure there is a common understanding.

**COVID-19 Response Team Update**

Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said that Adventures Preschool will be back in the building in August. They have developed safety protocols to separate children into rooms, and enhanced cleaning. She said that that will be the first group to operate in the building again. She said the community small groups like Al-Anon would be next. She said she reached out to three groups and they have not committed to coming back, but they are excited about the chance. The church has communicated with these groups the expectations around wearing masks, social distancing, and additional cleaning.

Jacobson said that the team received 176 responses to their survey so far and received some requests for paper copies of the survey to distribute to people who do not use the internet. She said the team received responses from people representing all age groups.

Pastor Lautzenhiser Bellon said her operating assumption was that we are not going to be in the building in the near future. She said the team needs to look at what happens in Fall when the students return to Iowa State, and what that does to the infection rates in Story County. She has formed a group of people who are involved in producing the digital worship to look at whether we can film parts of the digital worship in the sanctuary, or outside, or other locations. She said that group was looking at how to keep the digital worship lively.

Faeth said that as a parent of young children, Loonsfoot was doing a good job of engaging the children in digital worship opportunities. Pastor Williams said his grandkids are also a fan of Loonsfoot. He said that Collegiate Wesley is doing a good job with digital workshop compared to other churches. He said there are some services he watched where they film in the sanctuary, and he feels like the pastor is speaking to the room and he is the only one in the pew.

Pastor Hibben said that when students come back in the Fall, we will not be opening the main building to them. She said college students seem to be a higher risk group. Wesley Foundation planned to allow them to meet in small groups using the Annex, where they would have a separate space, and where the space would be large enough to spread out.

Drake said that she was meeting with the leaders of the adult Sunday school classes. She said they are still planning a virtual kickoff toward the end of summer. Many of the people she talked with are looking forward to meeting again.

**Property Needs Assessment Subcommittee Update**

Plagman-Galvin said she shared list of questions with Chair Orth that guided the conversations of the subcommittee so far. She said that the next step will be for the subcommittee to identify any additional questions they have after holding those initial conversations.

Plagman-Galvin said that the first phase of the assessment will be gathering information and identifying the physical needs of the property. She said the second phase will look at any problems that need solved and see if there are any recommendations to solve these problems.

**Nominations Subcommittee Update**

Drake said that Administrative Council met and did a good job creating their slate of proposed nominees. She said that Ministries Council would be meeting soon to make their nominations. She said the church is making progress toward presenting a set of leadership nominations at a charge conference, whatever that looks like this year.

**Leadership Development Subcommittee Update**

Drake said one of the projects that she saw a need for was updating the description of roles for our leadership positions within the church. She said as she started putting this together and she realized that she needed some help. She said the goal was to create something where people really know what they are signing up for when asked to serve in a leadership role. Hoyer asked if the church already had any kind of starting point for the leadership role descriptions. Drake said that it was out of date with the new church structure, and as an example, it did not reflect the current focus of the clusters within the Ministries Council. Allen said she would be willing to help and asked about the timeframe. Drake said she thought it would be great if the subcommittee could put something together by the end of the year.

**Dennis Byrne Endowment**

Chair Orth said when the Byrne team presented their grant award recommendations to the church council last year, a concern was raised that they did not follow the allocation guidelines from the Byrne agreement. He said that the responsibilities of administering the Byrne grants falls to two groups: the Byrne team within Sending to Serve manages the grant process and makes grant recommendations, and the Endowment Board manages the financial aspects of the Byrne endowment. Chair Orth suggested forming a subcommittee to clarify the requirements from the Byrne agreement and build a consensus between the two groups.

Pastor Hibben said Sending to Serve recently planned to change the way that the Byrne grant recommendations were made. She said that after a regular meeting, Sending to Serve would adjourn and reconvene as the Byrne team so that they could make grant recommendations that align the Byrne grants with Denis’s expressed wishes and the church’s purpose.

Wickham asked if Sending to Serve had a copy of the Byrne agreement. Pastor Hibben said that they did. Wickham said that the agreement detailed how two-thirds of the award was to go to international missions, and one-third of the award was to go to missions sponsored by Collegiate Wesley. She said the Endowment Board had three roles in the administration of the Byrne endowment: 1) manage the fund, 2) calculate the total grant award amount each year, and 3) ensure that funds are spent every year. Pastor Hibben said that Sending to Serve does not want to be involved in the financial management, so she did not see any conflict between the roles of Endowment Board and Sending to Serve.

Wickham said that she and several members of the Endowment Board met with Gossett, who indicated he was the chair of the Byrne team. She said that they had reached an agreement about allocating the awards based on the ratio in the Byrne agreement, and clarifying the two award categories in the communication about the grants. Allen said that Sending to Serve reached out to the former Byrne team members and found that most of them were not interested in continuing, and Gossett expressed his desire to step away from leading the Byrne team. Drake said she thought it was a communication issue. Sending to Serve made a plan to work on the Byrne grants and put it into action but did not communicate it to Gossett. Drake said he may have interpreted that as a lack of movement and started to re-engage in the Byrne team in order to make sure the grants were awarded this year.

Wickham said it was important to make some small changes this year like writing the definitions of what constitutes international missions, and missions sponsored by Collegiate Wesley. She also suggested making sure that when grant recommendations were presented, they list the sponsoring groups from Collegiate Wesley where applicable.

**Other Business**

Janssen said that Max Morris will take over as chair of Finance next year, and will serve the remaining two years of his term.

**Adjourn**

Chair Orth provided the closing prayer. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Adam Faeth, Secretary