

Minutes of the February 24, 2008, Church Council Meeting
First United Methodist Church
LaGrange, Georgia

The first meeting of the 2008 Church Council of First United Methodist Church, LaGrange, Georgia, met on Sunday, February 24, 2008, at 2:00 p.m. in the Chapel.

Mrs. Esther Rainey, Chairman called the meeting to order. Mr. Jim Thornton gave the devotional.

Copies of the minutes from the December 19, 2007, Church Council meeting were reviewed and approved. Minutes from the November 25, 2007, Leadership Training Workshop were also reviewed and approved.

Old/Unfinished Business:

Council members were given a copy of the proposed First United Methodist Church Mission Statement that has been developed as a result of the Leadership Training Workshop from November 25th under the leadership of Esther Rainey and Dr. Jay Simmons. Council members were asked to review and discuss it with their committee members and were encouraged to comment on possible corrections, additions, etc. A final version of the statement should be ready for approval at the next Council meeting.

Committee Reports:

Finance: Committee Chairman Paul Perrotti went over financial statements for December 2007 and January 2008, citing an approximate \$30,000 difference in actual revenue versus pledged revenue for the current year. With this in mind, the Finance Committee has approved the mailing of monthly statements to congregation members who have pledged, hopefully encouraging consistent and timely payment of pledges. Also, Mr. Perrotti will write a cover letter for *The Flame* to help explain the importance of regular monthly giving.

Early Learning Center/Methodist Day School: Chairman Pam Doig presented the current status of the application process to the State of Georgia for the proposed Methodist Day School. The written application has been submitted, and the committee is awaiting notification from the State. Once notification arrives of the State's acceptance, the next step will be a site inspection of the buildings and facilities. Once those two steps are complete, a proposed budget will be finalized and presented to the Council. Committee member Edward Smith assured the Council that the ELC/MDS should be self-supporting; it will reimburse the church for the cost of insurance, utilities, janitorial services, etc. ELC Director Casey Kornek reported on building improvements, equipment needs, and playground renovation.

Activities & Use: Chairman Bob Cammon reported that the committee has passed a new policy where there will be no activities on church property during the month of December except for our own church programs. This does not apply to regular activities held such as Red Cross,

Scouts, and Explorer Bible Study. Funerals will be held as needed. The committee also approved a request from Rick Free that groups pay for each day of use of our facility. The committee also passed a policy that groups must reapply each year for the use of the facilities; these requests will go through the A & U Committee as well as the church office.

Bereavement: Chairman Carolyn Alise sent a report saying that the committee has helped three families during the first two months of the year.

Communications: Chairman Andy Rainey reported that the committee is awaiting pricing and information on the relocation and improvement of the audio system in the sanctuary. The church office has designed a template for newspaper advertising to use for communication of church activities to the community. He reported that our website receives approximately 450 – 550 hits per month and *The Flame* online should be up and running soon. A question was asked as to why the 11:00 Sunday service was no longer broadcast on the radio, and Mr. Rainey reported that it was a matter of cost and equipment.

Education: No Report

Evangelism: No Report

Kitchen Work Team: No Report

Long Range Planning: Chairman Bobby Carmichael reported the committee meets monthly and is actively working with Skip Smith of Smith Design Group for a cost projection of a new youth building on the property south of Vernon Street.

Memorials: Chairman Skip Smith sent a written report to say the committee has pledged around \$1,300 for equipment for the Handbell Choir, around \$2,500 toward the Henderson Traylor Scout Award, and around \$6,000 toward the Columbarium project. It is also looking into the purchase of artwork to place throughout the facility.

Missions: Chairman Lewis Powell reported his committee sees the need for a more organized and coordinated effort to do church missions and to report on them. The committee is thinking about a possible central theme for the church and current ideas are in the areas of housing, health, and the environment.

Music: Chairman Nancy Larson reported on the refurbishing of the Music Suite at the cost to the church of only \$230. Dates have been announced for 3rd grade – 8th grades for a summer music camp; the Celebration Singers will put on the play “Elijah” on May 7; and the adult choirs are working on special music for the Easter services.

Policy: No Report

Staff Pastor Parish Relations: Chairman Nancy Stevens sent a written report thanking all the staff and welcoming Sandy Davidson as the new Director of the Children’s Ministry. Lindsey

Binion has transitioned to the ELC program to work with Casey Kornek. The Committee also sent a letter of recommendation to the Board of Ordination for Rev. Kathy Lamon.

Stewardship: Chairman Kelly Linch reported his committee sees 3 problem areas in regard to stewardship: (1) members waiting until November & December to turn pay their pledges (online giving & monthly statements hopefully to help in this area); (2) members who give but don't pledge, thus making it impossible to anticipate revenue; and (3) those who neither give nor pledge. The March 30th combined service offering will go towards youth activities of the church.

Board of Trustees: Chairman Mike Wilson commented on the construction of the new sign on Broad Street; the bushes surrounding it will be trimmed and spot lights will be installed. He passed around a rendering of a possible LED optic sign for Vernon Street; a final decision has not been made regarding this sign. The HVAC operational system should be installed within the next several weeks.

Buildings & Grounds: Chairman Hugh Jones reported that some painting has been done on the upper level of the MMC building. Dan Evans of LaGrange Landscaping has been contacted about estimates for a walkway/steps with rails up to the office on Trinity Street, repair of some of the brick sidewalks due to protruding roots, and the possible cutting of the magnolia trees on the Trinity Street side, replacing them with crepe myrtle.

Security: Chairman Rick Cox reported that his committee meets bimonthly and is currently working on the installation of seven video cameras, primarily around the children's building. The committee is also working on a card access system which will be installed in all three buildings (1 door in each) and a new policy will be developed regarding all these improvements.

Worship: Chairman Ray Newman reported that his committee meets bimonthly with its primary goal to make sure the events on the church calendar happen and run smoothly as planned. This committee works closely with the Music Committee, Altar Guild, Acolytes, and Ushers.

Community Care Team: Chairman Peggy Lukken informed the Council that her team works each Monday and Thursday from 9:00 – 11:00 AM helping qualified people with their prescription drug needs. The committee spends about \$2,000 monthly which is not a budgeted expense. Offerings collected on Communion Sundays help to offset this committee's work.

Singular Office Reports:

Lay Leader: No Report

Church Historian: No Report

Church Treasurer: No Report

Memorial Foundation: Chairman Charles Stevens reported in a written report that the Foundation is working with the Columbarium Committee on possible funding for this project.

The Henderson Traylor Scholarship Award has been setup in the foundation by Boy Scout Troop 21.

United Methodist Women: No Report

United Methodist Men: No Report

Altar Guild: Chairman Claire Beall reported that cushions have been recovered and brass refinished.

Adult Education: Co-Coordinator Laura Shedd reported that this committee continues to look at offering more Bible studies and a young 20's Sunday School class.

Scouting: Coordinator Bernard Bledsoe reported the initiation of a \$1,000 Henderson Traylor Scholarship Award to be given to a graduating high school senior starting in 2009.

Ushers: No Report

Membership Secretary: Patti Lybrand stated in a written report that during 2007 the church gained 33 new members, lost 20 members to transfer, removed 1 member by request, and lost 21 members to deaths. These indicate an overall decline of 9 members with a total enrollment of 1,684 members. 583 names will be removed from the church's roll at this year's Charge Conference, the end of a three-year process to update the church's roll.

Staff Reports:

Minister of Visitation Helen Henry reported that she routinely visits 40 elderly and shut-in congregation members. She also appealed to the members of the Council to purchase a niche in the Columbarium at a reduced pre-construction price of \$1,000. The Columbarium location has also been changed and she passed around a sketch of the proposed new location.

Associate Minister Kathy Lamon called upon Brooke Outland, Senior High Youth Director; Kim Davison, Mid High Youth Director; and Sandy Davidson, Coordinator of Children's Ministries to give the report on their areas. Brooke reported that her numbers continue to climb and that the youth attended Disciple Now and had a wonderful skiing trip. Kim reported on her retreats on January 18 [7 & 8 grades], February 1 [5 & 6 grades], and the confirmation retreat February 24. She and her parent counselors have started two classes of a Cokesbury series, "Created by God," a sex education class offered every two years. Confirmation will be Sunday, May 18th.

Kathy Lamon also reported on her work with office and program staff on efficiency and thanked the SPPR Committee for making a recommendation on her behalf to the Board of Ordination.

Senior Minister Harold Lawrence reported that J. M. Rawlinson has met with all staff to discuss purchasing procedures for cost effectiveness. Everyone needs to be better stewards of the church's resources.

New Business:

Chairman Esther Rainey announced that the next Church Council meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 23, 2008, in the Men's Bible Class. The dates will alternate between Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoon so that as many Council members as possible can attend.

Dr. Harold Lawrence had the closing prayer and there being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectively submitted,
Dorothy D. Cammon
Acting Secretary