

Core Leadership Meeting, November 6, 2017, 6pm

In attendance: Holy Spirit, Brad Beeman, Dorothy Beeman, Jean Harris, Joe Lee, Katie Olleman, Jen Hoerber, Robbin Price, David Lutz, Patty Ferguson, Melinda Lilley, Linda Detering, Rich Detering, Steve Rummel, Laura Baumgartner, Christian Hampson

Robbin was a tiny bit late, so we'll just pretend nothing happened until she arrived, okay?

Brad went over the outline for the Common Table/Charge Conference, which followed immediately after the Core Leadership meeting at 6:30pm. He reminded us that Charge Conference activities that require a vote of the congregation will happen on December 13, when we'll have a joint Charge Conference with the other Bellevue Methodist churches, and the District Superintendent.

Jen briefly described the edits she has made to our safe church policy, which has not been updated in some years. Some changes were small ones, while others were more significant. All were made primarily to make sure that our policy matches our current procedures. We are still trying to fill the safe church supervisory position, but in the event that we can't, or that it is empty for a period of time, Jen clarified in our policy who would be responsible for various activities. She also covered how we're doing background checks and made a few other changes, most based on wording the conference uses. She reminded us that the policy is a living document that we can change whenever we need to, but that it must be voted on at the cluster charge conference in December. Because of that, she will be sending the amended document out to Core Leaders this week. She asked that everyone respond about whether it looks acceptable or needs corrections by December 7, so that she can have it ready for the December 13 meeting.

Action Item: *When you receive the safe church policy with Jen's changes, please take a close look at it as soon as possible and send your approval or suggested changes to Jen before December 7.*

This ended the Core Leadership Meeting, and we moved on to the Common Table.

Common Table, November 6, 2017, 6:30pm

In attendance: The Holy Spirit, and about 35 members of the congregation and staff.

After a delicious meal of soup, bread, and cheesecake (also Millie White's famous pumpkin bars, complements of Patty), Joe Lee welcomed us all, Roger led us in singing "Be Thou My Vision", and Laura opened the meeting in prayer.

We started by moving that Robbin take the minutes. The motion passed unanimously with a multitude of “ayes” and one “ack!” (mine). Then we got down to business.

Membership Report –Betty Fredeen

Betty presented the membership report, which is in the All Church Conference Report. We have a current membership total of 275, with an average weekly church attendance of 133. She explained that we send a letter to any members who haven’t attended or contributed in the past two years. We then wait to see if we receive a response regarding a change in membership. We then send a second letter in the next year. If we receive no response to either letter, we remove the names at the next all church conference. Right now we’ve sent a first letter to four people, listed in the All Church Conference Report. If you know how to reach any of those folks, please let Betty know, because we would rather contact someone and see what their wishes are before we strike them from the rolls.

Ministerial Candidates Report –David Lutz

David Lutz reported that we haven’t yet heard from the ministerial candidates whom we’ve supported with our prayers and encouragement, but we hope to hear from them before our Cluster Church Conference on December 13 (more about this below). He is not sure about the status of Jen Petersen and Laura Wall, who might still be on sabbatical from their ministerial path. We also don’t know about Rachel Shannon’s current plans. Dirk Robinson is commissioned at a new location, and is still pursuing ministry, as is Carrie Bland. We should know more in December.

Election of New Officers –Christian Hampson

Christian reported that Adam Stuenkel will be joining the Staff Parish Relations Team. The current roster of officers and team members is in the All Church Conference Report.

Pastor’s Report –Brad Beeman

Brad pointed out that when he counts active people in the church, the number is 247. Many families don’t attend weekly, but even though they may come less often, they are still active members of the church. He explained that change is happening rapidly, in our community and in our conference. He announced that the conference has been redistricted, and we will be part of the Seatac Missional District as of July 1 of next year. The district covers Seattle and Bellevue, and reaches from Seatac to Shoreline.

He described some of the creative developments happening in our conference. He mentioned Ravenna Methodist church, which is reaching out to the artistic community around it. He also pointed out elements of resurrection; in the midst of church closures there are new church starts and fresh kinds of outreach.

Brad has started having discussions with Jacob, a pastor of the Mandarin Speaking Chinese Church in Bellevue. Jacob’s church meets at the Boys and Girls Club near

Lake Hills Library, but they are outgrowing the space and looking for ways to partner with us. They'll be using classrooms at Aldersgate to provide English language classes, and we will be looking at other possible ways we can collaborate.

Brad also expressed appreciation for Laura, our new assistant pastor, who had done quite a bit in her first four months and continues to bless Aldersgate with her talents and enthusiasm.

Finance Team Report –Melinda Lilley

Melinda started by thanking everyone for their continued support through their time, talents, and financial contributions. She also thanked the staff for their efforts at keeping costs down. She reminded everyone that we will do our stewardship campaign in the spring, but that pledges can be made anytime, and that she is happy to help anyone sign up for electronic giving.

She was pleased that we were able to fund the assistant pastor position that Laura filled, and she announced that we are a third of the way toward funding a youth ministries assistant. We have \$5000 in pledges, and are aiming for \$15,000.

Melinda also let us know that even with the change in our fiscal year (to July through June), we will all be receiving an end-of-year statement of our giving for use in our taxes.

Youth and Family Ministries Report –Jen Hoerber

Jen announced that Vacation Bible School attendance went from 80 in 2016 to 125 in 2017, an astonishing increase that could have been overwhelming if we hadn't also had a huge increase in volunteers. When you have 60 volunteers, 125 is much more doable! We also had volunteers come over from Bellevue First to help, and Jen is continuing to look for ways to collaborate with our sister church.

We had a wonderful Fall Festival, with many church families, as well as lots of families from the preschool and the neighborhood, coming to join the fun. And we have lots of great programs in the works, including the ABC Blessings project for November, and the Christmas Bash and Christmas program. Jen encouraged everyone to look for new families on Sunday morning and take the opportunity to welcome them and get to know them.

We also had an Aldersgate only youth retreat at Sambica in Bellevue this year. The youth came up with several ideas they want to pursue, including the following:

- a Humane Society mission project
- a mission project in Idaho
- a mission project in Costa Rica, potentially in 2020
- a pajama Christmas party
- a BAF (Bring a Friend) night at youth group

Confirmation will be happening again this spring. Jen pointed out that we have many children in the church; they just don't always come at the same time. Her rough estimate was

- 8 preschoolers
- 7 in grades K-2
- 10 in grades 3-5
- 37 middle school and high school youth (give or take)

We have 4 youth serving on the SUMYT team, the conference group that organizes a retreat for church youth every March. This is giving our kids a great opportunity to connect to the larger church beyond our doors. We also saw an increase in children attending church camp this summer.

We are up to four Sunday school classes (preschool, gr. K-2, gr. 3-5 and youth), thanks to our dedicated and brilliant Sunday school teachers.

And now you know why we're looking for that youth ministries assistant. Jen is doing an awesome job, a job that keeps growing with our growing group of children!

Preschool Report –Dorothy Beeman

Dorothy reported that Aldersgate Christian Preschool is full to capacity. Trends are changing, and more parents want their children in school for more days. Because of this, one of the age 2-3 classes has expanded to three days (M-W-F). ACP has also added an enrichment program two days a month where church members can volunteer to lead an activity. Last month, Jake and Malia Hampson did a wonderful interactive story activity, and next month Pastor Laura is bringing a science activity. Dorothy encouraged anyone who is interested to come and share something. It is a brief commitment, two short sessions on two days.

Dorothy also mentioned that there are 13 first languages spoken in the preschool. English is still the first language of 68% of the children, but Chinese, Korean, several Indian languages, and Spanish are also represented. Research suggests that the staff of a preschool should reflect the makeup of the classes, and at ACP, 70% of the staff is from this country while 30% comes from other countries, which comes close to mirroring the makeup of classes. Classes are in English, which the parents prefer, but there are staff members who can comfort many of the children in their first language if they are upset, which has great value.

The preschool is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and Dorothy thanked the church for its support. We have 181 slots for students, and 111 families are served by the preschool. 61% of the families have their children in more than one class so that they can come to school more days of the week. The preschool plays a

tremendous role in helping students prepare for kindergarten, and many children are building their English language skills as well.

Finally, she told the story of a family where the father was quite skeptical of sending his children to a Christian preschool. He was afraid that they would have doctrine shoved down their throats. He is now one of the schools biggest fans, and he might even start going to church. His wife is delighted.

Considering Reconciling Ministries –Robbin Price

Robbin presented for the Considering Reconciling Ministries team. She explained that the group is meeting to discern whether at this time Aldersgate UMC will become a Reconciling Congregation. The team is open to all. New members and drop in attendees are welcome. Also, anyone is invited to share their views, questions, and concerns with any team member. We don't have a set time frame for making this decision, but we are estimating that it will take 1-2 years. The team is working on an approximate timeline that includes study and small group meetings as well as a schedule of invited speakers. We have also renamed the group CRC (Considering Reconciling Congregation), because becoming a reconciling congregation is not a foregone conclusion.

There has been a clear call for a Bible study on the issue of whether homosexuality is compatible with Christian teaching. Pastor Brad and Pastor Laura will facilitate that study and are working on scheduling it.

Finally, the team acknowledges that currently the United Methodist Church globally is also discussing the issue of full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) individuals as well as their allies. Our process is happening now, not to preempt the global conversation led by the bishops, but because the core leadership team heard that the issue was important to our congregation in the context of the global discussion. The Reconciling Network of Congregations exists for congregations who find that because of their strong commitment to justice for all people, they must take a stand against the language that is used in the Book of Discipline to exclude one group of people and no other. We are deciding whether we are called to take such a stand.

Robbin also shared a short statement of her own, which is included with these minutes.

Ideas from the Assistant Pastor –Laura Baumgartner ("brought to you by the letter D")

Pastor Laura shared some ideas she has for moving Aldersgate forward in positive ways. She suggested that we would benefit from the following:

Dialogue—Unlike debate, dialogue is a conversation between people that opens them both up in a safe space. It requires listening without commenting, and allowing

all ideas to have a comfortable place to be expressed. Everyone is wonderfully and beautifully made, Laura reminded us, and everyone has a story to tell.

Discipleship—Local churches have the job of creating disciples who can go out and change the world. Laura wants us to look more intentionally at how we build discipleship.

Discernment—We need for everything we do to be based on what the Holy Spirit is leading us to do. We need to be listening and paying attention, through prayer and study, to the “tug” of the spirit.

Divine—Laura asked us to think about how we are being led to the divine.

Laura then led us in an alphabet prayer, where we gave thanks for our many church blessings alphabetically.

Why Two Charge Conferences?—Brad Beeman

Brad took a few moments to explain why we’re having two All Church Conferences, this one, and one on December 13. He explained that we have a new bishop, which means some changes in how things are structured. The meeting in December, which will be with the other Bellevue Methodist churches and the superintendent, will include voting on things such as pastoral salary for the coming year. It will also be a chance to share information and support our sister churches. By contrast, the current meeting was to check in with the church and be transparent about our activities. He also mentioned that two churches near us are dealing with very difficult issues. One pastor is battling stage four breast cancer, and another is struggling with brain cancer. We should keep them and their churches in our prayers.

Brad closed us in prayer.

These minutes respectfully submitted by Robbin Price. All omissions or errors are mine, and corrections are, as always, cheerfully welcomed.