

Leadership Team Meeting Minutes

Ghent UMC April 11, 2021

These minutes are a draft only; they will be submitted for review and approval at the next meeting.

Reports

The following reports were distributed via email to the Leadership team to review prior to the meeting:

- Mar. 14, 2021 Leadership Team minutes
- Mar. 2021 Spending Plan collapsed report
- Mar. 31, 2021 Balance Sheet
- Apr. 11, 2021 Homeless Task Force report
- Apr. 11, 2021 Open Table report
- Apr. 11, 2021 Messy Church report

Call to Order

A Leadership Team meeting of Ghent UMC was held on April 11, 2021 at the Bonnewell home. It began at 12 p.m. and was presided over by Gary Bonnewell, with Lisa King serving as recording secretary.

Attendees

Leadership Team

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|------------|---------------|
| Gary Bonnewell | Melanie Cramer | Russ Evett | Peter Griffin |
| Steve Loomis | Rev. Melody Tanner | Steve Vegh | |

Other

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|----------------|------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Nellwyn Beamon | Debbie Bonnewell | Lisa King | Ann Robertson |
|----------------|------------------|-----------|---------------|

Team members not present

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|-------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Faye Joseph | Linda Rienarth | Bill Whitehurst |
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Devotional and Prayer

Pastor Melody Tanner shared a devotional, based on a reading from Acts 4, that faith was hard in the past and also is hard in the present. She said that we are compelled to take risks in our faith. Melody then opened the meeting with a prayer.

Reports and Old/New Business

Pastor's Report Melody Tanner said that concerning items were found on the playground on Wed., Mar. 31, prior to the preschool's spring break (which started on Friday), so the classes played inside on Thursday. [Name] and [name] respectfully informed the homeless that they can no longer stay on church property or leave their belongings there during the day beginning on that Friday due to the items found. The church trustees were asked to meet on Mon., Apr. 5, to devise a zero tolerance policy to control access to church grounds by prosecuting those who refuse to leave when asked. The trustees decided to install permanent signs stating "No Trespassing: Violators will be Prosecuted." Those present on the leadership team shared the following ideas in response.

Debbie Bonnewell shared an idea that since our church is unable to provide shelter to the homeless, that we should do more in other ways to help the homeless, including advocating with the city to provide more sheltering for the homeless. Gary Bonnewell said that he contacted Andria McClellan of the city council who shared that the city will soon provide a new homeless shelter. Andria offered to talk, or find someone from the city who will talk with those of us who are interested. Gary suggested Pastor Melody set up a zoom meeting for those at our church interested in helping the homeless by advocating with the city.

Melanie Cramer, who serves on the Homeless Task Force that was started by our church (the task force that recently grew to include a number of Ghent faith communities & several organizations) shared with the group that we have already been reaching out to the city, but will be glad to ask the task force at the next meeting if they would like to have someone from the city to talk to the group. She shared that anyone from our church who wants to become more involved with the homeless can join the task force. Melanie Cramer shared that Faye Joseph asked her to let the group know that she will have a hard time leading the Homeless Task Force if our church doesn't minister to the homeless. An idea was shared by a leader that perhaps we should start a Homeless Task Force or mission group that is specific to Ghent UMC in which we find our niche to help the homeless. Melanie said that Faye also expressed a desire for our church to have more clear organization among the various leadership groups as far as who makes and acts on decisions. Pastor Melody said that it may be best for Pastor Ryan to help us with that.

Lisa King shared an idea that the church can secure the garden by installing an additional gate at the top of the wheelchair ramp, and that this is a more friendly way than no trespassing signs to restrict people going into the garden, outside of church events, whether they are homeless or not. When Ann Roberson started locking the one gate that we have, the foot traffic in our garden lessened as evidenced by less trash found. Pastor Melody voiced concern that an additional gate would be unwelcoming to those needing to use the wheelchair ramp. Debbie Bonnewell said that we should be able to unlock and open the gates before Sunday services and other activities. Melody asked that the gates be user-friendly for those with physical disabilities. Steve Loomis, head trustee, said he approves of installing a second gate.

Lisa King expressed concern for restricting the homeless on the entire property. Ann Robertson said the preschool's recent safety concerns are only with the playground and garden area, as well as the porch. Steve Loomis said that the signs will be tucked in only those two areas. Lisa King advocated that anyone, homeless or not, be allowed to sit on any of the steps as long as they are not disturbing anyone. She also said that if we are restricting the porch and garden from the homeless during non-church activities, then we should restrict them for everyone.

Debbie Bonnewell expressed interest in updating the plants in the garden after the church had some bushes cut way back last fall to prevent people from sleeping and storing items in them. Steve Vegh suggested plants that are less comfortable to sleep and store items in, such as holly and yucca. Lisa King suggested that we look into replacing the bushes along Raleigh Ave. to make it less inviting also to sleep and store items in, but also to put in the Prayer tree that has been approved already. Melanie Cramer suggested a Biblical herb garden be installed along Raleigh Ave. that is inviting to all, including the homeless, to participate in a safe way. Melody Tanner suggested that a committee be formed to implement these suggestions, as well as update and install the garden gating. Debbie Bonnewell agreed to be the head of that committee.

A few in the group suggested that a morning cleaning company be researched by Lisa King.

Lastly for the Pastor's report, Pastor Melody said she will soon ask the Leadership team for approval of funds for additional audio/ visual equipment. An outside camera is needed for worship, as well as additional microphones. She said that [name] is currently training 3 volunteers to use the new camera for worship services. Lisa King added that one more volunteer would be helpful, if anyone is interested.

Finance Peter Griffin reported that our PPP loan was converted to a grant and forgiven, and that we are applying for a second PPP loan. Peter also said that he recently made phone calls to individuals to ask them to please confirm their intended 2021 pledge giving with the church office for budget planning purposes.

Trustees/ Endowment/ Property Steve Loomis said we are working through the list of parsonage repairs.

Approval of minutes

Peter Griffin moved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on Mar. 14, 2021. After a question was asked and answered about [name] possibly speaking to us about the environment in the future, the minutes were approved unanimously.

More Reports and Old/New Business

Messy Church Melanie Cramer said that since we can't eat during our May messy church gathering due to VA UMC covid-19 guidelines, that we may want to suggest people consider bringing a picnic lunch to eat in Stockley Gardens after Messy Church is finished. Pastor Melody said she thinks that is okay.

Used Book Sale Steve Vegh reported that we will not have a used book sale this spring as the Stockey Gardens Arts Festival will be virtual. He said that we do not need any more book donations at this time as we do not have enough space.

Wesley Community Service Center Steve Vegh said that the Wesley Center had received grant funds to upgrade the building. There is an open house on Wed., April 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. that all are encouraged to come to see the new center. Social distancing is required. The center is now an official Foodbank location. During the pandemic, they have offered after school tutoring online with certified teachers. Lastly, there is currently a handbag raffle fundraiser.

Time of Sharing Pastor Melody said that her time of sharing on next Sunday, April 18, just prior to our Messy Earth Day meet up at 11 a.m., will be in the sanctuary instead of outside so that she can share slides.

Adjournment

Pastor Melody closed with a prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

These minutes are respectfully submitted by Lisa King, Recording Secretary.