

Aldersgate United Methodist Church Charge Conference, Nov. 28, 7:00pm

In attendance: 31 members of the church body

Brad opened the meeting with prayer.

Brad shared the story of a young man who left an angry post on our Facebook page, complaining at length about the church. Brad reached out to the poster, but he hasn't yet responded. Brad pointed out that many people have a dim view of churches, thinking we are hypocritical and money hungry and not helping the community the way we should. He emphasized that this is why we need to be more vocal, more apparent, and more connected to our neighbors with grace and compassion, so that they can see the great things we accomplish and want to be a part of them.

Brad pointed out one way that we are connecting to the community: Janice Zahn and Jack Morrison were not in attendance at the Charge Conference, because they were representing the church at a City Council meeting concerning the men's homeless shelter proposed for the Eastgate area. Their goal was to present the full support of the Aldersgate Core Leadership Team for the shelter, and to help allay concerns about safety.

Brad described us as "incredible people that nobody knows about," and expressed a desire for us to grow and reach out wherever we can.

Colleen pointed out that if we ever see a vicious post on the church Facebook page that we should take a screen print and let the church know immediately. Such posts are essentially graffiti, and need to be removed quickly. She made the point that nasty posts on the Internet are unfortunately quite common, and that we can combat them by modeling appropriate discussion and debate.

At this point we moved on to the business items on the agenda.

Leadership

A motion was made to accept the slate of leaders presented in the Charge Conference booklet (pp. 5-9). The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was then made to allow the Core Leadership Team to add leaders and participants as needed. This motion also passed unanimously.

2017 Pastor's Compensation

Brad stepped out of the room so that we could discuss his salary. Harris Atkins presented the recommendation of the Staff Parish Relations Committee (pp. 10-11 in the Charge Conference booklet). The new salary of \$67,755 includes a cost of living increase.

A motion was made to adopt the pastor's salary as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Update on our Ministerial Candidates

Brad presented an update on our five ministerial candidates:

- Jenn Peterson is taking a sabbatical from her ministerial path, but is still providing counseling.
- Laura Wall is also currently on hiatus from her ministerial pursuits.
- Carrie Bland is moving from Bryn Mawr in South Renton to Fairwood to work in ministry there.
- Rachel Shannon continues her seminary studies and appreciates our encouragement.
- Dirk Robinson remains grateful for our continued support of his ministry.

It was clarified that we support all of our ministerial candidates through our prayers and regular communication and encouragement. We do not support them monetarily.

A motion was made to approve our support of these ministerial candidates. It passed unanimously.

Membership Report

Wendi Brick presented the membership report, which is summarized on pp. 12 and 13 of the Charge Conference booklet. She explained that we make every effort to reach members who appear to have left the church but are still on the list of members. After two years, if we haven't heard from them, we remove them from membership at Charge Conference.

A motion was made to drop twelve members from our roles after repeated attempts at contact. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was also made to acknowledge a first letter sent to six members who appear to have moved on. This motion also passed unanimously.

We prayed for those members that have left us. We also prayed for the four members that we have lost to death this year, and for their families.

Accountability Questions

Several accountability questions are asked annually at Charge Conference and answered by the appropriate committee head or team leader.

1. Have the church financial activities been audited for 2015? (Yes, according to our Finance Team Chair, Melinda Lilley)
2. Are our corporate status and property tax exemptions current? (Yes, according to Board of Trustees Chair Rich Detering)
3. Is our insurance current and paid? (Yes, says Rich)
4. Does our church have a “safe church” policy? (Yes, according to Wendi Brick, Church Secretary)
5. Is your church current on apportionments? (Yes, says Melinda)
6. When was the last time the parsonage was inspected by the Trustees? (This will be happening very soon.)

State of the Church (Testimonials)

Finances: Melinda Lilley presented a current look at our finances, sharing some graphs she created to give a visual idea of where our money goes, which will be included with these minutes. She started by thanking the congregation for their time, talent, and donations, and she also thanked the staff for their efforts to keep expenses down.

She pointed out that we are looking at a shortfall as the end of the year approaches, and everyone is encouraged to give a “thirteenth month” donation to help support the tremendous work of the church. There will be a stewardship focus this coming Sunday. She explained that the proposed 2017 budget increases slightly to cover increased expenses, primarily for staff. She cautioned that the budget is still a work in progress, and as far as this year’s expenses go, the year isn’t over yet.

Roger Ingalls wondered if we could somehow track all the tremendous volunteer work our congregation does, both in and out of church. Ideas were suggested about how we might do this, although it was also pointed out that not everyone likes to have their volunteering recognized publicly. Brad suggested we continue discussing this and see what develops.

Preschool: Dorothy Beeman described how much our preschool has accomplished in the last couple of years (summarized on pages 20 and 21 of the Charge Conference booklet). There has been a successful remodel. Several staff members have retired, but we’ve been blessed with experienced new teachers, and some retired teachers have come back to substitute on occasion. Someone asked about what makes our preschool special. Dorothy mentioned our excellent staff and facility (our playground is very popular), our reasonable price, and the way our part-time schedule benefits younger children who need to spend more time with their parents. We also have diverse staff serving our diverse families. Jon Tucker complimented the preschool on how it connects the families it serves to other church activities. Dorothy credited Jen Hoerber for her help with this.

Youth Ministries: Jen Hoerber talked about how our youth and family ministries have grown, which she summarized in her Charge Conference report (pages 18 and 19 of the Charge Conference booklet). She mentioned how the youth are taking ownership

of the youth group and coming up with suggestions for activities. Someone asked about the role of the youth in the larger church, and Jen mentioned how more youth are involved in helping in worship (three youth now help run the sound board), more youth are attending church, and the youth are also helping with activities like Kids Club, the Fall Festival, and the upcoming Christmas Bash and Christmas program (December 10 and 11 respectively. Get them on your calendar now!).

Jim Phillips mentioned how good it is to see a vibrant youth group, and that he sees it as a sign of a healthy church.

Church Activities: Colleen mentioned that we will be having a New Year's Eve party at the church from 6:00 to 9:00pm on December 31. This is the first of many church activities that we can expect to see over time. She encouraged everyone to come.

Brad ended the meeting by thanking the church for all that we do and for the privilege of being our pastor. He then prayed for the church as we continue striving to do God's work and be God's people.

We were asked to pray for Livonia, who goes in for outpatient surgery on Friday, and Joe Lee, who is stuck at home with stomach flu. (And you might want to pray for Brad, too, who was fighting a fever all during Charge Conference. The hand sanitizer was flowing thick as God's mercy all evening.)

These minutes humbly submitted by Robbin Price. Any omissions or mistakes are mine, and corrections will be gratefully accepted.