

Core Leadership Meeting, October 10, 2016

In attendance: Holy Spirit, Patty Ferguson, Colleen Olleman, Katie Olleman, Jen Hoerber, Robbin Price, Jean Harris, Janice Zahn, Jenny Andrews, Bud Bennett, Rich Detering, Steve Rummel, Stan McKenzie, Melinda Lilley, Dorothy Beeman, Joe Lee, Sabrina MacIntyre

Joe started the meeting in prayer.

We began with an informal conversation about the changing demographics of the community around us, and the concern that our church doesn't reflect our community. Joe shared some statistics about the makeup of the local schools; about half of the students are Asian Americans. He expressed his desire for smart plans to reach out to our neighborhood. He also suggested building a case for an assistant pastor, which we can present to the District Superintendent.

It was pointed out that communities want to keep their first languages, so perhaps we should be offering services in another language, or a space for a church group with another language to meet. We remembered the Chinese church that used to use our space, and how we did not have a relationship with them; it was strictly a contract to use the space. Joe raised the possibility of getting an associate pastor from another culture.

Someone suggested that we could offer English classes, and Dorothy said that a program like that would be of great interest to the preschool parents. She mentioned that the preschool parents want their children to be taught in English, since they are learning their first language at home. Janice observed that perhaps parents wanted children to learn English when they were young, but wanted church services in their first language for their older children so that they wouldn't lose their fluency. She also pointed out that it is dangerous to look at our Asian and Asian American neighbors as one group. There are many Asian cultures in our area, and she observed that in her experience, older Asian Americans were more sensitive about divisions between different Asian cultures than young people, perhaps because of their experience with, and understanding of, historic conflicts.

It was pointed out that we are reaching out to preschool families, and some of them have connected with us. It was also mentioned that many of the preschool families already have a church.

We went back to the issue of reaching out to all of our neighbors, so that our church family reflects the diversity around us, including diversity of ages. We considered the need for a campus ministry that would reach out to Bellevue College. This was another area where we felt an associate minister could be quite valuable.

Colleen mentioned that the traditional Methodist Church focused on both service and evangelism in its outreach, whereas our church now focuses solely on service. It was also pointed out that our neighbors are not just Asian, but Russian, Indian, and Ukrainian, just to name a few of the many cultures in Bellevue. The conversation circled around to the first question: how do we open our doors in a way that welcomes everyone?

We were gently reminded not to get stuck scolding ourselves for what we don't do, but to focus on inspiring each other to greater effort.

In this spirit, Janice suggested that we begin all of our meetings with a request for kudos and compliments for those who have been doing great work. We took some time to do just that, notably recognizing Jenny for her many years of service leading the group. Joe also thanked all those who have helped him over the last several weeks with a variety of things. Colleen thanked Robbin for her description of libraries in the sermon yesterday. Janice was recognized for her efforts on behalf of the emergency shelter program, and Patty for her exceptional musical talents.

And then we actually started the meeting.

Women's Emergency Shelter Project

The shelter program that we were going to host from January to March has found a different church that will work well for them, so we discussed how to make use of the energy at Aldersgate that the project generated. Colleen pointed out that we still have \$10,000 in a holding account that was donated quite some time ago to be used in efforts to combat homelessness. After some discussion, Janice volunteered to contact those who volunteered to help with the emergency shelter and ask them to be part of a short-term homelessness task force instead. This led to the following proposal:

Proposal: We will establish a homelessness task force, led by Janice Zahn and accountable to Core Leadership, that will decide how we can best use the holding account monies to combat homelessness. They will come up with a plan and work to implement it. The proposal passed unanimously.

Joe mentioned that he would like to keep track of the actions we decide upon as a committee, keeping a record of who is responsible, what monies are budgeted, and revisiting the actions after a specific time period, perhaps 45 days, to see if a project was completed or needs more time and/or support. [Secretary side note: At the end of these minutes you'll see a summary of the action items from this meeting, and you can let me know if this is helpful.]

And one final point: Jean Harris reminded us that although Sophia Way supports the Women's Emergency Shelter, the winter shelter is a separate program and should not be conflated with Sophia Way. My apologies if past minutes have blurred the lines between the two.

Software upgrade and new PC

The leadership was informed that we have the money we need for upgrades in the presentation software and hardware in the sanctuary. Bill Ferguson is overseeing the purchase. It was noted that we have a gap on Core Leadership; it would be nice to have someone working on the technical needs of the church represented on the team.

Fall Festival

Jen is busy preparing for the Fall Festival. She is gathering volunteers and promoting the event, which will be on Friday, October 28, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. We'll be cooking chili ahead of time, which will be reheated in the kitchen as necessary. Set up will be on that Friday, and there will be booths and games. There are still lots of opportunities to volunteer, and it is a lot of fun, so email Jen if you're interested in helping out, and tell all your friends.

Harvest Dinner

Harvest Dinner will be on Sunday, November 13. There should be something in the bulletin starting this week. Patty is looking for a co-worker who can shadow her in the kitchen and learn how to organize and cook for a large group. She says it's easy, but we all know she has super powers. Jenny might have someone who would be interested, and it's possible that Rick can help her with this, too.

2017 Budget

A first draft of next year's budget was presented. Melinda reported that we're lower than we should be for income this year, but that we're also lower in expected expenses, so we're doing well. For next year, the finance committee drafted a budget based on input from staff and leadership. It is included with these minutes. The actual budget will, of course, depend on our stewardship campaign, which will be starting in early November.

We are still down two staff positions, youth ministries, which Jen and Brad are covering for now, and second service choir director, which we're currently trying to fill.

There was a question about the Beyond our Doors grant, the status of which is unclear. It was meant to be a three-year grant to pay for manpower to explore and implement outreach to our diverse community. The first year involved gathering data, the second and third years were to involve action taken as a result of the data. Jen said she would be talking to Brad about this and would find out more.

Eastside Movies

It looks like another church has taken the lead on this project, but since we want to support the project (and voted to do so last July) we briefly discussed how we could do this. Janice encouraged folks to attend the movies, which are shown on the third Tuesday of the month. Colleen is planning a movie night church activity for early next year; church members would meet at the church and carpool to the movie. We decided that the first priority is to get the movies announced on the calendar, even though they occur off-site.

Janice mentioned that the next movie is *The Ten Commandments to Avoid Extinction*, and author and theologian Michael Dowd, whose work is presented in the film, will lead the discussion afterwards. It will be next Tuesday, October 18, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Margeret's Episcopal, and if you're free that night, you won't want to miss it.

New Business

Strategic Thinking and Planning

We decided to table this until next meeting, since we were getting short on time, and we had already touched on some elements at the beginning of the evening. Joe wants us to develop rules and structures that will work well and help us reach out to our community. He also wants our position descriptions so that we can see where we have gaps in leadership.

Vision: "Taking IT (Jesus) to our Neighbors"

Joe would like to find workflow application software that would allow us to communicate and share ideas online easily, something like Blackboard or SharePoint. It was suggested that Daniel Flahiff might be able to help us carve a space for this on our website.

Joe also wants to brainstorm ideas on how to best communicate with our neighbors, especially young people who use a variety of social media, such as Facebook and Meetup.

Jean mentioned that she is unable to add UMW event information to the website; Melinda will help her figure out who to contact to get this going.

How do we become a destination for those around us? People love our grounds, our church, our coffeepot. We need ways to reach out. There are some ideas about signs on the property that might help us with this.

Talking Points for the District Superintendent

We are meeting with the DS in two weeks, on Monday, October 24. What do we want him to know about Aldersgate? Joe will email his talking points, and will ask for input from all of us. There was general agreement that we should advocate for an assistant pastor to help us with outreach and campus ministry.

Lectio Divina and Seventh Day Adventists Use of the Church

Sabrina described the Wednesday morning contemplative service we have at Aldersgate and the interest in Lectio Divina, a type of spiritual meditation that focuses on a specific scripture. She is hoping to have a speaker come who can do a two-hour workshop on Lektion Divina, to be paid for with a free will offering. There was some confusion about whether our policies would allow a program like this. Joe will get clarification and communicate with Sabrina within the next few days.

The Seventh Day Adventist request has been withdrawn, so there was no need to discuss it.

The meeting closed in prayer.

Summary of Proposed actions:

Group	Leadership	Focus	Budget	Revisit
Task Force on Homelessness	Janice Zahn	Design, plan, and implement a project to address homelessness	Est. \$10,000 in a holding fund reserved for this purpose	In 45 days (December Core Leadership meeting?)

Homework

- Brainstorm talking points for meeting with the DS on October 24.
- If you haven't given Joe your position description yet, please do so.
- Prayerfully consider how we might become a destination for our neighbors.

Next Core Leadership Meetings:

- Monday, October 24: Meeting with the District Superintendent, 7 p.m.
- Monday, November 14: regular Core Leadership meeting, 7 p.m.
- Monday, November 28: Common Table/Charge Conference, 7 p.m.

These minutes humbly submitted by Robbin Price. All omissions and errors are mine, and corrections are always welcome.