

Board Retreat, September 28, 2013

Members present: Bob Williford, Craig Miller, Andrea Parry, Leni Windle, Marina Patrice Van Gossen, Tom Ott, Dennis Strain, Treva Burger

Non-members present: Rev. Kent Matthies

How do we as a Board try to make sure we are spending more of our time on big picture, visioning and proactive planning and less time on day to day issues and crises. Andrea Parry noted that one of our objectives is to simplify USG structure and governance. Tom Ott has authorized her and Rev. Kent Matthies to look at this in more depth. Andrea Parry is chairing an ad hoc group of Board and non-Board members: Rev. Kent Matthies, Beth Lazer, Scott Murray, Linda O’Gwynn, Linda Brunn, Gloria Smith, Treva Burger and Marina Patrice Van Gossen (who may have difficulty coming because of scheduling issues.) The group discussed complexity in the system so that people don’t know who is responsible for what, repetition of work because of lack of institutional memory, lack of authority to make things happen. How do you train and choose appropriate leaders and make sure the work is being done? For Example, Lincoln Drive sidewalk needs a \$12,000 repair and Buildings and Grounds has the ability to get this done, how could we make it simpler? What can we do to maintain ultimate fiduciary responsibility and also empower Budget and Finance to make more of the day to day to decisions. Another example would be the budget, the Board spent two full meetings going line by line through the budget and instead we could have said to the Budget and Finance Council, please decrease this budget by \$10,000 and sent it back to them.

Rev. Kent Matthies says he sees year after year, Boards working very hard, but one thing that there isn’t time to fully address are the needs of the people. The Board needs to be freed up to look to the future. Staff is working on this, but they don’t have the authority to make things happen. Marina Patrice Van Gossen feels frustrated with a lack of focus on vision and values. Leni Windle stated that we need to have more trust in each other. We reviewed the Congregational Mission, Values and Goals. It was noted that there is a lot of room for interpretation in these goals and Rev. Kent Matthies pointed out that discussing how to interpret these is important to spend time on.

A question was asked if the Governance Task Force and the Leadership Development groups will be working together. Governance may develop a concept for optimal leadership development, but this is not their primary task. The Ministries and Programs Council (MPC) currently has the responsibility for looking at leadership development and starting a process for development of leaders. But we need leadership develop in areas outside of the realm of MPC, for example in Personnel and Buildings and Grounds. We will ask them to develop something that could be exported to the rest of the church. Our Mission Statement, building beloved community with empowerment speaks to this.

Dennis Strain will be the Board point person coordinating Leadership Development with MPC. Think about addressing the issues through the SMART format: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely. Last year we had a Board retreat and divided up the goals, but didn’t do consistent follow up. We decided to try the following process: we will have Board members report orally, briefly, on progress at the start of the Board meeting. It would be helpful for people to send brief written reports of the

important meetings for the other members to read before the meetings. We discussed whether members should be going to committee and council meetings. We agreed it may be appropriate for Board members to sit on Committees, but they should not be driving the work of the committee or council. Dennis Strain will be the Board liaison with the MPC responsible for summarizing MPC minutes and forwarding them to the Board.

Master Plan Implementation Committee Chaired by Carolyn Cotton and Linda O’Gwynn. The congregation voted on a master plan that was created by an architectural firm and the first phase was completed: office on the stage in the assembly room, Sullivan Chapel and renovation of the upstairs of the youth lodge for an apartment that could be rented.

The next phase of the Master Plan might include a new entrance and an elevator. And the question is should we plan to begin a capital campaign this year. Because the Master Plan is several years old, it needs to be revisited to make sure the next phase is consistent with our mission, values and goals. It was pointed out that we don’t want to have the MPIC come to us with a plan that we don’t want to follow. How can we help them develop a plan that will fit our mission, values and goals and is that plan conducive to a capital campaign? What are the high level goals the Board wants to achieve with the next step? We need to assess all the important metrics in the life of this congregation in the last 5-10 years. If it looks possible and/or likely that we will proceed with the next piece, we need to spend \$5-10,000 on a capital campaign consultant to determine how much money we can raise. Need to communicate with the congregation this year as to the status of the master plan. We don’t necessarily need to continue with the Master Plan in order to support our current congregation, though we don’t have a place for the high school kids and we don’t have room to grow in RE. MPC is scheduled to meet with the Board in October to recommend next steps. Tom Ott will send an email to Linda O’Gwynn and cc Craig Miller asking for them to come to us with a vision of how the recommended next steps would support USG’s mission.

We need to envision 3 years from now. Rev. Kent Matthies: over 350 members, over 300 average attendance, over \$400K pledge income. Other Board members: 75% attendance and full RE programs at two services; Remove the pews, repair the ceiling; Monetize the space, make more rental income; Church more accessible; Church is packed in Tuesdays (when home schoolers rent the space), we need that more days of the week; Triple the number of the people in leadership and have them feel vibrant and fulfilled with what they are doing.

Does membership assess where new people may fit? It needs to be clear where the opportunities exist. Help them identify strength and gifts. Joan Javier-Duval and Gloria Smith are working with Jenn Leiby, Membership Chair, to help with the membership process. Rev. Kent Matthies advised that when membership exceeds 200, people need to be engaged with smaller groups of people in order for them to want to stay. USG’s current membership is 305. The Choir is a good example of such a small group, as are Small Group Ministry groups, the Book group, etc. Small groups where people can connect. On Sundays when Board members are available for conversation during Fellowship Hour, Board members could go to people and ask about their “Like and Wishes,” rather than having people come to see them.

Comments on having one Fellowship hour between services, the Choir can't attend most of Fellowship Hour and going straight out after church doesn't feel right.

Motion: we as a Board formally commit to the objectives in the context of our mission statement.

Motion approved: 8-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 11:55am.

Treva Burger