



SERVANT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes March 5, 2023

1. The regular meeting of the VRUMC Servant Leadership Council (SLC) was convened on Sunday March 5, 2023 at 12:40 PM, with all members present.
2. The Lay Leader led a spiritual and leadership development discussion on the topic of acceptance, hospitality, and assimilation into the church. The recent movie release *The Jesus Revolution* was used as an example of the kind of shift most churches are witnessing in today's times. As John Wesley observed in his time when similar shifts were occurring, the church is ripe for a revival of the principles of Christianity. However, it is not just getting more people into the doors, it is incumbent upon us to ascertain what the next steps are in ministering and caring for everyone we encounter. Hillary led the group in prayer.
3. Pastor's Report
 - a. Special Called Annual Conference – A special convening of the North Texas Annual Conference took place on March 4, with the agenda item approval of the churches that had been put forth for disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church. The new Bishop of the Conference set a tone of grief over the separation but also blessing, as we all strive to fulfill the mission of the greater church in making disciples. The Conference voted to approve the 41 churches seeking to separate (effective on March 31) and marked the event with a meaningful worship service, as an opportunity for farewells and good wishes. The SLC discussed the need to offer grace to those that may be seeking a new church, either coming from a disaffiliated church or for those at our church that may choose to leave. As a result of the decision, and similar results from surrounding Conferences, the North Texas Conference will be merged with 2 other conferences (Central and Northwest). In addition, it is estimated that the Conference Apportionments will see a 12% drop following this year. It is unknown at this time how that reduction in funding may impact the local church.
 - b. Continuing Education – The Lead Pastor will be traveling to Houston this week to take part in a brainstorming/think tank event discussing the future of ministry in the church, using techniques developed by NASA in the space program.

- c. VRUMC – In interactions with other church leaders, the sense is that VRUMC is currently experiencing a higher level of energy, sense of collaboration, and firm direction for the church than many of our sister churches. It is a source of inspiration to see the trajectory of our church.

4. Discussion Items

- a. Feedback from Church Family Meeting (2/19) – The consensus from a majority of attendees was that the event was well received and worth repeating. One issue that was brought forward was the possible reticence of some to stand in front of the group to voice their question or issue in such a public way. Two solutions were offered to mitigate this concern: 1) All members of the SLC must make every effort to make it known to the groups they interact with that they can be the place where people can come to for questions or opinions and have it taken to the SLC; and 2) We provide a method for submitting questions and/or comments signed and in writing before the meeting. One other issue was raised concerning the state of Congregational Care. The subsequent discussion revealed that while some work in the areas of definition and communicating needs improvement, there are not glaring omissions in the ministry area being detailed or brought forward.
- b. Guiding Principles – The Chair presented a list of Guiding Principles that the SLC will need to review, formulate, or adjust during the next several months. The list includes:
- Large building maintenance expenditure limits and procedures, to include bidding procedures
 - Authority to hiring and/or termination of staff positions, to include developing or altering job descriptions
 - Building Usage Policies
 - Emergency Action Plans
 - Ministry Safe Policies
 - Disposal of Non-Cash assets, especially time frames
 - Church Security Policies
 - Procedure to change an existing Guiding Principle

The SLC will be addressing these items in future meetings this year.

c. Ministry Areas

- The Lenten Project of item donation collection and then passing them to those in need will continue through Easter. A plan for organizing and distributing donations is being developed.
 - The Children's VBS ministry for 2023 is fully in the organizing and developing stage. This year the event will occur in the first week of June from 9 AM to Noon, Monday through Thursday. VBS will be capped at a maximum of 50 kids this year and registration will begin soon. The program will need multiple volunteers, either for the entire week or some portion thereof.
 - The recent organizing and training session for Liturgists and Communion Servers was well attended with several new faces in attendance.
- d. AED (Defibrillator) – Dan Sepdham presented the SLC with a brief, hands-on tutorial on operating the new AED unit. Dr. Sepdham has made himself available to any group that uses the church regularly for similar training.

5. Consent Package

- a. Financials – At the time of the meeting, the Financial Reports (end of January 2023) had not been made available to the SLC. That statement was subsequently sent out the day after the meeting for review. A copy is available in the Church Office.
- b. Building Projects – A comprehensive list of the status of several building repairs and upgrades was sent to the SLC for review. Most all of the identified problem areas have either been taken care of or are on the schedule in the very near future.
- c. Church Insurance – VRUMC, along with all other churches in the Conference, has been required to seek new insurance coverage. While no specific details are yet available, the negotiations with our potential insurer seem to indicate that we should be able to receive similar coverage with a decrease in both premiums and deductible. More details will be forthcoming when an agreement has been finalized.
- d. SPRC (Closed Session) – Two positions that were identified as becoming open in the near future were discussed: 1) Finance Clerk (formerly Bookkeeper) – A new job description is being finalized this week, at which time the position will first be advertised internally to the congregation, and then if unfilled, will be advertised to outside sources. Long-term, James and several others will be fact-finding other options with regard to the church's entire accounting system. 2) With the departure of Collin Hughes from the Audio/Visual Team, four volunteers have stepped and are now trained to fill the tasks. In addition, the church has ceased to Livestream the 8:30 service as of this week, therefore decreasing the number of people needed to oversee this function. VRUMC is now officially serving in the role of overseeing the pastoral development of Colin Craft. In his role as official intern, Colin will be required to observe and participate in a broader range of church-related activities.

Church Family Meeting – **Sunday, May 7, at Noon**

Next SLC Meeting – **Sunday, May 21, at 12:30 PM**

Closing Prayer – Karen Meeks

Submitted:

Stephen Greenwade, Chair

Ashley Anne Sipe, Lead Pastor

Angie Christoffersen, Lay Member Annual Conf.

James Kunke, Lay Leader

Hillarye Hightower, Staff Parish Relations Chair

Barry Sykes, Chair of Trustees

Javier Saenz

Karen Meeks

Dan Sepdham

Susan Francis

Bernadette Ealy

Tiffany Harlow