



SERVANT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes July 16, 2023

1. The regular meeting of the VRUMC Servant Leadership Council (SLC) was convened on Sunday July 16, 2023 at 12:20 PM, with all members present, except for Javier Saenz and Dan Sepdham.
2. The Lay Leader led a spiritual and leadership development discussion on the topic of leadership during times of challenge and chaos, using the example of Paul in Acts 27. During times of crisis, true leaders step up and show the courage and fortitude to lead the way to better times. The keys to effective leadership are not sitting by quietly, but accessing the situation, and finding the solutions to alleviate the problem areas. There is also the inherent need to trust in God's plan that whatever the challenges (i.e., congregational shrinkage, lack of volunteers, levels of friction), He will see us through the hard times. Hillarye led the group in prayer.
3. Chair of Trustees – As of July 16, Barry Sykes has resigned from his position as the VRUMC Chair of Trustees and membership of the SLC. The Leadership Development Committee has chosen not to fill the open seat for the remainder of 2023. Javier has been approached about filling the role of Chair of Trustees for the rest of this year, and he has agreed to step back into the role. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to elect Javier Saenz as Chair of Trustees for VRUMC through December 31, 2023.
4. Pastor's Report
The SLC Chair, Lay Leader, and Lead Pastor lead a discussion on the growing problem of vision perception in the church. The recent departures are symptomatic of a larger problem – a lack of clarity of where VRUMC is headed. Some of the problem is one of perception, bled over from the denomination and Conference, that we are embarking on a progressive "activist" agenda, with no room for traditional or conservative views. At the same time, the Lead Pastor has cast the vision of VRUMC as a place where all are welcome, and we seek to serve those in need in our community regardless of circumstance, but there is no politically active agenda. The example of Christ's ministry should be the template for how we further God's Kingdom on earth. This conversation will continue within the SLC, as

well as bringing in the entire congregation to clarify and exchange thoughts on the subject. To that end, the SLC will return to meeting monthly for the time being, and incorporate the next All Church Meeting in October toward the goal of clarified direction.

5. Discussion Items

a. Sunday Morning Schedule – The possibility of combining worship services is being considered for the following reasons:

- Financial strain of supporting 2 services.
- The lack of mass in attendance produces a “low-energy” environment for worship.
- The anecdotal evidence of more first-time visitors at 8:30 but low return rate, while the 11:00 service sees fewer visitors but more return.
- The success of the “5th Sunday” services this year.
- Creating the opportunity to form additional small groups and classes.

Several potential scenarios have been considered, for example:

8:30-8:45	Chapel Communion Time
8:45-9:45	Small Group Time
10:00-11:00	Worship Service
11:00-Noon	Small Group Time

In an effort to bring the entire congregation in on the idea, several steps will be taken in advance of the October 29 “5th Sunday” including communications, a FAQ page (to be written by James), and the opportunity for feedback from the congregation following the service. The new VRUMC Director of Worship has already been part of the discussion and has indicated a comfort with providing multiple elements to satisfy whichever style the individual congregant may prefer.

- b. Public Displays Policy – Due to time constraints, the SLC was unable to discuss what, if any, policy is called for regarding the display of flags, etc. on the church property. This issue will be discussed during the August SLC meeting.
- c. Parental Leave Policy – It has come to the attention of the SLC that the Employee Handbook has no guidance on Parental Leave for the staff. *The Book of Discipline* provides some guidance for clergy, but nothing beyond that. There are several alternatives to handling the situation but further research and discussion needs to take place before a new policy is developed. This will also be on the August SLC agenda.
- d. Church Holiday Calendar – The Church Holiday Calendar does not reflect the addition of Juneteenth as a Federal Holiday. The SLC has approved the addition.
- e. Reconciling Ministry Work Team – Hillarye has taken charge of leading the effort to garner more information about Reconciling Ministries and whether it could fit at VRUMC. More information will be forthcoming.
- f. Discussion Topics from SLC – None.

6. Consent Package

a. Financials – As of the end of June, Offerings continue to outpace Budgeted funding. Expenses for the month were not made available at the time of the SLC meeting.

Accuracy and lack of response from the accountant continue to be an issue with relevant information as to our financial picture. Research for alternatives is now again a priority. James is working on the Job Description and the SLC Chair is garnering possible services that may fit the task.

- b. Building Repair – The air-conditioning system has been worked on to provide adequate cooling for the building for now. Work will continue after the peak heat season due to contractor availability.
- c. Church Emergency Master Plan – The SLC has been provided a copy of the VRUMC Master Emergency Plan for review. The plan will be discussed in more detail at a future meeting. The SLC Chair will be contacting a Security Consulting firm to provide an assessment in the near future.

7. SPRC (Closed Session)

- a. The SLC Chair clarified the hiring process under the Simplified Accountable Structure that we now operate under. When an open staff position has been identified, the SLC authorizes the SPRC Chair to assemble a Work Team and develop a process to identify potential candidates. At the end of that process, the SPRC Chair and designated Work Team make the final evaluation and selection. The SLC is kept informed as to the progress and potential candidates, but does not approve the final selection.
- b. The SPRC Chair, in the interest of time, deferred further discussion.

Next SLC Meeting – Sunday, August 13, at 12:30 PM

Future Dates: SLC Meeting on Sunday, September 17, at 12:30 PM

All Church Family Meeting on Sunday, October 1, following the 11:00 service

Closing Prayer – Pastor Ashley Anne

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 PM.

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

Javier Saenz, Chair of Trustees

Karen Meeks

Dan Sepdham

Susan Francis

Bernadette Ealy

Tiffany Harlow