



SERVANT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes November 15, 2023

1. The regular meeting of the VRUMC Servant Leadership Council (SLC) was convened on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 7:30 PM via Zoom, with all members present, except for Hillarye Hightower.
2. The Lay Leader led a spiritual and leadership development discussion on the subject of “change.” Dealing with change causes much anxiety with many people. We commonly resist any change to what we accustomed to, regardless of the justifying reasons accompanying the changes. Our fears can be eased by acknowledging that scripture affirms that God is in charge and all occurs according to His Will and His plan. Ecclesiastes tells us that there is a time for everything, and inevitably that results in change. Hebrews 13:5-6 and Malachi 3:6 declare that God is the constant. His care and love never change and can be relied upon for steadfastness. Karen Meeks led the group in prayer.
3. Pastor’s Report
 - a. The Leadership Development (Nominations) Team is in the process of filling out the slate of new leadership for 2024. The results of their work to date include:
Leadership Development – Kay Allen & Pam Gowens (Class of 2026), with one opening yet to be filled.
Lay Delegate to Annual Conference – Angie Christofferson (remains on SLC)
Servant Leadership Council – Class of 2026: Cassandra Williams, Matt Devine, Wesley Potter (Trustee Chair for 2024). Karen Meeks will assume the role of SLC Chair for 2024. The new roster of leadership will be formally voted on during the Charge Conference, scheduled for December 5.
 - b. Accounting Service Update – Pastor Ashley Anne and Bill Burden have thoroughly vetted and interviewed the accounting firm Belay Solutions. This firm provides all the current services we require, with the additional benefits of accomplishing payroll and bill-paying. Belay is a U.S.-based company with a proven track record of reliability and responsiveness. The cost of the new service will be less than the current service, even considering a small start-up cost. It is their recommendation that we move from the current accounting service to Belay. The SLC affirmed their decision to make the

change. The goal is to move to the new company as soon as feasibly possible. The contract with Belay will include a month-to-month obligation and will be signed by the Chair of Trustees.

4. Discussion Items

- a. Sunday Schedule Changes – Feedback from the congregation since the time of the last Church Family Meeting continues to be positive. The SLC had no objections moving forward with the new schedule and recommending to the Lead Pastor that VRUMC adopt this alternative. The motion to make this recommendation can be found in the attached document. It was moved, seconded, and unanimously passed by the Council. The Lead Pastor immediately affirmed and approved the recommendation. The new schedule will go into effect on January 1, 2024.
- b. Budget Process 2024 – The Chair presented the Budget Expense Summary created by Greg Rimling. All ministry areas were tasked with calculating their respective expenses for next year, along with any explanation for changes. Those numbers were collated to create a first version of the 2024 Budget (expenses only). The Chair highlighted each ministry area, emphasizing changes from this year, plus any areas that need further research or decision. The next step in the process will be to examine the results of the stewardship campaign, and then reconcile any differences in estimated giving versus the expense side of the ledger. This work will be the main topic of the December SLC meeting.
- c. Discussion Topics from SLC
 - No additional topics were brought forth.

5. Consent Package

- a. Financials – The financial state of the church, as of the end of October, remains essentially unchanged since the end of September. Expenses exceed revenue by \$23,722 through October. Much of the shortfall can be attributed to two areas: miscalculation of wages and benefits, and the payment schedule of the church's new insurance policy. There is hope that end-of-year giving, along with continued expense discipline, will cut the deficit significantly.

6. SPRC (Closed Session) – The suggestion was made that due to no forthcoming raises for the staff in 2024, that the church bring back the Christmas Love Offering opportunity. This tradition was lost in the changeover in 2022 but is essential in recognizing the hard work and energy expended by the staff, particularly in challenging times. The entire SLC (James Kunke abstaining) affirmed this decision wholeheartedly. Hillarye, as SPRC Chair, will send out electronic notification to the congregation and a box will be placed in the Welcome Center for those that choose to participate.

VRUMC Charge Conference – Tuesday, December 5, 2023, at 7:30 PM

Next SLC Meeting – Wednesday, December 13, at 7:00 PM (via Zoom)

Closing Prayer – Dan Sepdham

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted:

Stephen Greenwade, Chair

Angie Christoffersen, Lay Member Annual Conf

Hillarye Hightower, Staff Parish Relations Chair

Javier Saenz, Chair of Trustees

Dan Sepdham

Bernadette Ealy

Ashley Anne Sipe, Lead Pastor

James Kunke, Lay Leader

Karen Meeks

Susan Francis

Tiffany Harlow

Motion to Move to a New Sunday Morning Schedule

The Servant Leadership Council (SLC) of Vista Ridge UMC, after months of careful study, research, and conversation, hereby formally moves to recommend to the Lead Pastor to change the current Sunday morning schedule to the following format:

8:30-8:55 Communion Chapel (Emphasis on Communion & Prayer)

9:00-9:50 Small Groups

10:00- 11:00 Worship Service

11:00-12:00 Small Groups

- This alteration of the schedule is being made with the overarching themes of efficiency, unity, and energizing of the staff, congregation, and visitors in mind.
- The new Worship service will combine elements of traditional and contemporary worship to create a welcoming atmosphere for all.
- This new schedule will create new opportunities for small group formation and growth.
- The new schedule will go into effect on January 1, 2024.