



SERVANT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes October 25, 2023

1. The regular meeting of the VRUMC Servant Leadership Council (SLC) was convened on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, at 7:00 PM via Zoom, with all members present, except for Javier Saenz.
2. The Lay Leader led a spiritual and leadership development discussion based on the scripture passage Psalm 84:10-12. It is always important to put God first above self-centeredness. Life is not about just doing better but to focus on experiencing His presence and His love, using Him as the source of true joy. Hillarye led the group in prayer.
3. Pastor's Report
 - a. The Lead Pastor laid out the main elements of the Stewardship 2024 Campaign. The focus of the campaign is to lean into a feeling of healing and wholeness, while avoiding the anxiety associated with trying times. The theme "Step into the Story" will concentrate on the affirming ministries of not only this year, but also the rich history of ministry of VRUMC. The key dates of the campaign will be November 5, 12, and 19 (Celebration Day).
 - b. The Leadership Development (Nominations) Team will meet on October 26, 2023, to discuss upcoming vacancies in church leadership. On the SLC, the Team will be looking toward filling the roles of Chair, Trustees Chair, and Finance Chair. There will also be positions on the Leadership Development Team to fill. Members of the SLC were asked to prayerfully consider those they feel would be good fits for these open positions and make the appropriate suggestions to the Team.
4. Discussion Items
 - a. Sunday Schedule Changes – The consensus remains mostly positive. The main source of any anxiety seems to be centered on the music choices of a single service. Following the combined service scheduled for October 29, the Church Family Meeting on November 5 will concentrate on any remaining issues with the proposed change. The focus from the SLC Chair and Lay Leader will be one of revitalization of VRUMC. The church is better served by not looking back to what we used to be, but instead ask the

question, “What is next?” Following that meeting, the SLC will be in a better position to ascertain whether to move forward or take more time for examination.

- b. Budget Process 2024 – The Chair presented the budget timeline, as created by Greg Rimling. All ministry areas have been presented their respective expenses for this year to date, along with a blank budget form for next year. Their task is to complete a proposed budget for 2024 by November 8. Greg will then summarize the combined budgets, which will be presented to the SLC during the November meeting. Following the completion of the Stewardship Campaign, the main task will be to reconcile the Giving estimates with the proposed Expenses, to create a final budget for 2024. It is acknowledged that creating a budget for next year will be challenging. Creativity in finding new ways for ministry and using Capital Funds for appropriate areas will be extremely important in mitigating the challenges.
 - c. Accounting Service Update – Pastor Ashley Anne and Bill Burden had a productive meeting with a prospective firm (Jitasa). The cost structure is in line with what the church currently pays, plus the impression of better responsiveness to our needs. The drawbacks include the need to return to QuickBooks instead of using the current One Church software, plus the potential challenges of working with their outsourced team in eastern Europe. One other church in the area that uses Jitasa was complimentary of their service, with the caveat that their size merits a U.S.-based team. One other service, Belay Solutions, is being researched as another candidate. More information will be forthcoming.
 - d. Reconciling Ministry Work Team – Prospective team members have been identified and conversations initiated. The vision is to create a team with differing skill sets and potential roles.
 - e. Discussion Topics from SLC
 - A suggestion to bring back the Prayers of the People to the worship service was offered. With the state of anxiety and worry that exists in today’s world, the time of prayer may bring a renewed sense of comfort and joy to the congregation.
 - The SLC was made aware of the sense of frustration within the congregation concerning recent departures from the church. This has created an atmosphere of baseless rumors and conjecture. The SLC affirms that it is not our job to defend or explain the reasons some have chosen to leave the church, but instead to suggest to those with questions to contact directly those they have questions about. It was also noted that no official notes of resignation have been received as of this date.
5. Consent Package
- a. Financials – The current financial picture of the church remains less than optimum. Actual Revenue is exceeded by Actual Expenses (through September 30) by \$21,867. There was some improvement from the previous report in that the shortfall was reduced by \$2,595 over the month of September. The full financial report is available to any member of the congregation through the Church Office. One point highlighted during this discussion is that our shortfall is indicative of the difficulties faced by the SLC during the upcoming budget consideration.

- b. VRUMC Policy on Public Display of the U.S. Flag – The SLC considered and approved the latest proposal on this subject. The policy goes into effect immediately and is available from the Church Office or SLC Chair. The discussion on other displays will continue with the advent of the new SLC in 2024.

6. SPRC (Closed Session) – Nothing further to add

Next SLC Meeting – **Wednesday, November 15, at 7:30 PM (via Zoom)**

Future Dates: All Church Family Meeting on Sunday, November 5, at 9:30 AM

Closing Prayer – Karen Meeks

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 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

Karen Meeks

Javier Saenz, Chair of Trustees

Susan Francis

Dan Sepdham

Tiffany Harlow

Bernadette Ealy