



SERVANT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes July 28, 2024

1. The regular meeting of the VRUMC Servant Leadership Council (SLC) was convened on Sunday, July 28, 2024, at 11:15 a.m., with all members present in person, except for Hillarye Hightower, who joined via Zoom. This constitutes a quorum of voting members.
2. James Kunke led the group in a devotional and opened the meeting with prayer. He left us to ponder the question: How do we fill the needs or meet the demands for personal connections within our congregation?
3. Pastor's Report:
 - a. Engagement Team Update: We reviewed the list of new members and visitors during the previous meeting. Rev. Ashley Anne Sipe recommended asking some of them how they connected to our church and how they would like to connect more to help inform our next steps.
 - b. Travel Plans: Rev. Ashley Anne is engaged at the regional and national levels of the UMC and has some upcoming travel plans. Her Calendly online calendar will always be updated to reflect her meeting availability. It is posted in the weekly church newsletter.
 - c. A Joy: She shared a new member letter thanking us for getting her connected.
4. Discussion Items:
 - a. Amendments to Guiding Principles: No comments on the draft document were received from the congregation. There was one recommended change from the council: Section 3.a.IV: Board of Trustees Chair does not need to be elected by the trustees

- i. As a related question, Vera Jo Bell asked what it would entail for Classic Women to become United Women in Faith. Wes Potter will share a contact for UWF to look into the process.
 - ii. Tiffany Harlow made a motion to approve the revised SLC Guidance with the one suggested change. Angie Christoffersen seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
 - iii. Thank you to James Kunke for the work on the revised update.
- b. Approval of minutes from June 30 meeting: Wes made a motion to approve, James seconded; Motion passed unanimously.
- c. Visioning Brainstorming: The council held an engaging discussion to help identify our “why” to help move the mission of the church forward, using this prompt: Why? Why? Why?
 - i. Clarifying: A vision statement should be different than our mission statement.
 - 1. The vision is “what it will look like when the mission happens.”
 - ii. Churchwide: Make disciples throughout the world
 - iii. UMC vision statement: to live as servants of Jesus Christ by being compassionate, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for strangers and freeing the oppressed. They also aim to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel.
 - iv. The vision of the newly created Horizon Texas Conference (beginning January 2025) will be:
 - 1. We are followers of Jesus seeking the loving, just, and free world God imagines for all people
 - 2. We do this with our strategic priorities:
 - a. Multiply Jesus followers
 - b. Champion children and youth
 - c. Maximize care and healing
 - d. Pursue and embrace diversity
 - e. Tell our story
 - v. If we look at our mission statement, how do we make a more acute vision – Vision for 2025 – through these goals?

- vi. Our current mission statement: Vista Ridge United Methodist Church is committed to:
 - 1. Grow deep in intentional discipleship
 - 2. Grow wide in generous hospitality
 - 3. Grow strong in our commitment to serve
 - 4. As we thrive in joyful community

- vii. James provided this as a framework: If we accomplish our mission:
 - 1. We will be a Christian fellowship known in the community for creating paths to compassionately serving the needs of others
 - 2. We will be a safe space for all people who seek the love and grace of Christ

- viii. Volunteerism vs. Discipleship
 - 1. How do we make our own serving “inclusive” and build our “army for Jesus”?
 - 2. With everything we do to serve our neighbor, is there an invitation for our neighbors to serve alongside us?
 - 3. If we are successful in our mission: We are serving with an invitation to bring others into a relationship with Jesus.

- ix. Recommendation: Re-establish 5th Sunday Service Days – invite your friends to serve their neighbors.
 - 1. Other ideas that can flow from the idea of the invitation:
 - a. The card
 - b. The T-shirt “Come serve with me”
 - c. The moms’ groups/secular youth groups

- x. How do we know if we are successful in our vision?
 - 1. VRUMC will be known in the community for creating paths to compassionately serve and for bringing people into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

- xi. Dan amended his motion to approve this as the vision statement. James amended his second and it passed unanimously.

- xii. **Edited to add: ChatGPT rewrites the above for clarity in these terms:
“Vista Ridge UMC will be recognized in our community for leading the way in compassionate service and for fostering meaningful relationships with Jesus Christ.”
- xiii. Next steps: Goals and actions for 2025 – possibly to hit on the 5 strategic priorities

5. Future Discussion Topics:

- a. Goals and actions for 2025 – possibly to hit on the 5 strategic priorities of the new united conference
- b. Neurodiverse ideation to create space for people who need accommodations; sensory needs, etc.
- c. Passion for developing a gardening team; additional ways to bring people in with ideas for learning/interest groups
- d. Adding a Youth Minister position back into the budget

6. Finance Report:

- a. Matt Devine, Finance Chair, took the council through the June Financials (Profit & Loss and Statement of Financial Position.) As reported, we are halfway through the year and about \$3K under; giving is down about \$1,200/Sunday; estimated giving down ~\$62K by the end of the year; Operating Cash \$110K; does not include designated funds.
- b. Bill Burden and Matt Devine have been researching interest rates to help offset the decrease in our giving. One option: bring over non-designated funds in TMF, only earning 1.5%; plus operating income that we are not using to earn a better interest rate; looked at CDs could gain about \$6K with better interest rates. An investment company has contacted us, and we are meeting this coming Wednesday to hear how the investment company could get us into a low- to moderate-risk and flexibility for liquidity; ensuring the funds that we are in align with our values. This does not mean that we have to move forward with them. With any investment company, there are always fees. No decision to be made today; only informational that we will be meeting with them on Wednesday, July 31, and the council is invited to attend.

7. Trustees Report:

- a. Wesley Potter, Chair of Trustees, took the council through the following report:
- b. Choir room AC has been repaired

- c. They believe to have identified the sound system part that needs to be replaced to fix the sound in the Wiggles & Giggles room and throughout the nursery area. Part has been ordered.
 - d. Replaced AC filters throughout the building
 - e. Still a very small leak in the Welcome Center
 - f. Grounds clean up to be scheduled to prepare for the fall
 - g. Safety team update: Bill Burden, Wes Potter, and David Sieja met with local representatives from another church to share their resources and guidelines; but it does not align with hopes for our church or the Book of Resolutions. Additional discussions need to be made.
 - h. Made changes to the door lock schedule. For those entering through the side doors, access will be allowed with key cards or someone physically opening the door from the inside, but the doors are not to be propped open.
 - i. Bill and Wes to review key card access at a later date.
8. Staff Parish Relations:
- a. No updates on SPRC items.
9. Next SLC Meeting: Tuesday, August 27, at 6 p.m. in person at VRUMC.
10. Church Family Meeting: Sunday, September 22, at 11:15 a.m.
11. Dan Sepdham led the council in a closing prayer. Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

SLC Membership:

Karen Meeks, Chair

Ashley Anne Sipe, Lead Pastor

Angie Christoffersen, Lay Member Annual Conf

James Kunke, Lay Leader

Hillarye Hightower, Staff Parish Relations Chair

Matt Devine, Finance Chair

Wesley Potter, Chair of Trustees

Tiffany Harlow, Secretary/Minutes

Dan Sepdham

Susan Francis

Bernadette Ealy

Cassandra Williams