



SERVANT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL Meeting Minutes - January 22, 2025

The regular meeting of the VRUMC Servant Leadership Council (SLC) was convened on Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 6 p.m. at VRUMC in Rooms 108-109. A quorum was confirmed. Attending in person were James Kunke, Matt Devine, Nikki Monkman-Lou, Angie Christoffersen, Dan Sepdham, Gina Witherspoon, Cassandra Williams, and Rev. Ashley Anne Sipe. Attending online were Bernadette Ealy and Madi Butler. Bill Burden from staff was present.

James Kunke led the group in a devotional and the group recited the Wesleyan Prayer.

SLC Member Covenant

SLC members reviewed the SLC Member Covenant and shared what words and statements stood out to them from the Covenant. A copy was circulated and each member present signed the document.

Approval of Meeting Minutes - November 20, 2024

Dan Sepdham motioned for approval. Cassandra Williams seconded. Minutes were approved by consensus with no changes.

Pastor's Report

Rev. Ashley Anne Sipe reported that overall attendance in 2024 was slightly down from 2023. In 2024, 14 new members joined which was an increase from 2023 (9) and 2022 (6). She shared that the conference is encouraging the recording of "constituents," which are people consistently attending even if not officially joining. The number of constituents at VRUMC is increasing.

There will be 11 youths attending MidWinter Retreat on February 7-9. Rev. Ashley Anne will join the youth with a guest preacher to cover for her during Sunday worship that weekend.

Finance Report

Matt Devine, Finance Chair, took the council through the most updated Statement of Financial Position. The church ended 2024 with a \$13,000 deficit with the main factors being lower revenue and higher trustee/admin expenses. He went over the 2025 positions pointing out there is \$104,307 in non-designated funds available with a total cash position of \$321,847.

The adopted 2025 budget shows \$104,307 in non-designated funds and a total \$321,847 cash position. The 2025 budget is positioned with \$497K revenue and \$513K expenses, projecting a \$17,000 deficit. Matt asked the council to approve the financial report as presented. The group approved by consensus.

There were 70 active families counted in the annual stewardship campaign. Of those, 46% (32) increased their pledge, 23% remained the same (16), 8% (11) have decreased, and 9% (6) have not pledged so they are assumed the same. There were eight new pledges. Overall, pledges increased from \$397k in 2024 to \$435k in 2025.

Matt opened a discussion about alternative revenue options. Rev. Ashley Anne suggested forming a Work Group to explore and develop a process for building use and other ways to increase alternative revenue. SLC agreed that the work group should consist of members outside the SLC that would report to Matt Devine as Finance Chair. Dan Sepdham motioned and Cassandra Williams seconded the motion. Council approved by consensus.

Trustees Report

No information was reported.

Discussion Items

James entered a record of an email vote conducted on December 1, 2024, to approve the 2025 church budget. The measure passed with nine affirmative votes.

The 2025 Community Outreach Calendar was submitted for consideration. Rev. Ashley Anne noted the Classic Women are now officially a church-affiliated group and are included on the outreach calendar. Motion to approve the 2025 Community Outreach Calendar was made by Dan Sepdham and seconded by Cassandra Williams. Council approved by consensus.

James shared he is working on creating “process guides” for leaders of outreach projects such as CCA food pick-up. Two have been completed so far.

Council discussed potential dates for 2025 Church Family Meetings:

- March 23
- July 13
- October 19

Rev. Ashley Anne led a discussion about the upcoming SLC retreat on February 15 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Sipe residence.

Upcoming Church Events

- Women’s Retreat - 1/25
- Mardi Gras Supper - 3/4
- Ash Wednesday Service - 3/5
- Serve Sunday with Love Thy Neighbor - 3/30

James encouraged the Council to attend events when possible.

SLC Meeting Dates

After discussion, the members agreed to alternate meetings on Sundays after church and Tuesday evenings. After the February retreat, the next meeting will be on March 25 at 7 p.m.

Staff Parish Relations

Matt Devine assumed chair duties. Nikki Monkman-Lou, SLC Chair, led the council in the process of selecting liaisons for each staff position at VRUMC. All members present were matched with a staff person.

Matt offered a closing prayer. The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.