



GUM CHURCH

Our vision is to actively live the example of Jesus

Governance Board Meeting Minutes

May 15, 2023, 7:00 pm, Library

In attendance: Karen Ambs, Doug Barry, Marie McDonald, Lindsey Meredith (joined via phone), Karen Owen, John Stamm, Jon Tuscan (joined via phone), *Sherri Swanson, *Michelle Wood,

Absent: Shaun Skibinski, Karen Strickland

(*non-voting member)

Actions taken by e-mail since our last meeting:

Congregational Survey: On April 13, Karen Ambs sent an email informing the board that Pastor Sherri has been working with Penny Avery to put together a congregation survey about worship times. When Pastor Sherri shared the survey with the staff, they had some concerns about allowing the responders to be anonymous. The staff asked if the Governance Board would consider having the name of the person taking the survey be required. Karen requested that the Governance Board respond with an answer to the question, "Will you approve the survey if the name of the person taking the survey is required?"

From those who responded, most were in favor of changing the survey status to "name required" and two were not in favor, though one of the individuals was open to having the survey go either way. As a result, the survey will have "name required" and add (per one of your suggestions) the question "How often do you attend worship services?"

1. Prayer

Pastor Sherri opened the group in prayer.

2. Devotions

Marie shared a devotion from the book, Heaven Rules: Take Courage. Take Comfort. Our God is in Control. She shared some quotes and words from the book that were appropriate for our discussion.

3. Pastor's Report

- New staff member, Laura. Integrated well into the team.
- Encouraging signs in worship. Several visitors and several members have returned.
- 7 New Members joining on May 21.
- Recognizing graduates on May 21.
- Good turnout for church directory. A physical directory and app will be included. It will only include those who have signed the permission form.
- Sending out a batch of letters to inactive members.
- Pastor Sherri will be serving on the District Committee on Ordained Ministry.
- Pastor Sherri is participating in some classes/training on: Stewardship, Clergy Ethics, Healthy Boundaries, and anti-bias/anti-racism training.
- Brad retired. 2 graduations celebrated - Son (Tom) and Daughter-in-Law

4. Staff Reports

See attachment at end of minutes.

5. Activities/Ministries Reports

- Children's Ministries (see staff reports)
- Church and Society (Lindsey) - Christine (chair) enjoys working with the planning group. 10 participants in each of the Transitions series events.
- Family Camp (Lindsey) - Getting ready for July. New families joining this year. Some just coming up for the day.
- Intentional Faith Development (Marie) - Lenten cross project had good participation. 36 crosses returned for display. Shining Light class has 12 participants. Chris K's Zoom class on Sunday afternoons is going well. 6 people meet regularly for Coffee and Chat at Panera. Would like to look into anti-racism programming.
- Landscaping Team (Shaun) - Going fine.
- Prayer Chain (Marie) - 5 people participating in the phone chain.
- Prayer Shawl (Karen Strickland) - Things are going well. Looking to add making hats, scarves and mittens to help homeless through Heritage Christian Reformed ministry for serving homeless.
- United Women in Faith (Marie) - 4 active groups. Recent bake sale went well and raised \$400. Heard from many about the UWF Sunday service and how it spoke to them.

6. New Business

- Ottawa County Unifying Congregations Document
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This document was brought to the attention of the Governance Board to review and consider. Three churches have signed already.

Some concerns were brought up that it is political and other concerns that Some in the congregation will find it divisive. Concern was raised that only the Governance Board will make the decision on behalf of the entire congregation. A comment was made about the membership vows taken that state "...resisting oppression..."; isn't this what we have said we would do?

Ultimately, the Governance Board decided that signing the document was not the direction they wish to take at this time. Doug will report back to Kim Nagy who invited us to endorse this document, and share the idea of allowing individuals to sign the document, as several Board members would be willing to do.

- Worship Survey
 - Huge thank you to Penny Avery for pulling all of the survey together.
 - Response of 122 people.
 - 52.5% prefer single worship service, 26.7% prefer two worship services, 20.8% do not have an opinion on the issue.
 - Style of service was overwhelmingly voted as blended.

The Governance Board meeting discussed the results to best decide about worship for the fall.

MOTION: Doug made a motion to continue services "as is" for the Fall.

SECONDED: Karen O. seconded the motion.

VOTE: All in favor, none opposed. Motion passed.

Other comments made in the survey could impact other areas. These will be addressed at a future Governance Board meeting. Pastor Sherri will share with staff and a pared down copy will be shared with the Worship Design team.

Questions 2-4 will be shared with the congregation in the newsletter (graphs).

- Fall Kick Off - Task Group/Committee
 - It would be great to have a chairperson and/or co-chairperson.

- Fall Kickoff will be on September 10.
- Planning will be needed for food, games, communication, etc.
- Jon T. and John S. both offered to sit on the committee. Pastor Sherri will set up the first meeting.

- Finance Committee Update - John Stamm
 - Taking in enough to pay our bills
 - Continue to be behind on ministry shares.
 - A little short in the General Fund, but generally ok.
 - John S. will attend Finance Committee meeting on May 16

7. Old Business

- Doors update - Karen A.
 - Will bring Ryan M. (Trustee chair) up to speed on things. He is really excited to meet and see what the next steps are.

- Festival Stuff - Lindsey
 - Storage unit is cleared out. Giving away or selling items that were stored.

8. Closing Prayer

Karen A. closed the group in prayer and the meeting was adjourned

9. Next Meeting: Monday, July 17

(Michelle will not be at meeting and Karen A. will find a substitute)

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Wood, Governance Board Secretary

STAFF UPDATES (MAY 2023):

Music, Worship, and IT – Alex Barringer

After a bit of a rebuilding year, the Music and Worship Teams are looking forward to things slowing down a bit for the summer. The Bell Choir and Adult Choir will both be performing in the May 21st service and then taking a break until the fall. I'm very impressed with how both groups have consistently made meaningful, worshipful music despite having smaller numbers than we are used to.

The worship band will continue playing each week during the summer in our blended services. We'll have either a stripped-down acoustic band or the full band depending on volunteer's availability. We are very blessed to have a team of very dedicated and skilled musicians who are willing to give so much of their time to our ministries here.

The tech teams have really benefitted from having just one service on Sunday morning. We have been able to get both the sound and video teams onto a rotation that uses each volunteer only once per month max. In the past, some volunteers were serving 2-3 times a month, so this is a huge improvement! We've also been blessed with 2 new volunteers joining the team and one past volunteer returning.

After a few years off, the Worship Design Team has resumed meeting. We had our first meeting in March and intend to meet again this summer with a couple new members added to the group. I'm very grateful for all that this team does to enrich our services.

On the IT side, things are going well. All employee computers are running smoothly. The Young Disciples Laptop was recently passed on to Laura and she should be good to go. I don't anticipate any big needs for IT in the near future but will be ready if something arises.

As always, thanks to the Governance Board for your continued support!

Adult Choir – Lynette Cole

It has been a year of adjustments for the choir. We are in a "small but mighty" stage, but have been able to accomplish preparing music for 2 or 3 Sundays a week. It has been a challenge to find a suitable variety of music for both our singers and the congregation's ears. But as always, the choir members are ready to give their all to anything I present them. It really is a beautiful group of people.

We have welcomed a few new members to fill in some gaps left by people no longer attending or having to retire. We've enjoyed having some "once in a while" voices, including some of our youth join us for special occasions or when needed. It's also been a pleasure to have several of our youth and adult GUM members accompany us on their various instruments for several anthems. We are fortunate to have a well of talent here to draw from.

At Christmas we were able to present a full Cantata again after the pandemic messed things up. Also, a small group of us went to American House to sing carols and visit with Lorena Brown. She had us laughing and feeling the Christmas spirit.

For the immediate future, we are about ready for our summer break. The dedicated volunteers of the choir certainly deserve their time off. They will miss Kerri's treats though.

I always want to emphasize here what a gift it is to work with Alex Barringer. We would not be able to pull off some of what is necessary without him. (for example, when we need a band, he usually puts that together) Plus he is very fun as a cohort.

Thank you for your continued support. We will keep doing our best to provide meaningful musical messages and be a small group to support each other.

Communications – Sidney Yin

Website

- Revamped navigational links for easy of use for members and visitors
- Unified page feels with similar heading graphics for conformity
- Renewed domain and web site hosting
- Combined previous worship sermons
- New sign up tool for liturgists
- Restructured "Fellowship Opportunities" page for at-a-glance functionality of what activities are offered at GUM

Electronic Sign

- Successful utilization to attract newcomers for events such as Pub Theology
- Accentuated "Rainbow" door, welcoming aspect of GUM

Newsletter

- Ongoing updates and refreshed look for simple, image-centric articles
- Texting capabilities for prayers & celebration upon request

Photo Directory

- Photo directory update project
- Coordination between members, volunteers, and Universal Church Directories for photo sessions complete

Upcoming - continued coordination with members and UCD for the final assembly of photos taken, photos submitted, and layouts

Facebook

- Utilization of Facebook Ads and creation of shareable events such as Kick Off, Christmas, Easter events at GUM.
- Weekly post of newsletters for ease of access for members
- Continued monitoring of fake and spam profiles on FB Page and Group

GUMC Office - Amy Schuiling

We have been keeping pretty busy in the office as 'normalcy' continues to resume. There is always something to do! It's great to see the building used more and more during the week, and we work together to make sure the doors are unlocked and re-locked for people after office hours. Sherri and I meet weekly and although there is much I am able to anticipate now that I've been here awhile, I always appreciate that she looks ahead and helps make sure we are organized and prepared. Our entire staff meets two time a month, and it's great that the majority of us are able to connect during those times, since we never all work on the same days.

I have assisted with some of the recent special Sunday planning (Camp Sunday, Volunteer Sunday, and our upcoming "Help us clear our Closets" Day.) We will soon receive new members and acknowledge all our graduates. I am also updating personal information recorded in our database, as well as areas where people wish to volunteer, based on the submissions from our recent photo sessions.

We continue to be cautious with spending and things are running pretty smoothly. We did have a phone issue this week, which was repaired on Wednesday, May 3. It seems we often discover "To Do" items for our Trustee Committee's list, and this committee is staying on top of things that need to be taken care of around our building.

Things slow down a bit in the summer, as they do for most everyone. From mid-June through mid-August, I will be reducing my hours and pay, and have received permission from S-PRC to adjust our 'open office' hours to Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9-1, eliminating Thursdays for those eight weeks. Thursday is normally a slower day for outside visitors and phone calls anyway, so we are hoping it doesn't inconvenience anyone. Sherri will still be available via cell phone for any emergencies that arise. Once our normal hours return in mid-August, I anticipate that we will be really busy preparing for Kick-Off and all the excitement that comes with a new fall season.

Blessings to you all!

Young Disciples & Nursery – Kerri DeZwaan and Amanda Hoskins

As our season wraps up for this program year, and we look forward to Laura bringing so much to the team, we reflect on this past year, and look with eager anticipation to the future.

Youth has had it's ups and downs this year, with sporadic participation due to our Young people's very busy schedules. We have had some great discussions and meaningful conversations and lots of fun as well. We just finished up playing a life sized version of the "Game of Life". It was a ton of fun and was a unique way of helping the kids understand choices and consequences and also how life can sometimes take unexpected twists. Prayer and Breakfast has had good attendance and has been another great way to connect. We have one more event this month that we will combine with EDGE for a final Ice Cream Social.

EDGE has had great attendance this year with about 10 kids attending each time. They worked on a mission project for Mel Trotter, and made Valentines for some of our Senior Members of the church. They have gotten to know each other better and made friendships and connections that I hope last a lifetime.

Children's Ministry has had a busy season with a very steady group of Sunday School participants. I have written or modified available curriculum for this season to match Sherri's sermon topics, and we have had fairly steady participation of about 17 kids each week – some weeks a little lower, some higher. Looking forward, we are hoping to find curriculum that approaches Sunday School from a more age appropriate learning experience to ensure a strong beginning to Lifelong Faith.

Nursery has had consistent numbers of kids, which is exciting! We have a squad of one year olds that provide joy and excitement and sometimes a little drama to each morning! Amanda is actively working on seeking out and training additional volunteers to help her staff the nursery.

I have managed to attend at least one activity, and often more for each youth/child that I have received a schedule for. I have attended concerts, musicals, plays, basketball games, football

games, tennis matches, marching band competitions, track meets, recitals and I am looking forward to a few more events that will conclude this spring with Golf, baseball and softball.

This summer will once again be filled with VBS, Family Camp, bringing Laura on board, determining each of our roles for this coming year, and planning, planning, planning! I will also be attending a conference on Lifelong Faith Development through a scholarship from the Conference. I am excited about what this new year will hold and what we will be able to do together to bring the Love of Jesus to life for our children and young people.