

Oakdale Emory United Methodist Church
Minutes of Church Council Meeting
June 15, 2010

Council Members in Attendance:

Ted Strahan	Therese Walden	UMM- Alden English	UMW- Susan Lears
Kevin Baker	Matt Van Patten	Patti Whitten	Lawrie Branson
Leslie Myers	Scott Frederick	Mark Huff	Debbie Goldberg

Staff in Attendance:

Anne Jordan	Amy Cole	Jennifer Souter	Alison Sarracino
Luis Franco	Cynthia McDermott		

Others in Attendance: Bill Nullmeyer Marti English

Recording Secretary: Damali Kajubi

1. **Opening:** Ted Strahan, Council Vice Chairman opened the meeting. Bill Nullmeyer led the opening prayer.
2. **Approval of May Minutes:** Alden English moved the motion to approve the May minutes. Therese Walden seconded the motion and the Council unanimously approved the minutes.
3. **Building Committee – Debbie Goldberg**
 - After doing reference checks and site visits, the Building committee selected Alexander Art Studio to be the architectural firm for the building project.
 - The Building Committee asked the Council to approve \$90,800 to fund the design stage and to finalize the contract.
 - Alden English, a member of the Building Committee, felt that it was important for the congregation to know that the Building Committee worked hard to move forward with the best plan. Ted Strahan added that one advantage of the plan was that the church would have a design plan after the first stage. Matt Van Patten felt that the plan was well thought out and had stop points.
 - Kevin Baker pointed out that the Council's position as leaders was to understand that there were members of the congregation who were going to be skeptical about the project. The Council's job was to provide information to the skeptical members that the Building committee was trying to be faithful to the 87% of the church members who voted for the building project. Scot Frederick also added that we should inform the congregation that the \$90,800 is from restricted funds that can only be spent on construction. This money was previously set aside for construction.
 - Debbie Goldberg moved the motion to approve the release of the \$90,800. Lawrie Branson seconded the motion. The Council unanimously approved the release of the funds.
 - Matt Van Patten prayed for Debbie and the rest of the Building Committee.

4. Capital Campaign – Leslie Myers

- Leslie Myers reported that the Capital Committee was going to meet on Wednesday June 16, 2010 at 7 P.M. in the Bready building. Rick McDuturff is the Chairman. 7 to 8 people want to be on the committee.
- The goal of the committee is to discuss options for raising the \$3M required for the building project

5. Economic Environment Review –*a). Communication Plan: Chairman's letter*

- During the May meeting, the Council had recommended that Dave Young as Council Chairman should write a letter to the congregation describing the struggle the Council and staff go through to make sure that church finances are being handled well.
- Ted Strahan asked for feedback on the letter. Therese Walden reported that some people felt that the letter should have identified some specifics. Lawrie Branson pointed out it would have been better if the letter had included Dave Young's title as Council chairman.

b). Education

- Ted Strahan reported that people are noticing the financial information in the weekly bulletin.
- Alden suggested that the information on the church's giving in the church bulletin should be highlighted in color to differentiate the information from the church's mission.
- Scott Frederick will be submitting brief stories about giving for the Two42 monthly magazine. He intends to use some FROG graphics to brand the message with the "Fully Rely on God" theme.
- Matt Van Patten wanted to know what the next step should be. Scott Frederick reported that so far the Finance Committee has focused on communication and disseminating information about financial giving. He would like to focus on the electric bill program
- Matt Van Patten asked Kevin Baker to inform the congregation that the Council was moving forward with the Building project

6. Ownership of the TAG Initiatives – Cynthia McDermott

- Cynthia McDermott explained that the Next Step campaign is not a program but a process. The Next Step theme is going to define a process that is so clear that all church members will understand it.
- To measure if people are growing, we have to look at the great command to "love God with all your soul, your mind and strength" and the great commission "to make disciples of all the world" We have to look at whether we are changing people's hearts and behavior
- The next step campaign will consists of the processes that allow a member to "Connect, grow, and share" Connecting starts with connecting with God first then with others. The process does not have to be linear.

- To implement the process, we are going to:
 - Market the concept through a media blitz that includes publishing information about the concept in the monthly Two42 magazine.
 - Get people to talk about the concept by asking small group leaders to ask people to identify their next step
 - Assemble a team to focus on the process and act as “next step” counselors
 - Measure results through self-assessments and get people to adjust
- Kevin Baker reported that he liked the concept. He felt that it flowed well and was very inviting. Kevin was going to include the next step concept at the end of each sermon
- Ted Strahan added that we need to explain to people that you cannot connect by just attending Sunday services. People need to join a small group so that they can interact with other church members.
- Susan Lear felt that providing good examples gives the right perspective. Anne Jordan provided an example. After going on a mission trip to Uruguay, Annes’ next step was to learn Spanish before going on another trip. After learning some Spanish, she was able to connect to people in a more meaningful way when she went on a mission trip to Guatemala.
- Anne Jordan is going to use the September issue to introduce the “next Step” concept

7. 2011 Budget Process

- Scott Frederick reports that the Finance committee will use July to collect the budget information, identify capital expenses and develop an operational budget. The Finance committee will report back in September.
- *Stewardship Campaign:* Scott reports that it is a good idea to change a process every 4 years. We have been collecting pledge cards and sending them back to people without looking at them. Not opening the cards has given the impression that the church does not think that the cards are important. As a result, the number of pledge cards has diminished over the years. Scott advocates looking at the pledge cards. The purpose would not be to develop a budget that fits the amount pledged but to reinforce the idea that pledging is important.
- Rather than planning ministries and projects based on the amount of money the church received the previous year, the Council should plan above the budget in order to cover new priorities. We have a record of expenses and revenues for the past 10 years. For the past 4 years, our revenue has been in the range of 1.3 to 1.4 million. We could plan for a revenue of 1.6 and then scale back. A bigger building is going to give us more opportunities for ministries.
- Lawrie Branson felt that what Scott is advocating is positive. The Council gave the Finance Committee a responsibility – we should endorse their ideas.

- Matt Van Patten felt that it was premature to talk about the budget. The next step should be for the Finance Committee to get a proposed budget. We should focus on getting an approved budget by November.
- A question was raised as to where we got the financial reserves and other restricted reserves in our financial statement?" Lawrie responded that past congregations were conservative and saved the money. Alden English added that the money was also donated for these various specific funds. The church today has a strong laity, but people are not giving because people are not excited and feel disenfranchised. Lawrie feels that people are scared to voice their feelings. Each person needs to be valued by the Council and the staff.
- Patti Whitten felt that giving was low because people were voting with their checkbooks.
- Alden felt that because of the economy, people have tight budgets but there is also a feeling of disconnect. Most leaders have physically or emotionally left the church
- Amy Cole reported that there was a general feeling that the Council does not care
- Kevin thanked Lawrie for putting the issue on the table for discussion. Kevin felt that when he first joined the church, he created a lot of changes that were hard for the staff, Council and the congregation. The TAG team identified that the church was changing too fast and Kevin has been trying to moderate the change.

Kevin explained further that the church started off small in size, like a "shepherd church", where the pastor interacted with the congregation more. The pastor's calendar matched the church's calendar and the pastor attended most gatherings.

The church is now bigger and more like a "rancher church" where the church needs multiple shepherds and where the senior pastor cannot be part of every gathering. To some church members who have coming to Oakdale for a long time, the shift seems very radical. Not attending some gatherings has made some people feel that Kevin did not care about that group. Kevin would like to re-assure the congregation that not attending all the gatherings does not mean that he does not care.

- Susan Lears felt that many things have changed, expectations are different, we have wide generation gaps and some people do not want to stretch and grow.
- Bill Nullmeyer felt that people who are dissatisfied should go directly to Kevin
- Kevin offered a further explanation that he fought the Bishop about being transferred to Oakdale Emory. He felt that Oakdale was too conservative, formal, and structured. He did not want to wear a robe. The first six months were hard but the Bishop and the Superintendent assured Kevin that they were not asking Kevin to change. They wanted the congregation to change.

- Later on, Kevin realized that people do not care how much you know until they know that you care about them. Kevin eventually fell in love with the church. He is not interested in moving and is excited about what God has in store for Oakdale. He wants Oakdale to be the best church it can be. He now understands why the transition is so difficult for the church. He sees how the church can feel that they are not being listened to, they do not count, and that decisions are made at the top.
 - Bill Nullmeyer commented that Kevin's explanation was so effective he wished that the congregation was in the meeting to hear the explanation.
 - Therese Walden commented that there was a need to focus on the church first as opposed to the unchurched
 - Marti felt that it was our job to give the same explanation to the congregation
 - Kevin asked Lawrie if the explanation had been helpful
 - Kevin feels that the church needs to have a forum where they can have a conversation about issues. He intends to set a blog.
8. **Pastor's Reports:** Sharon Starling will be leaving as Worship and Music Pastor. Sharon mapped out music for the summer.
9. **Closing of the Meeting** Kevin Baker Closed the Meeting with a prayer