Church Council Minutes

First United Methodist Church of Arlington

313 N. Center St. Arlington, TX 76011

September 24, 2024 | 6 pm

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| Betsi Goode | Cathy Olson | Chris Olson | Johnnie Sue Bucek | Janet Gray |
| Betty Dalton | Madison Boboltz | Loni Fancher | Kay Lancaster | Shari Harrington |
| Holly Maxwell | Molly Hayes | Chris Hayes | Betsy Spencer | Kim Crawford |
| Macy Craft | Heather Hanson | Scott Russell | Edward Castillo | CJ Reddig |
| Rob Franz | Shawn Dickler | Sean Hale | Rita Martin | Michelle Clark |
| Taylor Jackson | Jacki Reininga | John Knapp | Jo Anna Cardoza | Tim Graves |

\*Welcome/Prayer – 6:05 pm, Holly Maxwell called the meeting to order.

* Molly led the opening prayer.

\*Strategic Initiatives Update

* Telling Our Story— (6:07) Chris Hayes gathered the team at the beginning of the year. Crews are working on the story around Cloud Covered Streets, and videos are being fine-tuned. We also wrote a story. We tapped the brakes after planning for 2025 because we want the entire theme of next year to be about telling our Methodist story.
	+ Kim Crawford appreciated the incorporation of video during the sermon this week.
	+ Chris mentioned a moment of praise – four out of five weeks of September, we had women in the pulpit.
* Maximizing Care - (6:11) Kay Lancaster continues offering small group studies/events for seniors (Away We Go, Fellowship@First). David Mosser is doing ThanksGIVING (an all-day retreat focused on giving) in November. Making connections with our Homebound members. The Congregational Care Team is growing. We also have an incredible prayer team, and she has noticed more and more members remember to tell her about their joys/concerns. Put together a team of memorial service helpers. Increased First Friday volunteers to 30. A lot of them are younger. Grief group starting October 15 on Tuesday evenings at 6 pm. After that, we’ll have an exceptional Holiday Healing Service. All Saints Sunday is November 3; we’ll also have a Remembrance lunch (probably Sunday, November 24).

\*Committee Reports

-Finance – (6:18) Kim Crawford explained there are no finance reports this month because of the transition to the new system. Through the end of August, we confidently reported a revenue of $1.3 million and an expense of $1.7 million. It was not unexpected, but we had a cash crunch because of that. We started the year in a bit of a cash crunch, so not that unusual. Trustees voted to pull $72k from the Trustee Memorial account into the Operating account. Chris & Heather worked on some projections so we could know where we’ll land. If projections go where they have in previous years, we’ll have expenses exceed revenue (paying everything, including apportionments) by $89k. We can cut in other areas $10k to keep that from happening.

* We need to decide if all the money from the Trustees needs to go back.
* 1.3 million revenue is a record for our giving. Chris took a moment to thank you for your generosity. A trustee fund was designated specifically for people to make donations for memorials for building use.
* Heather Hanson moved to add Kenna Bridgmon as a check signer for the Faith Fellowship Class and Marilyn Olive as a check signer for the Wesley Progressors Class. Rob Franz seconded. Motion carried; unanimous vote.

Trustees (6:23): Betty Dalton expressed her gratitude that the Trustees could support the $72k needs that came up. The Trustee Memorial Fund was created so they can jump in when needed. The trustees voted quickly to make it happen. There is no news on facilities.

* Shawn Dickler—Ideal Impact is working to improve electrical and HVAC efficiency, so we should see budget impacts over time.

-PPR – (6:25) Rob Franz shared that PPR has been busy. They are starting year-end evaluations in October. PPR unanimously voted to recommend Madison for ordination. Macy Craft has decided to pursue ministry, and PPR will meet to recommend her.

\*New Database/App Update (6:29) – Molly Hayes/Heather Hanson/Taylor Jackson

* Molly shared that Ideal Impact talks directly to our Church Center app, which is a benefit. We’re continuing to have help sessions, one on Sunday, September 29, and planning one for a weekday in mid-October. The website is also changing. It will look the same, but we’ll save $400 a month, and it’s much easier to work with than Shelby.
* Taylor mentioned the directory. Please email her at tjackson@arlingtonmethodist.org if you still don’t have access to it or have questions.
* Heather explained that donations for the year's first half are only in Shelby because there’s no way to backdate giving in the Planning Center. She has downloaded everything from Shelby so that people will receive two giving statements this year (one from Shelby and one from the Planning Center). Thirty-two households are set up, and there are still 125 in Shelby, but they haven’t moved to Planning Center.
* Chris shared with the church council that we’ll send out a reminder email; in that email, we’ll tell them we’ll call in a couple of weeks if we haven’t heard from them. The new system will save us so much money and is more secure. Our IT company investigated it, and they verified it’s more secure than Shelby.

\*Horizon Texas Conference (6:38)

* Chris Hayes – As a point of information, we have historically been Central Texas Conference; we are merging with North Texas & Northwest Texas Conference into the Horizon Texas Conference. All three have voted at their own Annual Conference to unify. Saturday is the official unification conference that goes into effect on January 1. This is happening because we need to be more efficient. We couldn’t continue as those Legacy Conferences and ask churches to pay as much as they are, so they decided to combine. For us locally, it’s not changing a lot. Apportionments will go down; we’re reducing the budget for the new conference by about 48%. That needed to be done because we couldn’t reach them previously, and with disaffiliation, we lost many paying churches. For 2025, the Committee on Finance and Admin has proposed that all churches in conf. Get at least a 3% cut on apportionments and no more than 10% (we should receive about a 10% cut). Apportionments will now be calculated by a decimal percentage of how much we receive in giving instead of how much on a 3-year average we spend on ourselves.

\*Stewardship Campaign (6:46)

* Chris Hayes explained that if we can’t count on revenue increasing in 2025, we will have to go in and see what more we could cut from the budget. We are already about as bare bones as possible to continue doing, including pay cuts for some staff members. Stewardship is even more critical than usual this year. It kicks off on October 27 through the Sermon Series, Connects to God’s Generosity (5 weeks). Thank you to Jacki Reininga for putting together the campaign for this year.
	+ If Chris or someone asks you to share your story about your stewardship, *please share it*. It has a more significant impact coming from members that people need to hear scripture and sermons.
	+ We can ask people to pledge or give as much as we can, but it’s also much more effective if people hear it in small groups, from their peers, focused communication.
* Holly Maxwell shared with the group that we are called to lead by example as Church Council members, so she would love to see 100% of the council pledge.
* Molly Hayes – The QR code will not look right until October 1.

\*Other Announcements/Next Meeting (6:57)

* A New Bible Study with Kay starts October 1. It will begin with a book by Amberly Neese at 2 p.m. in person and 7 p.m. Zoom only.
* Special guest Rita Martin came to see what’s happening at the church.
* We’re hosting the East District Charge Conference on November 3 at 4:30 p.m. and might need greeters or hospitality.
* We always need greeters, so feel free to sign up!
	+ Chris mentioned that we continue to receive thanks for our welcoming and warm environment. This past Sunday, someone said he could tell we care about people, even visitors.
* The next Congo Convo is December 8 at 10 a.m.
* The next Church Council meeting is December 10 at 6 p.m.

\*Closing Prayer – Kay at 7:01

Sang Happy Birthday to Rita Martin

Meeting dismissed at 7:02