Church Council Planning Day

January 27, 2024, 9 am – 2 pm

Minutes

***Connect…***

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| Holly Hattendorf | Chris Hayes | Shawn Dickler | Jacki Reininga | Loni Fancher |
| Betty Dalton | N. Michelle Clark | Michelle Clark | Betsy Spencer | Molly Hayes |
| Johnnie Sue Bucek | Kim Crawford | Tim Graves | John Knapp | Annie Gray |
| Kay Lancaster | Cathy Olson | Kirby Warren | Betsi Goode | Edward Castillo |
| Rich Crosier | Kim Hetherington | Rob Franz | Luke Morton | Jo Anna Cardoza |
| Mary Lobban | Taylor Jackson |  |  |  |

1. Welcome/Introduction – Holly Hattendorf, church council chair, opened the meeting at 9:16 a.m.
2. Devotion & Prayer – Rev. Madison Boboltz shared an Acts 2 excerpt from *The Peace Table*.
3. Rev. Chris Hayes provided an overview of the structure and purpose of the various committees.
4. Celebration of Loving God & Neighbor in 2023 (Ministry Area Reports)
	1. Congregational Care – Rev. Michelle Clark reported that the Care Team and Ministry has blossomed and grown exponentially in the past year. The focus has been training people to go out and make connections, pray for those on the prayer list, and make and send cards and food. Some Sunday School classes have gotten really involved and have created a well-organized system; one class has 4 “care coordinators” that connect with people and then report back to the clergy. This ministry has even spread into our unsheltered initiative and the connections we’re making there.
	2. Congregational Connections & Community Connections – Rev. Molly Hayes reported that we had 8 First Steps classes throughout the year, at which a total of 68 new members joined the church. We have partnered with AISD to be the sole host of their ESL & GED classes, which now take place Monday-Thursday, morning & evening. We opened our building to Taste Community Kitchen, which is a pay-what-you-can restaurant based in Fort Worth, with a second location coming to Arlington (near the jail); they had a plate painting project and a menu tasting here to raise awareness and help attract volunteers.
		1. There is some overlap between congregational and community connections, especially with our connection to Cloud Covered Streets; since September, we have had just over 100 people come to use the showers. 2 weeks ago, during the freezing weather, we opened the Scout Hut and had about 6-7 unsheltered friends and our volunteers.
		2. Our goal is to be the organizational hub for all the different organizations that work with our unsheltered friends. We have provided pastoral care to some of the executive directors of these organizations. We are trying to figure out how we can provide training for our volunteers, especially around mental health.
		3. Our school partnerships are continuing to grow and thrive. We were part of the Resource Fair at Thornton on 1/25. We donated pre-school blankets in December, our Hearts & Hands ministry made worry worms for each school. Our year-round angel team is going very well; we have been able to provide school supplies and even support for a family at Lamar who lost everything in a fire.
		4. Jo Anna Cardoza asked how we can add other schools to those we’re already helping; Molly responded by saying funds are the primary issue, but that she has spoken to other UMC Arlington churches who want to imitate what we are doing with schools that are closer to them. Betsy suggested going to the Arlington Council of PTAs in the meantime.
	3. Family Connections – Betsy Spencer detailed excellent growth in our children’s ministries area and reported on the many ongoing and upcoming activities, including Super Saturdays and Preschool Playdates which kicked off last year and have continued to thrive and flourish. We were able to send 34 campers to Glen Lake camp last year, and we paid for half or all their camp fees thanks to the fundraisers we provided. We have made an effort to educate our students of all age groups on the struggles and realities of our unsheltered neighbors, and how we can help through studies and mission projects.
	4. Adult Connections – Rev. Kay Lancaster discussed that Rev. Madison Boboltz has done a lot with our young adults’ ministry and re-vamped that connection by starting the Liturgy Sunday school class. Kay is wrapping up her Bible 365 study, and some Sunday School classes are not far behind. Our special needs ministry is continuing to thrive through Amazing Grace, First Friday (new participants and volunteers), Troop 517, and our Green Oaks cleaning outreach program. She also mentioned opportunities for fellowship such as United Women of Faith, Away We Go, and Fellowship@First.
	5. Worship – Rev. Chris Hayes reported that worship attendance continues to increase by about 7% year over year; people feel warm and welcomed when they come in. We have an incredible foundation in place to continue growing and moving forward.
5. The group watched a video presentation from Bishop Ruben Saenz where he discussed the Conference’s 5 Priorities, which are as follows:
	1. Multiply Jesus Followers
	2. Champion Children and Youth
	3. Maximize Care and Healing
	4. Pursue and Embrace Diversity
	5. Tell Our Story
6. Video Discussion – the group then broke into smaller groups by table arrangements to discuss what they think we’re doing well and where we can improve in each of the 5 Focus Areas for 2024, and out of those which do we want to make our focus for 2024. The determined focus was two-fold, with a Tell Our Story initiative and a Maximize Care and Healing initiative.
7. Committee Reports and New Year Business
	1. PPR – chair Rob Franz reported that in 2023 PPR updated the employee handbook, the biggest change was changing maternity leave to family leave and increasing it from 2 weeks to 12 weeks. Welcomed Pastor Madison. Performed clergy evaluations at year-end.
	2. Finance – chair Kim Crawford reported that 2023 budget was on target except for us being a little under on revenue and over on expenses. We were able to end the year with some cash reserves and sent $10,000 to the Conference for our Connectional Mission Giving (apportionments). While we did grow in the number of pledges received, we only collected 90%, compared to our normal 95-98%. The 2024 church budget was presented to the church council, Holly Hattendorf moved to approve the budget, John Knapp approved the motion, and the motion was seconded by Betty Dalton. The motion passed unanimously.
	3. Trustees – Kirby Warren moved for Betty Dalton to be elected chair, Johnnie Sue Bucek seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
		1. Facilities Endowment fund committee election of officers. Molly moves to elect the church facilities team as presented, Cathy Olson approved the motion and John Knapp seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.
		2. Jo Anna Cardoza asked if it was possible to add more handicapped spots Chris responded by saying we will look at how many spots we have and if we can add more, as well as adding designated guest parking spots.
		3. Chris said the congregation will not follow or take initiative unless we first lead by example, by parking farther out on Sunday mornings.
8. Communion and Benediction for all, with the meeting adjourned at 1:19 pm.