

## **First United Methodist Church**

### **Governance Board Meeting – March 28, 2022**

Present: Duane Carlisle, Reid Hochstedler, Perry, Brown, Anna Clark, Mike Johnson. Craig Dobbins, Larry Huggins. Lola Huggins, Tim Delworth, Alamanda Rowe, Kathleen Abrahamson, John, Norberg, Lauren Hall, Bill Walker, Jan Beaty, Jim Beaty, Jessica Hinman, Dave Downey

#### **1. Pastors Report**

Pastors are looking forward with faith and hope. Many transitions have happened during the past two years and there are additional transitions in the works. Lauren's last day as a First Church pastor will be April 30. There will be a Ministerial Intern joining us over summer to assist with some of the things Lauren has been leading. Haewon Yang will also be leaving soon. Various individuals will be assisting with the music ministry as a more permanent plan is developed.

#### **2. Safe Sanctuary Policy**

The church is a place that provides high access to children and youth. While background checks are made of volunteers and VNS staff, we need to ask ourselves what else we can do to make things more secure. During the discussion it was pointed out that in addition to considering harassment, it was important to consider the possibility of a shooter. An ad-hoc committee of Anna Clark, Tim Delworth, Mike Johnson, Reid Hochstedler, Perry Brown, Lauren Hall, and Duane Carlisle were tasked with providing the GB with policy suggestions.

#### **3. Trustees**

Repairs to the sidewalk near the kitchen were attempted, but the quote for repairs was close to \$3,000. The concrete was ground down and a rubber mat was placed over the crack to make it smoother. This has not solved the sidewalk problem and further investigation is being done.

Updating the Wi-Fi network has begun

Office furnace has been repaired

Ongoing issues with Sanctuary AC are being addressed.

#### **4. Communications Ministry**

Over the last several months the Church has been working with Smallbox, a company that helps mission-driven organizations focus on strategy and branding. The goals of the collaboration with Smallbox is to better

- a. Communicate to the current congregation our story: what we do and what we stand for.

- b. For our local community to think, “First Church is a place where exciting things are happening.”
- c. Attract those who are searching – as well as those who may have written organized religion off.
- d. Showcase the vibrancy and life within the church.
- e. Create an abundance mentality – if we do this, more people will attend and we can grow.

A survey of 387 people that had some past or current connection to FUMC was conducted. Results include:

- a. 100 responses (62 complete; 38 partial)
  - i. 87% are aged 50+
  - ii. 12 responses had children under 18 living at home
  - iii. 57% are weekly attenders, 25% no longer attend regularly
  - iv. 66% of respondents are currently involved beyond just attending. 21% are interested or unable to participate.
  - v. How are people involved? (Choir, Small Groups, Volunteering, etc.)
- b. Where can we focus our efforts? (Children/Youth/Family ministries, Community involvement, Connection)
- c. How do you get information about the church? (Email, Website, In-person/Virtual gathering)
- d. What makes FUMC unique? (People, music, location)
- e. What excites you about FUMC? (Opportunity)
- f. How can FUMC better serve the congregation? (Get organized, Develop Connections, More programming)
- g. Why did you join FUMC? (Church, music, programming)
- h. What keeps you coming back? (People, church, friends)
- i. Three words about FUMC (Friendly, caring, music)

Thank you to everyone who participated in this work. Many people shared – during the challenges of the pandemic – and the input was invaluable.

Overall themes that emerged from survey and focus groups:

- **First Church is welcoming & progressive** – respondents strive to be known for LGBTQ+ acceptance and public stances on social justice issues.
- **First Church must take a stand** – respondents want the church to clearly communicate who we are and what we stand for.
- **First Church balances lightness & heaviness** – respondents overwhelmingly love and value the welcoming feel and the congregation’s ability to critically consider deep issues.

- **First Church is deeply relational** – the connections formed over years (and decades!) are a key part of defining who we are collectively.
- **First Church must invest in attracting young families** – respondents view now as a crucial time to build towards the future.
- **First Church must continue to value and enrich existing members** – some respondents feel disconnected after two years of COVID/remote services.

Based on the survey and group meetings a foundational statement and three key message statements have been drafted.

### **Foundational Statement**

At First United Methodist Church West Lafayette, we embrace and celebrate the complexities of our faith, our world, and each other. Together we pursue knowledge and understanding in our journey as Christians. We strive to make the world a better place through service and social action. And, we nurture each other's true selves as we collectively build a community of inclusive Christianity. As a Reconciling Congregation, we joyfully and unconditionally welcome and care for all in our Church family and beyond.

### **Key Message 1 -Our Faith**

Together we pursue knowledge and understanding in our journey as Christians. Through respectful dialogue, communal worship, vibrant youth and music programs, and enriching adult programs, we encourage each other as we explore our faith and enrich our understanding of the word of God.

### **Key Message 2 -Our World**

We strive to make the world a better place through service and social action. Our faith is put in action by caring for others and for our environment. From working to overcome food insecurity in our community to joining mission trips throughout the world, we believe it is our responsibility to serve others. At First Church, we are champions of economic and social rights for all, and we are passionately committed to diversity, equity, and inclusivity in our faith and actions.

### **Key Message 3 -Each Other**

We nurture each other's true selves as we collectively build a community of inclusive Christianity. Belonging to the First Church family doesn't mean we act the same or think the same, it means that we foster community by celebrating individuality. No matter age, race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, or ability, we believe each person is a reflection of our Creator.

5. There was a discussion about the importance of helping people make connections. We were reminded again that we should take advantage of the connections we all have by asking an acquaintance to attend a service. We could plant a yard sign in our front yard Identifying First Church as the place to be, and other things. The suggested topics would easily fit in the Welcome and Connections Ministry. Several people expressed a willingness to provide limited assistance in this area. They included Jim Beatty, Jan Beatty, Amanda Rowe, Tim Delworth, and John Norberg. A leader for the group was not identified.
6. It was suggested audio from a service be piped too other areas of the church. (Personal note: I think getting audio of the service to the childcare area done years ago.)

The meeting was adjourned with at prayer.