

New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church
 Council Meeting Minutes
 June 30, 2009

A Council meeting was held on Tuesday, June 30, 2009. The following were in attendance: Reverend Sharon Lee, Council Chairperson Donna Smith, Bobbie Lawrence, Amy Collins, Mary Roberts, Steve Roberts, Dan Teague, Lois McGee, Charlotte Collins, Jerold Teague, Sharon Wagoner, Ollie Taylor, Jim Taylor, Ann Shipley, Janet Glascoe, Deanna Brown, Renee Taylor, Eddie Cooley, Terri Cooley, Jewel Amos, Barbara Ruark and Elaine Teague.

Chairperson Donna Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting stating the purpose is to review recommendation for a stewardship campaign and turned the meeting over to Reverend Sharon Lee. Sharon read from a book – *Giving Christians* - emphasizing stewardship is more than giving money. Sharon referenced a board that contained the following and pointed out that tithing is only referenced one time:

Spiritual Gifts	Blessings	Fruit We Bear
Gifts of:	Graces of:	Fruit of Spirit:
Hospitality	Fellowship	Love
Evangelism	Sabbath	Joy
Helps	Worship	Peace
Mercy	Communion	Patience
Administration	Tithe	Kindness
Leadership		Generosity
and others		Faithfulness
		Gentleness
		Self-control

Sharon added that a faithful steward has all and commented that sermons are planned for each. Following the reading in the book of a writing by Peter Marshall, Sharon noted the saying “it is more blessed to give than receive” and if we missed the messages then we’re lost on what stewardship is all about. Sharon further pointed out that there are over 2000 references about giving in scripture. She stressed the importance of having an open mind and heart for transformation; we have to be right with it in order to make decision for the congregation. She asked that if anyone is not right in their own heart, to abstain from voting, and we can work together to get it right. Sharon stated she is willing to meet us where we are, but not willing to stay there. She further stated that this is our decision; she can’t make us do anything nor can she do it all. It was pointed out that God gave us resources – we own nothing – this is not *our* church, but rather *God’s* church. Sharon stated our church has great opportunity and that many have been in prayer and that many within the conference are praying for our church tonight.

At this time, Donna Smith called for approval of the minutes from the May 21, 2009 meeting. Donna reviewed the decision that had been made to send the minutes out electronically to get information closer to meeting dates. Donna also reminded the group that copies of the minutes are maintained in the church office. There were no additions or corrections to the minutes and they were approved.

At this point, Donna reminded the group they had approved at Charge Conference to have a stewardship campaign. Donna pointed out that we are changing little by little, but changing. She covered the VBS held last week and the time together serving on committees never thought possible and further added that we are blessed to have Sharon lead us in this transformation. She reminded the group that Sharon had been charged by the group to determine what type of stewardship campaign would work best for our size church and make recommendation. The recommendation is Adam Hamilton's new stewardship book: *Enough, Discovering Joy Through Simplicity and Generosity*. Donna stressed that this must be a church-wide mission – not just a few. She again stated and stressed that this endeavor is not just about fixing the budget. At this point she shared a humorous story told to her by an elderly gentlemen stating that years ago the plate was passed throughout congregation to obtain the pastor's salary and if they did not receive enough the first time, the plate was passed again!

Donna requested everyone to review the correspondence that Pastor Sharon had sent out over the past several weeks regarding the recommended campaign and asked everyone to write down questions. (Copies were available to those who did not have the communication and time was allotted for jotting down questions.)

At this point, Donna and Sharon grouped the questions received, and discussion took place. A question arose on how will "*Enough*" be presented and who will teach. It was pointed out that "*Enough*" is structured to have all of the church involved – similar to the 3:16 study and we must determine if that worked and it was noted that many are capable of teaching. There was a great deal of discussion at this time regarding how people reacted to the 3:16 study.

It was further pointed out that we must communicate how to pay for the books as this was not well received by some who participated in the 3:16 study. There need be only one book per household; no workbook and the cost is approximately \$8.00. Discussion continued on how to reach the masses. In so far as time involved, Sharon noted that the videos are 15 – 20 minutes and would probably need an hour to present.

Jewel Amos asked to address the group. She stated she had ordered the book and wanted to go on record that she loves the little book. She further stated that the book does not beat you over the head – it's just a wonderful book that talks about inner needs and contentment. Jewel praised the book noting that she would have purchased had this not been a recommended study. She feels we will get a blessing out of the book/study.

There continued to be discussion on how to handle the study and campaign with greater discussion centered on pledge cards and the suggested letters at various levels based upon attendance/giving. At this time, Elaine Teague stated that it appears with so much discussion spent on giving, pledge cards, and levels of giving, etc., that we're missing the broader point of stewardship and since the material referenced the program could be tailored to meet need, perhaps it would be more beneficial to start out in phases – first to commence with the study and sermons and at a later time the pledges to follow. She also stated that with current economic situation and a number of people out of work or working fewer hours, this may not be the best time for contacting for pledge commitment. She further stated that if we start out with the study perhaps we will be better equipped to address the financial aspect of the campaign. She stressed this would be in steps leading up to the pledge campaign adding that we have to be willing to change.

A majority of the group expressed interest in this approach and discussion took place including the fact that a letter could still be sent to inactives making them aware of our “*Enough*” study, while inviting back, etc.

At this time Mary Roberts made a motion to implement the “*Enough*” study – which would be four weeks and during Sunday school, have the sermons on stewardship, and also have a sign-up to pay for material. (Note: Sharon Lee had stated we need a plan in place to pay for material as she and Keith are having to pay out-of-pocket for items that should be paid by the church but are not being reimbursed due to current budget situation.) Ollie Taylor made a second to the motion.

14 voting members approved. (It should be noted this was majority of voting Council members.)

Donna stated we will prepare for the next phase and get back together and to keep open hearts and minds. Sharon added that the month of October has four Sundays with no conflicts in so far as events, etc.

At this time Donna had closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

Elaine Teague, Recording Secretary