

New Mt. Vernon United Methodist Church
Council Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2009

A Council meeting was held Sunday, September 13, 2009. The following were in attendance: Chairperson Donna Smith; G. R. Hawks; Dan Teague; Ralph Amos; Jewel Amos; Mary Roberts; Ollie Taylor; Jim Taylor; Eddie Cooley; Terri Cooley; Alice Gadd; Edsel Ruiz; Amy Collins; Renee Taylor; Janet Glascoe; Deanna Brown; Xenia Ferris; Paul Ferris; Barbara Ruark; and Elaine Teague.

Chairperson Donna Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting and in the absence of Reverend Sharon Lee she commenced with devotions entitled *God's Faithfulness* and then followed with prayer.

Agenda items for the meeting as distributed prior to the meeting is attached to and made a part of these minutes. (Addendum I)

Elaine Teague called for additions or corrections to the minutes of the June 30, 2009 meeting as previously distributed adding she had a copy available in the event anyone had a need to review. Being no additions or corrections, Donna called for approval. 13 approved (majority).

At this point, Donna stated there had been questions/discussion regarding the status of the proposed stewardship study based upon "*Enough*" and informed the group that it was her understanding that until others come forward to assist the study is on hold.

Donna stated the primary purpose of the meeting is to review proposed budget for 2010 as well as Charge Conference related items. She pointed out several meetings had been held to discuss the budget and informed the group that we are currently not meeting budget obligations. Donna further stated, in so far as 2010, there have been a few cuts and referred everyone to the Proposed 2010 Budget page included in the handout material. (Addendum II) Additionally, Donna pointed out that we started the current year in a deficit. She also discussed the need to pay our apportionment noting that is the first thing covered in the Book of Discipline and she wanted all to know that the amount is based on the finances of the church and not based upon membership which has been a misconception. It should be noted that as the finances of the church have come down so has the amount of apportionment. Donna stated that while the current financial stats as noted in the bulletin (9/13/09) look much better we will probably have to "dig deeper" before year-end.

Donna reviewed the definition of "In-Kind Gifts" and referenced the amount as of 8/31/2009. The amount was reported by Jerold Teague as the number of persons and the dollar amount of the gift. She also particularly noted the amount of \$1,812 which represents an amount that Pastor Sharon and her spouse Keith are not asking for reimbursement. Elaine Teague added that it should be noted total amount would only include information as reported to Jerold and feels confident he does not receive all information.

Donna reviewed the "Special Designated Funds" that are included as information only and noted the funds are not a part of the general budget.

She again stated the need to step up in the required giving. Donna stated she realizes not everyone was receptive to letters going out, etc., but really asks everyone to be in prayer about the responsibility of tithing as God calls us to give back. At this point, she turned the meeting over to Mary Roberts.

Mary stated the proposed budget information is for the most part self-explanatory and asked if any questions or areas that needed clarification. She also added that the proposed budget had been thoroughly reviewed and can think of no other areas to cut back.

Deanna Brown asked if amounts spent for areas such as church cleaning and yard maintenance could be cut as she recalled time past when different families volunteered to clean as well as yard mowing. Mary stated the only problem would be getting enough commitment from folks to handle and that could possibly be looked at next year prior to setting budget, but it is too late for getting arranged now due to Charge Conference in only a few weeks.

Elaine Teague at this point did mention that in her opinion that while we are approving the amounts set forth in the proposed budget, we could still look at ways to cut expenses – particularly in the event we should commence the year in a deficit situation in so far as expenses versus weekly giving. She stated she felt we should operate under contingency plan if that should be the case and gave the example of cutting back on electricity/fuel cost further stating that she often gets very warm in the choir robe along with other choir members. So often when that occurs, Lois will lower the thermostat. If we're not meeting our financial obligation, it may be that we wear less - already wearing sleeveless garments - in the summer months and bring additional wrap for the colder months. She gave this as an example only to show that if we cannot pay our bills or our minister, we must somehow cut back and it should be at the very moment we begin to be under our weekly budget giving and further pointed out the congregation needed to be made aware. She continued with saying that we continue to “rob Peter to pay Paul” and at some point that will catch us. Donna Smith then added we should be mindful of our spending on electricity and in other areas as well.

Dan Teague stated we must keep the church members informed of our financial situation. He pointed out that he had heard some members would not attend this meeting since they were considered “non-voting”, but this is a means of keeping folks informed and the fact that they would not attend meeting is an indication of why they are not informed. He further stated that he has learned a great deal in the recent weeks regarding our finances and feels confident that a lot in the room tonight and other church members do not know as well. Dan stated it may come to a point we have to cut back on things such as electricity as Elaine mentioned and pointed out he can remember – as he knows others can as well – when we did not have air conditioning. He further stated that he realizes some folks are on fixed incomes as well as others – himself included – have not had pay increases or working reduced schedules and have had to cut back, but we still must meet our commitment to the church as God has called us to. Dan also stated some folks feel if they have participated in a fund raiser or contribute “in-kind” that they have done their part and consider that their gift to the church – which is wonderful, but has absolutely zero to do with tithing.

Donna Smith then pointed out that the budget does contain items for which we have no control, e.g. pension expense.

As the budget continued to be reviewed, Eddie Cooley asked how long it had been since we looked at getting quotes for grounds maintenance to which Dan Teague responded that the question had already come up in an SPR meeting and it was his understanding that was currently being looked into.

Deanna Brown informed the group she had discussed the amount budgeted for insurance on the property with James Wright. James informed her that is in Kermit McGee's area of responsibility and would pass along to Kermit.

Being no further questions or discussion, Eddie Cooley made a motion to approve the proposed budget for 2010 and the motion was seconded by Ollie Taylor. 16 approved (majority).

In so far as the Church Council report for Charge Conference, Donna reported she prepared the following for submission:

1. *Started new program for our elementary age kids called "Kidzone Live." This program will be available all during the school year on Sunday afternoons. We now have in place a program for all of our kids ages 3 thru high school in addition to Sunday school for these ages.*
2. *Completed a church-wide study of Max Lucado's book, John 3:16 The Numbers of Hope during the Lenten season. Followed by a beautiful cantata from the choir with the same message.*
3. *The Kid's Design Team had a special Sunday morning program and brunch with a specially made video to honor or in memory of our parents in the congregation.*
4. *Completed the Disciple Bible study "Christian Believer, Knowing God with Heart and Mind." For the first time, this was offered on Wednesday morning and night so that more people could participate.*
5. *Started our Seed 'n Feed project with our potato patch. They were harvested in July with the potatoes going to the Pastor's Pantry. As cherries and grapes became ripe, they were picked and delivered to the Pastor's Pantry also. Our youth group planted a pumpkin patch. They now have lots of pumpkins to be harvested in late October with all the money that is collected to be used to purchase a goat for a young boy and his family in Africa.*
6. *In July, our choir presented a beautiful cantata in honor and memory of all veterans. Special military flags were purchased and presented to the church.*
7. *For the first time, six of our children and three adults attended the Children's Retreat in Denton.*
8. *Record number of leaders (9) in our church participated in District Leadership Conference.*
9. *Staff-Parish wrote a covenant for their committee and compiled a ministry description for all leadership areas in the church.*
10. *We have participated in many missions this year such as: trips to Mississippi with Disaster Relief teams; donated money from Vacation Bible School to the Rosenberg Library in Galveston, Texas; one mission trip with Keith Lee to Guatemala; youth went to Mt. Shepard on a working retreat; small group sponsored Shrove Tuesday with a pancake supper and entertainment with proceeds going to "Nothing But Net"; and we have received money from the church for every designated conference mission.*

She then asked the group for additional accomplishments and the following were noted: *Trunk or Treat church-wide; members went to Mooresville Response Center to pack flood buckets; scavenger hunt for Thanksgiving and Super Bowl of Caring for Pastor's Pantry; Big Brother/Big Sisters Bowling; Brother Can You Spare a Dime - \$156; Invisible Children; packed grain bag at Spiritus for 12,000 – 150 in group packed; served meals at family shelter – Crisis Ministry; Pennies from Heaven – Crisis Ministry; UMW and church-wide Shoebox ministry; Angel Tree – Pastor's Pantry.*

At this time goals for New Mt. Vernon in connection with “The Power of 3 for WNCC” were discussed. (Addendum III) With current church membership at 228, the vision goal set for May 31, 2010 was set at **9** to total **237** and the vision goal by December 31, 2010 was set at an additional **3** for a total of **240**.

Worship attendance goals were discussed and questions arose regarding the current average attendance set at 91. Donna will get clarification of this number. Assuming the 91 average is an accurate figure, the group agreed to set the vision goal by May 31 2010 at **95** and the vision goal by December 31, 2010 was set at **100**.

In so far as mission teams, the vision goal number during 2010 was set at **3** (the same as 2009).

Commitment of extending the Gospel and Kingdom of God in the world required check marks for prayers and financial support and the group wanted to add the continued support of Missionary Nicola Applebe in Russia.

Donna then stated there are a few leadership positions for 2010 that need to be in place by Charge Conference which is September 27th. (Addendum IV) Those positions are SPR Chair and Lay Leader. It was also noted that Xenia Ferris has accepted the Finance Chair position and is coming off the SPR committee. Terri Cooley was nominated and she accepted to go on SPR committee as replacement for Xenia. Dan Teague was nominated to serve as SPR Chair and he declined.

At this point, discussion took place regarding term of SPR Chair which needs clarification. The group agreed that no person incoming to the committee for the first time should be chairperson. Following further discussion, no SPR Chair was identified.

Elaine Teague was nominated for Lay Leader position and she declined due to not knowing full responsibility of position. Paul Ferris nominated and he will consider and advise.

Donna then asked the group if there was further discussions in so far as Charge Conference. Being none, Jim Taylor made a motion for adjournment. Donna requested signatures of Council members for a form required for Charge Conference and the meeting was adjourned.

Elaine Teague, Recording Secretary

