



**Leadership Board
Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2023
7-9pm**

Location: DSM Room

Board Members Present: Brittane Lucas, Kristy Harrison, Lori Sedlak, Veronica Runyan, Jill Easterling, Garrick Barnett, Susan Boddy, Ben Murray, and Dale Gold

Board Members Absent: None

Others Present: Margaret Brandt

Pastors Present: Tom Parkinson, Bud Fickley

Call to Order and Approval of Minutes: Brittane Lucas called the meeting to order and offered a prayer. Meeting minutes from January 16, 2023, were approved. Motion made by Dale Gold and seconded by Jill Easterling. Motion carried, with unanimous consent.

Report of the Senior Pastor:

Pastor Tom expressed his gratitude to the board for all serving the church so faithfully.

Ministry Highlights from Q1 2023:

- The Men's retreat had the largest attendance in its history.
- Graceful and Grateful hosted their first women's retreat.
- The Lenten Dinner series is off to a great start. Attendance has been very strong.
- Pre-school appreciation Sunday was a success. Two preschool parents attended church for the first time on that Sunday and came to Discover Dutilh.
- Attendance has seen a 7% increase from last year with 15% of attendance being online.

Pastor Tom also reported on several new ministry Initiatives:

- Sarah Hogue is coordinating two new short-term small groups: a divorce care group for women and zoom Bible study based on *The Chosen*.

- Matt Cosgrove and Pastor Tom are working on developing two short term video studies on *How to Read the Bible* and *How to have a Prayer Life*. These videos will be designed for individual use and small group use.
- Margaret Brandt has been coordinating congregational care with a few volunteer visitors. More volunteers are needed.
- Matt Cosgrove and Beth Gavaghan have soft launched our “Dutilh Sermons” podcast. Public promotion will begin after Easter. A second podcast, “Your Story Matters Here,” will feature interviews with Dutilh members and community members about current church and community initiatives. The podcast will launch later this year.
- Pre-school enrollment is already at 80% total enrollment, which is 30% higher than this time last year. The 3-year-old program is at capacity with a waiting list.

Pastor Tom also provided an update on the United Methodist Church:

- About 1/3 of congregations in Western PA conference are disaffiliating.
- In 2024, the General Conference will meet and will consider some proposals for changing the Discipline on matters related to LGBT marriage and ordination.
- The Leadership Board believes that it is best for Dutilh Church to remain focused on our mission, and to not get distracted and drag the congregation into a denominational discord when we do not yet know what the General Conference will or will not do.
- The Board will develop a communication for the congregation that describes the Board’s position of waiting until 2024. This is in response to the fact that there is an increase in the number of church members asking questions about the UMC.

Area Reports:

Financial Update:

- Garrick Barnett reviewed the February 2023 Financial Reports. Offering income through the end of February is down 2.5% from last year.
- Garrick also reviewed the Income Statement, where the facilities costs were over budget because of HVAC repairs, and high gas costs.
- Garrick reported on the 2022 Audit Report. Once a year our financials get audited by volunteers in the church with an accounting or finance background. The audit was completed and there were no findings. Garrick is exploring whether the church needs to conduct a professional audit in the future.

Personnel Report:

- Dale Gold reported that we have hired Beth Freiss as the Director of Facilities and Administration and she has accepted. Beth will start on April 3, 2023.
- A cleaning service, Cover All, has been contracted to clean the preschool. This is in lieu of hiring a second part-time custodian, as we have no applicants.
- The board convened in closed session to receive an update on Preschool Staffing. As a result of the closed session the Board unanimously adopted a revised budget for the Preschool for the 2023/2024 school year. The revised budget includes \$118,531 in projected income and \$115,169 in budgeted expenses.

Property Report:

- Jill Easterling reviewed the items that have been completed. These include, parking lot lights, patching the ceiling in the balcony from the leak, and electrical work in the kitchen. The ceiling work in the balcony and the boiler repair were covered by insurance.
- Jill is putting together a list for Beth when she starts including HVAC, flashing, brick repointing, and parking lot restriping.
- Beth Gavaghan has put together a bid for a new sign to replace our current sign on route 19. This bid gives an idea of different dimensions and design options. The Board agrees with the desire to have a more visible sign but felt that the design of the sign and the price are not the proper solution.

Fundraising Policy: Barbie Battaglia and Pastor Tom developed a policy surrounding fundraising. The wording in the policy reflects what we are currently practicing. Brittaney made a motion to approve the new fundraising policy. Lori Sedlak seconded the motion. The motion was approved with unanimous consent.

Pastor Tom mentioned that TNC has asked for additional funds for their sixth clinic. Sarah Hogue has offered that VBS fundraising can go to the new clinic, as well as some endowment funds that have yet to be assigned. The congregation will be informed of the opportunity to support this project in conjunction with the VBS offering in June.

Strategic Planning: Pastor Tom reviewed the strategic planning process. The feedback from the staff was that we are looking for the Leadership Board to look into the future 5 years. There was some discussion about the churches desire to grow being hampered by an occasional “small church mentality.” Because the meeting was running long, Pastor Tom proposed that the Leadership Board meet in April to discuss Strategic Planning in more detail. A separate planning session will be scheduled.

Closing and Adjournment:

Pastor Bud offered a closing blessing.

The next meeting is scheduled for May 15, 2023, at 7pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Boddy
Board Secretary