

## Leadership Board

**May 13, 2025**

Present: Ray Stankiewicz, Dawn Goellner, Heather Hay, Mary Hoey, Todd Hubbard, Kasie Cousino, Nolan Peterson, Rick Fitzgerald, Jeff Melvin, Joy Barrett

Guests: 1

Todd (serving as the chairperson in Mike's absence) called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

Rick offered an opening prayer from *First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament* and led the Spiritual Formation time. The topic was "how do we contextualize scripture?" Rick shared this clip from an episode of *West Wing*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CPjWd4MUXs>

When reading the Bible, it is so important to see things in context; book recommendation: *Context*, by Josh Scott, a UMC pastor in Nashville.

The Bible is a library, not ONE book. The writings of the Bible arose from a particular land, history, culture, the time they were in, the people that shaped them. All of this is to be considered when reading and seeking to understand the Bible today. Various writers had different perspectives. This library we call the Bible came primarily from marginalized communities...how inappropriate that we use it today to further marginalize people.

Scott identified three common mistakes in reading the Bible: "Ransom notes"; "Magic 8 Ball" (the Bible is not an answer book; instead it asks more questions); "Assumption" (when we assume we know what something means, we do so at our own peril). Example: I Cor. 13 ... Paul's instructions are not for individuals, but for communities and how they relate to and care for one another. When the words and context are put back together, we gain a much deeper meaning of the Bible.

## Leadership Development led by Heather Hay

Topic: Developmental Stages of Christian Discipleship

Two great resources from our denomination:

<https://www.seeallthepeople.org>

[www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)

Heather shared several examples of Discipleship Systems; there are 5 handouts in the Leadership Board Shared Drive folder "*Leadership Board-related Documents*." These are very helpful as they provide visuals for understanding what we mean by lifelong faith formation and the many pathways of nurturing mature disciples of Christ. We looked specifically at the Discipleship System Sample (adapted from the work of Phil Maynard)

## Review of New People

We had six local first time guest households present for Easter Sunday who signed in; Kasie is

willing to reach out to them; Joy will provide contact information. Also two new households that have attended 2 and 3 times.

### **Goal Review and Accountability**

1. Director of Lifelong Faith Formation (Susan Adam-Rita) has been hired and will begin in this new role June 1. (this goal is accomplished)
2. Guiding Principles – are ready and on the agenda for approval in this meeting
3. Implementing SAS model: two additional town hall sessions are scheduled for 2025; on-going conversations with the Standing Teams – to determine how they and the Leadership Board work together and channels for clear and important communications both ways.
4. Hospitality:  
recent collaboration with Tammy Melvin and 11 other UMC congregations to place an ad (affirmation and welcome statement) in the June issue of the *PrideSource Magazine* of SE Michigan.  
Quote from the Monday evening parent group: “Not only are you welcomed here; you are wanted here.” Our goal is to do our part, individually and collectively, so that every person is seen, valued and included.  
Heather has agreed to be one of the Leadership Board members to the newly forming Hospitality Leadership Team. Joy welcomes suggestions of persons to serve on this leadership team; . Will begin recruiting in June.

### **Packet and Consent Calendar Items**

March Financial report; April Minutes: Approved without question

### **Strategic and Generative Items**

Guiding Principles are presented for approval. Kasie expressed her appreciation for the comments; much of the work in the past 60 days has been with the Standing Teams. Remember, this is a living document, so edits may continue to happen as needed. Kasie also recommends that both the Vision and Mission Statements and the Strategic Plan be reviewed annually. Motion to approve – Todd; Second – Heather; **Approved unanimously**

### **Director of Lifelong Faith Formation**, including new position approval

Joy brought a request from the Personnel Team to approve the creation of a PT program assistant to work directly with the Director; 8-10 hours per week; no additional funding is needed; the 2025 budget will accommodate the financial needs for this role.

**Motion** to create a new Program Assistant position, up to 10 hours per week, to support the Lifelong Faith Formation director and ministry.

Motion made by Kasie; seconded by Mary; **Approved**

Note: Since this is the first time the LB is receiving requests for action from a Standing Team, this is a learning opportunity for the LB members. After discussion, here are the recommendations for future requests of this nature: New items requiring action by the LB must be submitted in writing prior to the meeting. The request for action must include 1) the specific request; 2) and rationale for the request. Any relevant background, context, relevance to church goals and priorities would be helpful.

### **Pastor Transition discussion**

The Leadership Board had some initial discussion about the inevitable retirement of Pastor Joy, so there is plenty of time to begin thinking about the processes and resources that will be needed for this to be a healthy, positive transition. Joy explained how the pastor appointment process works in The United Methodist Church and the importance of the information provided to the district superintendents and bishop in the annual “Profile of the Congregation” report.

Some items for future conversation: might an interim pastor for a defined time and purpose be a wise request of the bishop; salary considerations; how best to prepare the congregation for the pastoral transition.

### **Finance Team Requests – Kasie**

Two action items

The Finance Team approves the following and moves to Leadership Board for final approval:

- The disbursement of money from the income of the endowment fund to the Property Team for the parsonage kitchen renovation, in the amount of \$10,569.34.  
Motion by Kasie/seconded by Heather/**approved**
- Move \$13,000 from our current Fund Balance to the Improvement Fund, which may be spent at the discretion of the Property Team.  
Motion by Kasie/seconded by Dawn/**approved**

Background information: the parsonage kitchen renovation was raised multiple times with the Finance and Administrative Council by the Trustees in the fall of 2024, for awareness of this major project; while that information was shared, at that time no cost estimates were available nor requested. Both the Finance Team and Property Team are very supportive of this project.

### **Communication to Congregation:**

Guiding Principles (Kasie will review the document one final time, then share with Rick, so that it can be shared with the congregation)

Parsonage Kitchen Renovation

Hospitality Team

Closing Prayer... Todd

The meeting was adjourned 8:09 pm

Meeting notes are respectfully submitted by Joy Barrett

Topics for future discussion: regularity and content of reporting from the Standing Committees?