

BELMONT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD MINUTES
April 2, 2017 (Amended 5/21/17)

I. Opening prayer and Ministry Focus: Darren Wright

- Lunch was provided by the youth who provided a potato bar to raise money for their upcoming mission trips to Appalachia Service Project and Heifer Ranch.

II. Welcome & Introduction: Nancy Northington, Administrative Board Chair

- Call to order
- Minutes approved from January meeting

III. Spiritual Life Assessment Survey: Jim Strickland

The Senior Adult Ministry Council requested and received a \$1000 grant from Belmont's Trust Fund to develop a spiritual assessment survey of Belmont's adult membership in 2017. A task team was formed to develop the assessment with the guidance of Dr. Rick Gentzler from Encore Ministries. The team included:

- Jim and Starr Strickland (Co-Chairs of the Senior Adult Ministry Council)
- Louis Jordan (Chair of the Welcoming Committee)
- Heather Harriss (staff liaison with Senior Adult Ministries)
- Jefferson Furtado (Pastor of Discipleship)

The Assessment will be available to the church membership over three Sundays, April 23, 30 & May 7, 2017, in the adult Sunday school classes, in the Iris Room between 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon, and online through the Belmont UMC web-site. Copies will also be sent to each homebound member along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope for them to complete and return to the church.

The results will be compiled and reported to the Administrative Board, Ministry Council and all ministry teams. We believe the results will help us determine the needs for our church and assist the staff members and our new senior pastor with future planning.

IV. Reconciling Ministries Network Vote: Ken Edwards

Ken expressed his gratitude for the team who coordinated and oversaw the voting process.

As a result of the vote, Ken will send a letter and a copy of our welcoming statement to notify Reconciling Ministries Network of Belmont's decision become a reconciling congregation.

Ken reaffirmed that we will continue to care about everyone. The 21% of the congregation who voted against this action continue to be important, valued and loved members of our congregation. And we will also continue to be a community committed to advocating for all those who are voiceless.

V. Advocacy Committee Update on Ecclesiastical Sanctuary: Mike Engle

Mike reviewed the work of the committee in investigating what would be involved in becoming a sanctuary congregation.

The roles of a Sanctuary congregation

- Create a sacred space of refuge for immigrant individuals and/or their families that are in immediate danger of deportation
- Have individuals and/or their families reside in our place of worship for an undetermined period of time while the community of sanctuary works on the stay of removal orders for each person residing in the space or until those individuals can safely arrive to another place of sanctuary
- Be a community of love, hospitality and fellowship for those living in our care
- Provide food, clothing, toiletries, and company to those in our care
- Publicly declare our place of worship as a sanctuary

Under federal law, “harboring” undocumented immigrants may be unlawful. The Sixth Circuit has defined “harboring” to mean acting “clandestinely.” By contrast, no one is requesting that the church, and Belmont will not engage in clandestine activities to harbor individuals but instead to provide open and notorious shelter to individuals needing sanctuary.

Under the Obama administration, there was a provision that sensitive places like hospitals, schools and churches that would not be invaded unless there was an imminent terrorist threat. However, current administration may not honor this provision.

Advocacy committee presented two recommendations for proceeding:

- Continue to develop specific and detailed plans for becoming a place of sanctuary for undocumented immigrants
- Implement other ways to assist and support undocumented immigrants in fear of deportation. This would involve supporting other local faith communities with goods and necessities and for families in sanctuary, sharing volunteers, etc.

Committee asked direction about how to proceed.

Board recommended continued study about what would be involved in becoming a sanctuary congregation as well as a list of our range of options for providing support. It was also recommended that the Trustees be asked to assess risk factors.

VI. Staff Parish Relations Committee: John Lesesne

- The Cabinet will be meeting this week for the 3rd time to finalize appointments. Expect to receive some word by end of next week and announce on our appointments on Apr 9.
- The committee met with the District Superintendent in February and provided input about what we wanted in a senior pastor and have had some additional communication with her since.
- This afternoon, the bishop will be meeting with the Staff Parish committee to address concerns.

VII. Finance Committee: John Pearce

2017 Concerns:

- Loose Offering & Pledge Collection
- “Right Size” Operating Budget
- Transition New Business Manager

- Clean up Finance records/policies
- Week Day School Integration
- This Old Building and Deferred Maintenance
- Re-negotiate SunTrust Debt

Through Feb: fall off in pledges, but hope that this will stabilize. So far, we are in line with 2015, but off from 2016.

We want to continue working on “right sizing” our operating budget. Need to continue to keep this in mind for 2018.

Nancy, Mark and Susan have been hard at work on cleaning up our financial records and are about 90% done. We have found about 50K that we didn't know we had. We underpaid our apportionments by 44K, but if we had known we had this, we would have used this money to pay it. Once this process is completed, a decision will be made about what to do with this money.

We would like to renegotiate our SunTrust loan by May or June and believe we can get a very favorable rate. This must be done by Nov 1.

Upcoming meeting dates:

- May 21
- July 16
- Sept. 17
- Charge conference (TBD)