

**METROPOLITAN MEMORIAL COOPERATIVE PARISH  
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 24, 2010**

The meeting began with a welcome and call to order by Phil Potter. The opening devotional was led by Jimmy Sherrod and Kate Murphey.

***Presentation of Proposed Outline of Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives*** (Visioning Implementation Team (VIT) – Charlie Parker, Phil Potter, Anne Mathews-Younes, Pam Settlage, John Long, Joyce Shields, Suzanne Forsyth, Ann Michel, and Ken Millian):

**Purpose and objectives to implement our vision to:** expand and re-energize our spiritual life as a discipleship community; develop a holistic structure for ministry, built around the Discipleship Adventure model adapted for the Metropolitan Parish, and including an equal emphasis on Worship, Learning, Serving, Connecting and Sharing; grow our membership, worship attendance, participation in ministries, and giving; focus on our Core and restructure our organization around a 2-campus model, integrated congregations, and 3 worship services defined principally by type – traditional, blended, contemporary – rather than separate congregations defined by location, preacher and time. The plan contemplates a single, integrated congregation. The **need for change** was discussed. That included attendance decline at the denominational and church level; the VIT presented target goals of attendance growth to move us into the statistically significant category of churches that have achieved growing congregations. The discussion also included a description of our financial challenges, specifically, the heavy reliance on the Foundation both in terms of income and principal to meet our budget. While the Foundation has grown significantly in size, our goal is to achieve having the operating budget funded primarily from congregational giving and to increase giving as well as participation. Also discussed was our lack of clear programmatic focus as a result of our yoking with St. Lukes and Wesley UMC; staff are spread too thin and focused disproportionately on worship, significant areas of the Discipleship model are under-staffed and under-resourced, and a plethora of ministries are all sustained by the same small percentage of volunteers in the congregation.

The **Goals** that were presented included: be the first church in the conference with an average worship attendance of over 1,000 within ten years (500 in three years, 750 in seven years). We had approximately 1060 attend Easter Services at Metropolitan and over 1200 at all three sites. These goals are achievable; become a diverse congregation in terms of age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status; focus more lay resources on ministry and less on administrative functions; and restructure the operating budget to reflect the Discipleship Ministries and two-campus model, and support it predominantly from tithes and offerings.

The **Proposed Structure** discussed was to: organize work and staff around the five Discipleship Ministries; provide adequate funding and support for all areas; maintain and grow pastoral care and connecting, service and evangelism; build Discipleship Model, incorporating ministry teams for Worship, Study, Congregational Care, Service, Outreach, Advocacy, Children and Youth; operate out of two campuses: Metropolitan is the primary campus which houses two existing worship services – traditional and blended – the church offices with administrative and operations staff, and clergy and ministry staff; and the St. Luke's campus houses Crossroads and a vibrant Mission Center that expands on the presence of our Homeless Ministry and Shalom Place; and other than worship, the other four Discipleship Ministries are fully integrated between the two campuses. It was noted that Wesley UMC will continue to discern their future and the Cooperative Parish will continue until another agreement is reached. Kate Murphey will continue to serve a half-time position at Metropolitan Memorial and Wesley UMC respectively.

The **Implications** that were discussed included people, finance, facilities, and operations:

**People:** John Long presented additional information on the staffing implications of the VIT model, and he provided a chart with the church organized around the five components of the discipleship model of praising, connecting, learning, serving, and sharing with administrative as the sixth area. The proposal is to have a staff coordinator in each of the 5 ministry areas (not necessarily a full time position). SPRC asked that the Church Council consider what the optimal structure would be to achieve success in each of the 5 areas without being limited by the current structure or staff. The proposed structure includes a Senior Pastor, two Associate Pastors, and an Executive Pastor or COO. Charlie Parker spends a great deal of his time in the running of the church and it may be desirable to have someone at a senior level doing this work and freeing Charlie to focus on sermons and support of the discipleship ministries. SPRC is reaching out to other congregations who have embraced the Discipleship Model to ask about their experiences. The SPRC is also reaching out to some consultants who can advise us on moving forward with a new Model. Phil emphasized that what was presented was not a final plan, but suggestions for where we want the church to be in the future. The Church Council was asked to consider how the church should operate and what the structure and resources should be for each of the proposed areas. The view at this meeting was on the long term future of our church.

**Finance:** Pam Settlage reviewed the financial implications of the proposed model, including a restructured budget (the current budget structure is very complex and difficult to understand, and we could align our budget structure with the new Discipleship Model so that we could track how much we are spending in each area); separation of the capital budget and the operating budget; investment of resources; Foundation visioning for use of funds; and establish a

sinking fund for capital repairs and replacements. Pam noted that Metropolitan Memorial has been in the habit of not investing for our growth, but spending to catch up in a reactionary mode, rather than a proactive mode. Some of the proposed programs will involve some investments beyond our current budget, and we want to invest our resources in balance with our spending resources. The VIT has agreed that when SPRC comes back with specific proposals for staffing, that will go to the Finance Committee and then the Church Council. The plan anticipates that there will be specific limits set on the investment of resources to support each program in each of the discipleship ministries. This is specifically true for staffing. If programs are not meeting the specific goals set within the timeframe established, they will be terminated. New programs will then be considered. It is expected that the June budget proposal will include some funding for additional staff and other resources. These changes will require resources and we will need to determine from where those funds will come. There is a Foundation visioning group that has been looking at how other churches use their Foundations and what some options are for our Foundation.

**Facilities:** Pam also noted that a significant amount of our resources has gone into maintaining the physical plant. The Board of Trustees has done an analysis that included a ten-year projection of costs that could be anticipated over that time period and the goal is to include an average figure for these funds in the church budgets that are created over the next ten years. If staff numbers are increased, the Board of Trustees will need to look at space and how to keep the staff together to continue the synergy that comes from having the staff centralized.

**Operations:** Phil noted that consistently the feedback has been that we need to have improved communications – this cuts across all ministry areas and programs as well as improved IT (better equipment and computer designs as well as improved use of social media

The proposal is largely conceptual and the VIT is asking the Church Council to approve the concept of these structural and budget changes that will allow the SPRC and Finance to create more specific proposals.

**Small Group Discussion:** The Church Council broke into small groups to review the outline proposed, the goals, the problems, and the implications of the proposed models, as well as to identify questions that the model raises.

Questions posed by members of the Church Council and responses from Charlie Parker:

**What is the difference between connecting and sharing?** There is a 5-pillar model for successful churches, and connecting is the internal structures that allow us to get to know each other and build relationships, and sharing is focused

on getting more people into the church. There is some continuity, but connecting is internal and sharing is reaching out to the community.

**Could connecting and sharing be put together into a full time position?**

This has been discussed and considered by the VIT and there can be an artificial separation between the two; this suggestion was referred to the SPRC for consideration.

**Could one of the people in a category also be the coordinator?** Yes, there are places where existing people could fill those roles.

**With regard to stewardship, should it have higher visibility and be a separate category? If serving and sharing are combined, could stewardship be one of the 5 categories?**

That can certainly be considered. There are a number of categories that cut across all of the categories (like children and youth which is under Learning in the proposed model, but also is included in Serving). Perhaps there could be a staff coordinator for stewardship.

**Does the model involve coordinating silos of different sizes?** The model is what we have not what we want the structure to look like – we want better balance.

**What is the time frame to accomplish this?** There are two: putting the structure in place could optimistically be achieved by the fall, while bearing fruit could perhaps be seen in 2 years.

**Should we be trying to change all 6 at the same time or have a prioritization?** This was considered by the VIT but their recommendation is that we do all 6 – all of the pieces have to be in place for us to move ahead (we already do some things well). Phil noted that we want to stretch ourselves in new ways.

**How can we do this more quickly and move from discussion to action?**

There is a balance between not providing too much detail and getting mired in the detail compared to having enough detail that we can see the options. Some of the details may shift as we move forward as this process evolves.

**“Praising” seems to leave out other dimensions of worship – worship is broader term than praising – could that term be used?** It was suggested that praising is more of an active term but it may be considered a one-way street. Charlie responded that this was an interesting thought.

**If we don't find the money in the budget for this, where does the funding come from and where do we draw the line?**

What we are talking about is a staffing structure that exceeds our current budget so we would need to confer with the Foundation about investments. The issues that have to be clarified

include how much is invested for how long a time period. If we are successful, what would it look like at 3 years? Charlie noted that it will be challenging to develop concrete numbers, but we cannot just reconcile ourselves to our current path that is moving toward continual decline. We need to figure out what we need to do to grow and be willing to try new things and stop them if they do not succeed after a reasonable period of time. Suzanne Forsyth reported that a Wesley Theological Seminary program included a discussion of the decline of the church and that the term “mission” in John Wesley’s time meant going out. There was a discussion at the Wesley meeting about going back to our roots and going out into the community.

One of the small group members stated that the Foundation needs to be used to grow the church and invest in the future.

**What about consultants who work on long term sustainability?** We could bring in someone with expertise in long term investments.

**What can we learn from the previous Leap of Faith that was not successful?** This was an effort during Bill Lawrence’s tenure that involved investing funds in a Leap of Faith to grow the church. Wayne Rusch stated that the perception was that the church had spent a lot of money on the building structure and the proposal was to hire consultants and experts and invest in programs, but the congregation did not know that it was going on because the funds were coming from the Foundation so there was not membership ownership. Pam stated that one of the themes in feedback was that this was a good concept, but there was not a lot of clarity and detail to what we were asking new staff people to do or what their common goal was. Moving forward, suggestions included getting information from Ned Leonard (SPRC Chair at that time) to see the staffing structures and where investments were made that did not succeed, and being clear about expectations and goals. Joyce Shields observed that the new model is about more than people and jobs and funding, but we need to have clarity about all of the pieces.

**What could we learn from other like congregations that are growing?** The Conference goal is to have 600 Acts 2 Congregations by 2012 (growing in worship by 2% per year and 1 profession of faith per 25 worshippers and 90% of the congregation involved in active ministry). The Conference has not yet seen an increase in the number of Acts 2 churches. Citing MMUMC as an example, we did not have professions of faith (people who accept Jesus Christ for the first time or Confirmands) last year. Two years ago we had professions of faith, but we were not growing in worship numbers. There are no churches in the Baltimore Washington Conference with more than 1,000 in average worship attendance.

**Can we talk to a church that is part of the 20% that is growing?** We do that all the time in looking at practices of churches such as the Church of the

Resurrection in Kansas as well as Ginghamburg UMC in Ohio, but there are not a lot of churches like this in our area. We also need to look at churches that serve Metropolitan areas, but which are located in the core city, like DC. The VIT thinks that we need to develop our own standards and goals and improve the data that we collect so we can measure how we are doing on an objective basis.

**Are there recordings of the whole worship service?** Yes, in audio and video, but only the sermon audio is posted on the Web.

**Do we need to include costs of office configuration?** The Board of Trustees will be asked to provide these estimates.

**The current proposal of Executive Pastor/COO may eliminate the need for Associates – do we want that?** There are several models for this, including the Executive Pastor being a CEO, but we are talking about a COO (a business model) and that is not the work of the Associate Pastors. It was noted that an Associate Pastor could be a staff coordinator in one of the categories. We want to be certain that there is a staff coordinator in each area.

**Do the questions posed at this meeting mean that we need to reconceptualize?** The hope is to move forward conceptually with the understanding that there will be more detail in the future and evolution of the model.

The **Motion** was made: *to approve the proposed plan to restructure around the discipleship model, including any modifications, in concept only and direct the SPRC and Finance to consider required staffing and estimated costs as well as the Board of Trustees to consider estimated costs to add to the physical structure with additional staff members, and for them to report back to the Church Council for further consideration.* The motion passed unanimously.

The **minutes** from the April 26, 2010, Church Council meeting were approved without any changes.

On behalf of the **Lay Leadership and Nominations Committee**, Anita Seline brought three nominations: Susan Brown for the Finance Committee (2012), and Phil O'Hara for the Study Ministry Team (2012) and Graham Covington for the Study Ministry Team (2012). These nominations were approved unanimously.

The Closing Devotional included Communion.

**Council Members Present:** Phil Potter, Suzanne Forsyth, Pam Settlege, Charlie Potter, Wayne Rusch, Ken Millian, Caralee Adams, Mary Beth West, Erik Dellums, John Long, Joyce Shields, Penny Pagano, Kathy Rawlings, Leigh Rollins, Don Scroggin, Kate Murphey, Jimmy Sherrod, Sandy Rector, Dick

Schleicher, Bill Roach, Anita Seline, and Helen Simon; **Staff Present:** Pat House, Bruce Caviness, and Dona Collary; **Visitors:** MiSook Ahn