

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Charlottesville, Virginia

Minutes of Church Council Meeting

December 7, 2017

In attendance were Matt At Lee, Katy Brandt, Bill Clarke, Jennifer DeVore, Michael DeVore, Al Horton, Greg Horton, Stefan Harris, Evelyn Kessler, Meredith Rose, Ann Shaffer, Hu Shaffer, Conor Sipe, and Peggy Vaughan.

Chair Jennifer DeVore opened the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting's discussion primarily centered on our church's involvement with First Night Virginia (FNV) in Charlottesville, as our church has for many years opened its doors for FNV performances, and normally has a venue in the Chapel and one in the Sanctuary. The concern this year is the perceived need for additional security due to the August violence in Charlottesville, especially near our church, and if we should even attempt to open our church to provide venues this year, as some of the other venues have decided not to participate this year. Lay Leader Hu Shaffer reported that Trustees and Witness feel we should go ahead due to the new contacts our church makes through providing these venues as well as demonstrate that it is a safe place to come. Pastor Al had suggested to Trustees that it might be better to have only one venue (Sanctuary) this year and close off the rest of church. Only one bathroom would be available to the public according to his plan. Performers and volunteers could park in the church parking lot and enter through the Welcome Center with exterior door codes. Another suggestion was that we would have a uniformed Charlottesville police officer on overtime to provide additional security outside the building. FNV will pay for 6 hours' time for this officer. Therefore, if the officer were used before 5 or after 11, our church would be responsible for the additional pay. Hu also mentioned that one of the entertainers would be a Christian unicyclist who juggles while teaching a Christian message and was said to be a crowd pleaser. The other is an early music singing group, MIRA.

Witness Team Chair Bill Clarke said Trustees do not have the authority to decide whether we can host a FNV event. According to the *Book of Discipline*, that authority rests with the senior pastor.

We were told that Trustees are insisting that we come up with money for security if it is not funded by FNV. Pastor Al noted that if we continue the tradition, the Witness Team may take over this endeavor and decide if we need more money.

Pastor Al also referenced the December 14 court cases tied to the August 12 events and that the church staff thought we should open our Sanctuary doors to the public for spiritual needs. So it was decided by consensus to open our doors.

Discussion and questions then arose as to whether we should ask Trustees to assess what the risks might be for us during any scheduled events and decide when we need to ask for security. Should we have a written protocol for events such as this? Do we need to have people in our church trained for events such as these? It was noted here by Bill Clarke that 6-8 people had already volunteered for service in the church during the December 14 event.

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Council Chair Jennifer DeVore then made a motion that we ask Trustees to develop a written assessment of all risks to our church and a plan for dealing with such risks and emergencies. This written plan would need to be presented to and approved by Church Council. It would be reviewed every two years. Jennifer's motion was then seconded and unanimously approved.

One member noted that we need to communicate better in our church, and it was further noted that we do have several avenues already available for communication.

Hu Shaffer noted that our Church Council is like a Board of Directors for the church, and we are responsible for overall leadership and direction—not micro-management.

Scouting Coordinator, Ken Day, noted that our Cub Scout Pack 36 may present a growing concern in the future if there should be a movement to have girls in the Pack. That would need to be approved by Church Council.

Pastor Al requested that these minutes reflect that the outgoing Church Council Secretary (Peggy Vaughan) has been in that position for the past eleven years and her service is greatly appreciated.

Meeting closed with prayer by Pastor Al.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Vaughan

Approved: 19 February 2018