

## Joint Ministry Leadership Team Meeting October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013 6:30 – 8:30 pm

**Present:** Jill McBee (chair), Cindy Murahashi, Pastor Jim Flaschbart, Donna Fitch (recorder 2<sup>nd</sup> half of meeting), Bob White, Jean Sheppard, Reverend Steve Ross, Mari Matthias (recorder 1<sup>st</sup> half of meeting)

**Absent:** Roger Blashfield, George Pantely

**Observers:** Vicki Wartalski, Rick McBee, Gigi Siekkinen, Kathy Rice, Betty Lou Yenne, Debby Chenowith, Rose Miller, Randy Church, Athena Church

Jill called the meeting to order at 6:30pm and led a devotion – jigsaw spirituality and putting ourselves in the hands of God.

Approved minutes of the October 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **TIMELINE CHECK**

JMLT meeting with Bishop Dave in attendance – both councils are invited and encouraged to attend.

### **FINAL REVIEW OF DOCUMENT – “Single Board Structure Joint Covenant of Union”**

Mari read aloud Bishop Dave’s email sent today about how this document does not create a legal single entity. He says this is a good provisional way forward, setting up unified budget and unified leadership. Also since legally both congregations will still exist, those constitutions may be in conflict with the covenant of union. Much discussion followed.

Need to add language saying that this document will suspend and supersede the existing denominational constitutions except for things that affect the one denomination and not the other. Analogy is a prenuptial agreement. However, Rev Steve says that if there is basic trust it won’t work. So by the time we make a joint constitution, we will know how it works. Should add the word “provisional” and say clearly the intent. May also include a timeframe (term of agreement) to address dealing with the formal legal incorporation several years down the road.

There was some question as whether this arrangement would be allowed. It would have to be approved by the synod council and is likely to be fine as long as it is in line with the mission of the church. Pastor Steve said the McMinnville Cooperative operated for over two years without having their denominational constitutions match.

(Mari had to leave and Donna took over recording at 7:15 pm.)

Rev. Ross was asked the difference between McMinnville and our situation and replied that they are larger and have two pastors, one ELCA and one United Methodist. He urged us to preserve the best in each tradition while leaving behind the weaknesses. We need to look for what’s valuable in the other and adopt it. It was suggested that the a further explanation of the provisional covenant go into the cover letter which will accompany the updated document. It was clarified that the term of the provisional arrangement will be two years.

At this point, Pastor Jim suggested that we entertain **questions or comments from the audience**. Vicki Wartalski asked if the proposed document will be sent to Bishop Dave for review before it is mailed to the congregation and was assured that it will be.

Rose Miller asked for clarification of the single board governance structure and how officers will be elected. A brief explanation of the nominating and leadership committee process followed.

Rick McBea asked if the denominational councils will be able to co-opt other members when needed. It was agreed that would not be prohibited by the document as we always need the best people to make decisions. Pastor Jim reminded that important decisions will always come back for larger input. Rev. Steve commented that sometimes it's possible to have the authority to make decisions but not the means and in those cases, bringing in more people under the direction of the Board would be appropriate.

Vicki Wartalski asked if the congregational councils will still exist. The best answer at this time is that the denominational constitutions will be suspended by the November 17 vote. The JMLT will continue to check with those at the Lutheran Synod and National levels to see if this is indeed possible.

Randy Church commented on the term of the Provisional Covenant, saying he doesn't like the end date. Pastor Jim clarified that 2016 (December 31, 2015) will be the end date but that nothing says that will be the end of the partnership. This date simply "holds our feet to the fire."

Jean Sheppard added that we need to consider what's the best way to serve the community and to be the community; that may be by having one Board, one budget, joint standing committees and combining all our operating funds. There will be a new checking account for the new operating budget and probably a new Tax I.D. number as well.

In further review of the document, it was decided that Cindy Murahashi and Jean Sheppard of the JMLT will rephrase the Mission portion near the beginning. Pastor Jim suggested that the words "especially the vulnerable" be added to Part Two, "Loving." Under Part IV, the physical address of the church building will be eliminated in speaking of the annual meeting as there could be a need to meet elsewhere. There was brief discussion of having ex-officio members of the denominational councils. No number limit was set. Rev. Steve said the pastor should be added as a member of the Nominating and Leadership Committee. Under Task Force IV e, last sentence, the word "must" will be changed to "shall."

Under Membership, it was suggested that "one" contribution during the past year be changed to "a" contribution during the past year. There was extensive discussion of membership and what that means in regard to voting. The language of the document will be reviewed again by the Bishop and the Synod and honed accordingly. The general discussion centered around standards for membership and the fact that being a voting member is a matter of significant missional import as the church is a mission. Those voting on congregational issues should be contributing regularly to the mission of the church in many different ways.

Rev. Steve noted that decision-making in the church is a matter for leaders and disciples. Church isn't a democracy; it's God's thing.

Gigi Siekkinen of the audience noted that the United Methodists do keep up-to-date membership rolls and have a pretty good process for doing that as we've had several votes in the recent past.

## **PUBLISHING THE DRAFT**

The perfected document will be mailed to all members of the congregation once it has been reviewed by the Lutheran Bishop and Rev. Steve Ross of the United Methodist Church. The current deadline for completion is Thursday of this week so documents can be mailed on November 1.

## **HANDBOOKS**

The appropriate United Methodist Guidelines for Committees will be ordered for use as our handbook. Everyone was okay with this.

## **PLANNING THE TOWN HALL MEETINGS**

Pastor Jim will moderate the November 6 Town Hall. It will be our first as the November 3 date was moved forward. The November 10 Town Hall will be moderated by Bishop Dave.

Rev. Steve Ross walked us through the suggested process for Town Hall meetings. Members of the congregation will have had the document in hand for a few days in order to review it prior to the Town Halls. Rev. Steve emphasized that this meeting is NOT a debate. Instead, it is Holy Conferencing, a process of discernment. Church isn't government. It's God's work and our job is to discern how we can best accomplish that. He suggested we begin by asking everyone to think about what we're trying to accomplish and to remind them that we're there to work on that together. Everyone will get a chance to speak in turn. People won't be able to make a second comment until everyone has had a turn. Here are the suggested steps:

1. Everyone will get a chance to share any concerns they may have about the Provisional Covenant.
2. Everyone will have an opportunity to ask any questions of the JMLT about the terms or effect of the Provisional Covenant. If the questions can't be answered, the JMLT will research and bring or hand out a written answer at the next Town Hall.
3. Each person present will have the chance to state what they see as positive aspects, something they find appealing or promising about the Provisional Covenant.

Rev. Ross suggests that we let the body tell us what is concerning them rather than to point out possible areas of concern. It might be good to have someone walk through the high points of the document very quickly at the beginning of the session as we can't assume everyone will have read it prior to the meeting.

A simple powerpoint presentation might be appropriate.

Rev. Ross suggested that we ask people to state their names before speaking. JMLT members will be dispersed throughout the body so that answers can come from any of us. We will use a wireless mic and hope to have the proceedings recorded.

After the two Town Hall meetings, the JMLT will meet to listen to the feedback and possibly revise the document. Pastor Jim stated that he believes it's our job to discern what substantive issues, if any, remain to be resolved. If there are big issues to address, we may need to do a rewrite. Otherwise, we will change the small things and move forward.

We need a recorder other than JMLT team members to take notes as well. The job of the team in this setting is to be totally present. This is Holy Conferencing and people will be urged to speak to the body about what God has given each one to bring, not to win the debate. Together we will have discernment.

## **NOMINATING AND LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE**

It was decided that two members of the JMLT as well as the current chair of each denominational council (or their designee) and Pastor Jim will be asked to sit as the Nominating Committee for the upcoming election of those to take office on January 1, 2014 (assuming passage of the Provisional Covenant on November 17). There are 12 positions to be filled. Rev. Steve will conduct a one and a half hour training session for committee members prior to the first meeting of the committee. That meeting will be held sometime within the next week.

Chair Jill McBee closed the meeting with prayer. The meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.  
(Mari Matthias and Donna Fitch recording)