Deacon Minutes – Approved

May 18, 2021

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|  | **Attend** | **Deacon** | **Attend** |
| Anderson, Larry | P | Langford, Wes | P |
| Cooper, Barry | P | Lorenzetti, Jim | P |
| Failing, Debbie | P | Lynn, Marion | P |
| Fry, Diane | **A** | Stegeman, Rob | P |
| Lancaster, Mary | P | Pastor Cable, Ritchey | P |
|  |  | Vande Polder, Don | P |

* Opening Prayer at 6:17 by Larry Anderson.
* Quorum is established.
* The April minutes are approved with correction of names (Bowen’s to Bowin’s and Wapin to Wopeta) -- Moved by Marion Lynn and and seconded by Larry Anderson, and ordered to be submitted to the deacons, Session, and office staff.
* Pastor’s Report:

Pastor Cable announced that before he left Cailtlin came to him saying she felt her time here at Gashland had come to a completion and she was being called to something else. He asked her to pray about it and when he returned she said she had come to know she would be leaving. Her last day is May 31st. She will have her work completed and ready to hand off at that time. We wish her well and every success.

Pastor Cable expressed his appreciation to Michael for stepping in again for Richie’s sabbatical /time off to do the movie. Michael did a great job. He is thankful for all team leaders that stepped is where needed.

**“From Embers to a Flame”** discussion.

Chapter 11 - Small-Group Discipleship.

* He agrees with the chapter that it is important. You want to resist becoming a clique however. This is offensive to many in the congregation; you don’t want anyone to feel excluded. Mary stated that can be a problem with some feeling closed off fom the groups.

Undershepherding is being revitalized in the session. A lot of work can be done with small groups. It is challenging to create and maintain a small group.

* Larry brought up that community groups here at Gashland have been successful over the recent years.
* Pastor Cable talked about his experience with small groups in St Louis. He grew the most in this small group as a young family and had deep impacts. They maintain connection with those in this group today.
* Don brought up that over the years Gashland has had small groups and one thing he noticed about them is when they have reached their apparent end there was no successful exit strategy established. How do you either separate from a group or discontinue a group without offending the members.
* Sunday School is like a form of small group. Size and scale does have an affect however. Barry brought up that big churches rely on small groups because of this issue. These are more or less substitutes for traditional Sunday School classes.
* Intimate relationships in the church is key. There are biblical cases to support Sunday School or small groups.

Question 1 – Why is small group ministry important?

It connects people together in the church. Our Summer Social groups are a good way to connect people of like interests together and can be a good vamp for continuing as small groups. The choir operates as a form of a small group as well as ministry teams.

Question 2 – Why did Jesus spend time with the 12.

Marion – To learn the basics and is an effective way to grow in faith

Jim – Gospel is a personal and intimate relationship.

Ritchie – Jesus also took specific time with 3 of the 12, an even smaller more intimate group.

Question 3 – What is the Benefit of small groups to a church

They create discipleship and add to the life of the church. Help to become a family.

Marion – Members need 3 types of relationships to assimilate into the church. It is easier to love one another.

Mary – A plug for Wednesday night Prayer Service: Prayer helps to connect with others. Encouragement for the congregations is an essential part

* Team Reports:

1. **Coordinating**: Don VandePolder
   * Virus communication is changing quickly. We are trying to keep with the current expectations and will inform the congregation as they do.
   * Security – Dave is working on the updating of the security information and some training may be involved.
   * Personnel information –

Caitlin Palmer will be leaving us and replacement for her position is currently underway.

Steve and Naomi’ replacement for music in the second service is also underway.

* It may be necessary to change the meeting time for Deacons from 6:15 or for Coordinating from 7:15.

1. **Session**:
   * Don reported they are trying to keep up with the changes in the mask mandates, which are fluid at this time.
   * They are working with updating the undershepherding program. Letters were sent out letting people know who their Elder is and how to contact them.
2. **Finance**:

Larry Anderson reported that standings still look good but there was a slipping of offering in April, around $15,000 down. Jim stated though that April 2020 was up from normal giving and would equate to a net loss over 2 years was a total of $60,000 down. We make up losses in the later part of the year.

1. **Helps**:

Debbie Failing reported. We had discussions on ways to recruit volunteers for all teams. Diane will ask Michael to announce that we will be passing out papers at the end of 2 weeks services showing the needs we have in all areas of HELPS. We also discussed the Sunday morning coffee offerings and that we have had positive comments on the return of the coffee and the respectful transition we currently are following. We do look forward to going back to the pre-covid process.

1. **Mercy**:

* Marion reported they continue to work on the new initiative of building cohesive groups to reach those in the congregation that need additional touching. This includes Blessing Buddies, which they see would call those individuals maybe weekly and keep in touch with them. \

1. **Property**:

* Rob Stegemen reported. The Amos House is having leaking issues with the chimney and roof areas.
* The basketball goal is finished.
* Work has started on the playground area.
* Calvin Paving will begin work on the lot east side of the sanctuary handicap area.
* Working on removing paint from the railings, proves to be a difficult task.
* Dale Anderson is working with the city planning to control the water problem on the East side of us. They are installing infrastructure making it difficult for us to access and mow the area. Appear to be at an impass right now but they have a meeting on Thursday with the city to discuss. It is imperative to move quickly on this item. Next Monday Property meeting will discuss and move forward.
* Mr Wopeta is fixing many things around the church…if it needs fixing we will fix it.

Old Business:

* Barry will be joining the Coordinating team tonight.
* Mary decided it was not necessary to pursue questions regarding the First Time visitor cards

New Business:

* Marion asked when will we meet in person? Per Pastor Cable Session is discussing and currently transition may be sometime in the next month or so.

Rob suggested both in person and Zoom, Jim stated he has been in hybrid calls and it is hard to hear. Barry stated we could use a Jaba Hub to help with that.

* Barry asked what he could communicate to the Coordinating team.. Mary suggested to ask “How can we the Deacon team support the Session?”

WOW Report /Prayer Requests:

* Wes’ WOW – a friend at work grew up in the church but is not a believer. Wes said it is hard to have a meaningful conversation at work but this friend said that Wes acts the most Christian that anyone else. The Lord is working.
* Mary said she wanted to bring up “The Brim” Aaron and Kelsie’s wedding venue. This is such a witness to non-believers thru their product to show purpose in their website and newsletter.
* Jim talked about a situation where he saw God work where he did not expect it. His Uncle Carl’s funeral was delayed. So a video was created to share stories. He learned a lot about his uncle thru this. A pastor from the church volunteered to speak on his behalf. Uncle Carl was not a believer. But he had been a volunteer at the church pantry every week for 15 years picking up food and delivering to those who needed it. He was a helping hand at the church. The pastor gave a great gospel message to tie it together. God gave a clear message from this to be used for his purpose on the internet. Awesome how God works.
* Rob had a prayer request. His daughter is getting married in June, a hilltop venue in Arkansas. The distance makes planning difficult. Please pray that all plans comes together smooth and the weather is good.

Closing Prayer: Mary Lancaster

Meeting adjourned at 7:26

Next Zoom meeting: June 15, 2021 @ 6:15 p.m

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Wes Langford – Moderator

Debbie Failing – Clerk