

## **Core Team meeting**

**Monday, July 25, 2022**

Core Team members present: Deanna H., Brad W., Collin Z., Paula G., Chad G., Tanya A., Jeff E.

Members absent: Carol O., Lynnette D.

Additional guests: Jim E., Harold J., Tom G., Randi E. (note-taker)

### **Opening prayer was delivered by Pastor Chad**

### **Flagpole discussion**

Recently, trustees recently noticed that our flagpole in front of the church was empty. Tom located a local tree trimmer and received a quote for a price of \$100 to cut back, clean up, and dispose of branches that obstructed the flagpole. Tom asked Pastor Chad if it would be ok to fly the American flag and his recommendation was to bring the idea to Core Team for discussion. Core team was consulted via email and opinions from responding members were mixed. Deanna has received other correspondence from individuals not on Core Team regarding this matter as well and she brought those perspectives to the meeting.

Several statements and questions were posed by individuals who were present at the meeting. The following themes/sentiments were voiced:

- What would be the reason for flying the American flag? Anytime a symbol is posted, there is a connotation or meaning attached.
- Why should our church be different than any other public building?
- What do we want our messages to be within the community?
- What does the flag represent to the whole and to individuals?
- Flying the American flag doesn't have to be a political statement.
- We are all American, despite the extremely divisive and oppositional forces within our country today.
- The American flag should/could be a "beacon of hope" and sign of unity. It was stated that it could be an indication that all are welcome in our church. However, it was also asserted that to some, the American flag is not perceived to be a symbol of tolerance and acceptance and concern was expressed to indicate that flying the flag may discourage some individuals in marginalized groups from coming through our doors.
- Any flag that we fly will by default symbolize our intentions and beliefs. If we use it to symbolize and promote negative or evil ideals, then that is what will be associated with HTUMC. If we use it to symbolize and promote positive, affirming, welcoming, and inclusive ideals, then that will be associated with us as well.
- An "both/and" approach to flying flags was expressed as a desired compromise, though opposition to flying anything but the American flag on the flag pole in front of the church was strongly voiced. It was noted that we do have other flags on our property that indicate and promote support and acceptance for other things (LGBTQ+, BLM, "all are welcome", etc.).
  - *Due to the fact that not everyone views the American flag as a positive representation of significant societal topics in our country, it was expressed by one member present that they were uncomfortable flying only the American flag because it may be interpreted by some that HTUMC is not the welcoming and open place that we are working to affirm it to be.*
- It was noted that diversity in our community, in our schools, and in our congregation has increased over the years.

Discussion points/questions on this topic included the following:

1. What is appropriate protocol for flying the American flag?
  - a. All parties on both sides of the issue agreed that protocol must be carefully and explicitly followed if the American flag is to be flown. Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - i. Maintenance
    - ii. Lighting
    - iii. Half-mast vs. full-mast
    - iv. Proper disposal of tattered or worn flags
  - b. Are there other flags that we could or should fly below the American flag (UMC flag, BLM, Pride/BIPOC, etc.

**\*A motion was made by Paula G. (second by Brad W.) that Holy Trinity United Methodist Church utilize the flagpole in front of our building to fly the American flag with Trustees assuming management of any and all protocol involved in doing so. Additionally, any and all other banners that indicate our intent to be inclusive of other groups, organizations, movements, or ideals should not be hung on the flag pole but should absolutely be visible on other areas of our property as a means to show our support of all people and to affirm our belief that “all are welcome.”**

**For-6**

**Against-0**

#### **Finance update**

Jeff provided an updated financial report. He stated that there has been a continued drain on our available cash flow for the past few months. Kelly is on vacation currently but provided guidance on ways to increase cash flow.

- There have been 2-\$5,000 lots from main EJ account
- Another stock donation has been received and processed

During the months of May-June, there has been a budget shortfall of approximately \$10K. Questions regarding the ERC (Employee Retention Credit) have been raised regarding our eligibility, how it works for non-profit entities, and how payroll taxes may be impacted. Pastor Chad stated that an email has come out from the Conference, which indicates a belief that most churches will qualify. Research on this option as a potential source of income/resources is on-going.

Tanya mentioned the idea of renting the parsonage. Recent modifications to the parsonage (i.e.—no showers) make the property currently unrentable. However, Collin indicated that he would reach out to trustees to explore costs of upgrades, repairs, etc., to see if renting the parsonage as a source of additional income is a feasible option going forward.

#### **CYFM update (report was made by Deanna in Lynnette’s absence)**

STORM Camp was a successful experience and the week went well overall! There were 18 youth (ages 12-18) who attended STORM Camp, most of whom were first-time attendees. Projects completed by the crews were mostly in the Prior Lake/Savage area and a worship band from “The Well” assisted with nightly worship experiences. Sammy and her colleagues from STORM Camp expressed an interest in being back here at HTUMC again next year. Deanna was a strong proponent of continued discussions between camp planners, hosts, and participants to determine whether that would be a possibility for HTUMC next year. Specifically, she was interested in finding out more information regarding what we as

a church would need to do to prepare for and facilitate an event as this, especially if it grows to include more days and more people.

Currently, youth and adults from HTUMC are on a mission trip to Rapid City, SD and Vacation Bible School will take place in a few weeks.

### **Night to Unite**

Pastor Chad said that more volunteers would be helpful but it would be possible to facilitate the event with what we have for now. Fliers are ready to be distributed and official registration with the city has been completed. Sign-up sheets are still available for anyone interested in volunteering.

### **Reconciling Ministries Meetings**

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, 9 people attended the morning conversation and 3 people attended the afternoon/evening conversation. Handouts with information presented at the meetings are available at the information station and Lynnette will add it to the website when she returns from the mission trip to South Dakota.

### **Upcoming Events**

August 8-11 – Vacation Bible School

August 17 – Sand Art event (Lynnette will provide more details)

August 29 - Steering Committee Meeting

October 16 – Respectful Conversations (after worship 10:45-1:15)

- Those who have agreed to be table facilitators for RC will be trained 10/9 following worship.
- Due to an expressed timing conflict with our annual stewardship campaign, a straw poll will be completed 1<sup>st</sup> week of November.

*\*Next meeting of Core Team – 8/15 @ 6:30pm*

*\*Next meeting of Finance Committee – 8/22 @ 6:30pm*

*\*Individual ministry reports by team members tabled until next meeting due to length of meeting.*