

Connections Committee Meeting Minutes

May 1, 2025 – 5:00 PM

Members present: Paula Mattila, Linda Hane, Gail Haney, Rich Floyd, Pam Ransom, Kathy Nelson, and Jay Tomlinson

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

1) VCC Food Shelf Report

Kathy Nelson reported that the VCC Food Shelf was very appreciative of the items delivered to them. She also reported that some items donated were out of date and some had been opened or previously used. We need to make sure people know to check the expiration date and make sure items have not been opened or previously used.

Kathy reported that the students last day will be May 15th and there is no summer session so our next food drive will need to be in August when students return. She also said that Lou Wiggin at the school encourages inviting students to share a meal. He hosted dozens of students over Easter.

Pam Ransom offered to arrange opportunities for students to “shop at the Ely Food Shelf” on off days or off hours on a need base.

2) Palm Sunday Pot-Luck Food Shelf \$ Collection Report:

Jay Tomlinson reported that \$170 was collected at the Palm Sunday Pot-Luck for the Ely Food Shelf. There was discussion about hosting another Pot-Luck the Sunday after the 4th of July. Linda Hane said she could not commit to organizing it at this time not knowing what her schedule will be concerning her niece’s needs. No action was taken at this time.

3) Spiritual Awareness

Rich Floyd presented documents defining passionate spirituality, spiritual awareness, and techniques churches might implement to improve passionate spirituality to increase spiritual awareness. Discussion centered around the National Church Development (NCD) surveys, the 8 different characteristics the survey measures, the 3 previous surveys our church has already participated in, and whether we should take the survey again. Jay Tomlinson said that previous surveys included 25 surveys that any congregation member could pick up from the table at the rear of the church and take the survey. Rich thought each person sent in their survey on their own. We might have remembered how things were done incorrectly.

Concerns were voiced on who should take the surveys if we elect for our church to participate in taking the survey again. Pam Ransom thought the surveys should be distributed completely randomly to members of the church. Include all members of the church, whether they attend or not, and draw out the names for the number of surveys we receive.

Rich pointed out that this survey was used by the former Visioning Committee to help decide where the Visioning Committee should focus their attention. He also said, should we elect for the church to take the survey again, there is considerable work that may need to be done once the results of the survey are provided to us. There’s no point in taking the survey if we aren’t prepared to address any weak characteristics identified by the survey results. A decision on whether to recommend to the Church Council that we participate in taking the NCD survey again was postponed to a future meeting.

Since the Church Council normally does not meet during the summer months, Kathy Nelson made the motion to ask the Church Council if they would approve our church taking the NCD survey should the Connections Committee decide at a future meeting that this is something our church would benefit from doing. Linda Hane seconded the motion. Motion approved. Jay will present the request to the Church Council at their next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Small Group Gatherings:

Reports from members of the small group gatherings established at our last meeting included that 3 of the 5 groups have yet to meet but have meetings scheduled. Pam Keely's group met at their house and had a wonderful dinner. Josh Forsman's group met at his house for afternoon snacks and a light meal. Pam Ransom's, Susan Laine's, and Sheri Rue's groups haven't yet met.

The committee decided that we should offer the Small Group Gatherings program to our summer snow birds so we will begin announcing the summer program in June, taking sign-ups in June with the groups assigned at the end of June. Group hosts would then schedule meeting(s) in July, August and early September.

2) Love Offering Collection Date

The Love Offering special collection was scheduled for Sunday, May 18th. Announcements would be included in the Pastor's email blasts, the Sunday Bulletins and verbally during the worship services prior to the May 18th service. Jay Tomlinson provided the committee with a verbal description of the Love Offering distributions: 30% to African University for student scholarships, 30% to Immigration Law and Justice Network, 20% to OC (Operation Classroom) Ministries, and 20% to Midwest Mission.

Jay also said he sent an email to Margie Olson on the UMCOR and Midwest Mission Collection of Personal Dignity Kits and Home Care Kits need at the Annual Conference this year.

Linda Hane made the motion to ask the Church Council to approve a motion to ensure that the Love Offering is not less than \$150 and if the special Love Offering collection on May 18th falls short of the \$150 minimum that the balance comes from the general fund to bring it up to the \$150. Kathy Nelson seconded the motion. Motion approved. Jay will present the request to the Church Council at the next meeting.

3) Summer Meetings

The committee decided we needed to meet in June and August during the summer months to prepare for the summer Small Group Gatherings, the VCC August Food drive, and to further discuss the NCD survey and whether we wished for our church to participate in the survey again this year. The committee felt we would not need to meet in July.

4) All Night Grad Party Sponsorship

The church received a request to share in sponsoring the *All Night Grad Party* for the high school seniors. The Church Council has in the past approved a \$50 sponsorship for this request. Kathy Nelson made the motion to ask the Church Council to approve a Bronze Sponsorship of \$50 to the *All Night Grad Party*. Linda Hane seconded the motion. Motion approved. Jay Tomlinson will present the request to the Church Council at their next meeting.

Meeting adjourned with no further business.

Next meeting will be Thursday, June 3, 2025 at 5:00 PM