

SALEM UNITED METHODIST ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL

12:25

I enter through the side door into the addition to the church. Three men are around a table: one asks somewhat strongly “Sir! How can we help you?” A second man says “Third floor” I ask “Administrative council?” and he nods.

I go to the third floor. Noone’s there and I was about 10 minutes until I got to wonder whether there had been an error. As I walked down and peaked into the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor it became clear that this is where it was. I walk into the room (large classroom, with an alcove full of stored old computers and the like and a large window to the north) arranged into a U shape of tables with several chairs in one row on the open side of the U. Mrs Zonora Hamm sits by herself at the head of the U. I nod to her and two or three other people clearly recognize me, including the person by a table near the door who tells me to pick up the hand-outs.

I to ZH and asks whether I should distribute the same statement I used last time. She says to put it with the other material to be picked up. She tells me that one statement was controversial she points at the place where I write about ““disadvantaged” peoples and communities” and says that Salem is not disadvantaged. I tell her that this is actually what we want to report in order to counter stereotypes. She smiles and we end this exchange.

{once again, as I write these notes, I wonder how we can to an “agreement” (?) That this would be the end of the sequence. Who initiated the ending? Was the ending preconstituted at the beginning? How does a committee head keep pre-meeting exchanges to a few sentences?}

11:37

ZH looks around and makes comments about whether to start; she says something about “CP time?”

11:40

{(= the meeting starts=)}

ZH: apology: no agenda... same as last improvised prayer

ZH: brief statement about retreat last week ... mission statement ... we as disciples she introduces me; some people say hello minutes

people read them attentively for more than a minute of silence  
move to accept ...  
Report from the Board of Trustees

Wendell Harris starts reading from what was distributed about the capital budget, the engineering report ... he uses regularly the phrase “the church family” to refer I believe to the membership. Others sometimes pick up the phrase but they generally use other phrases.

12:55 AP comes in with a plate of food. He is dressed in a sweat suit with a phone clipped to his ear. No one marks his entry for me to notice it. Actually I only saw it after he was sited. I must have been writing notes.

WH: a proposed fee schedule for the use of the facilities. Distinguish between members and non-members. People being asking questions about details. WH: “I am asking for guidance ...” He gives clarifications.

ZH: How does this compare to other venues?

WH: by comparison the United Methodist on Fifth, other churches, Riverside, Salem is cheap.

AP: We need to be a community church... we are not a business ... we do not want to profiteer ... but we need to cover costs ... Ms. Nelson

... when someone gets married he has to pay the pastor? AP: of course!

... more discussion about various aspects of the fees for the use of the sanctuary by weddings. “Organ?” “AP: sure!” Someone else “pipe organs are delicate pieces of equipment and playing them wrong can be costly in retuning after an event” AP: “ok”

... “let me finish my question”

ZH: “one more question and then we have to move on”

... fees for members are high

AP: if a single mom wants to have an event (birthday party, graduation) for her child should we charge her for the space, the kitchen, and everything... We must remain community based ... I am in disagreement, we should have different fee structures for events like birthday party and for events sponsored by large organization like the one who renter the hall today. ... I ask the trustees to review this ... table

... discussion of funeral fees

701

013

702

358

114

... there was a time when we did not charge fees ... I cannot see it charging for.... WH: “the trustee agree with these fees but we are bringing them up to you for approval ... we are open to suggestion.”

young man (the one who, at the retreat, said he thought he was the head of one of the financial committees until he was specifically reminded, by WH I am sure, that this committee was under the leadership of the board of trustees and that young man was just in training): “I know what the situation has been historically, but the church has costs.”

AP: “are we in the position to absorb the costs of a funeral? ... you may decide that we can ... we need to look at these issues”

... the organist is an outside contractor who sets his own fee ... need to look at his compensation as a whole ... this is really an issue for the SPR committee ... AP: ”I am asking SPR to look at this as whole.

ZH: please turn off you cell phones!!

...

ZH: we are not in the position to vote on this.

AP: why not?

ZH: too many variables

WH: actually we are in agreement we everything except for two small matters

ZH: make a motion

... approve with two changes as discussed

... unanimous open vote with one ‘No’ from a man who never spoke [who? Why?]

{ there are clearly different opinions on something that appears to have been unspecified for a long time, perhaps because of this ongoing different. Interactionally, the disagreements were mentioned clearly but not loudly.

The issues: “The way we have done things” “the need to cover costs” “the need to be community based”

This is a quiet group though it is clear that everyone is paying close attention. This is certainly not Southern European or Jewish in discursive and performative styles. It is not even “Black” according to any of the identified forms, whether in dialect or delivery }

1:50: two other open matters on the board of trustees but no movement on these

703

ZH: let's move on .. "Mr. SPR chair?"

... there was a \$20,000 line item in the budget for a student pastor who resigned. We are going to use \$8,000 of this, plus \$1,500 for professional expenses, to compensate our Assistant Pastor, Richard Hayes ... AP: "we are paying him much less than the student ... we were hoping for help from the Conference but could not get it"

... we thought we were going to save by cutting this line completely but we cannot do this.

All in favor? Unanimous

ZH: finance committee?

Tomasian McMillan stands up, mentions the report to the congregation last Sunday, the letter that will be sent out to every member asking for a minimum extra gift of at least \$100 to cover the current shortfall, as well as ask for people to increase their regular giving... hope to get an extra \$40,000 to pay the bills through March...

... quite a few members do not give or give very little ... we need to have audits ... we need to reduce our expenses ... we are prayerfully, scripturally asking to change our mindset ... there is little budget for ministries ... how are we to reach those who are not coming? ... we have to be careful when contacting people for financial support when we have not been contacting them on other matters, particularly the elderly and the sick.... some people do not know how to budget; if we helped them perhaps they would have more money to contribute ... e-mail appeals?

ZH: treasurer report?

Treasurer explains the three accounts and movement of funds in each ... we try to pay our fixed costs, particularly the staff, but we end up always having to ask extension from our other vendors, for example Con Edison ... we are in debt for \$40,000 in expenses incurred since December. ... we collect something like \$35,000 a month and spend something like \$45,000

{note how few people must contribute these \$35,000 given what was said about members who do not contribute and members who give very little. I bet there are no more than 50 to 75 truly active member units—ie family like groups that may be listed individually as members but give as one unit. These would I've an average of \$500 a month plus, I suspect, a lot of special extra gifts}

... we need clearer explanations...

AP: the report to the congregation must be reader friendly

... shouldn't we list in the bulletin how much is given every Sunday" ... it can lead to a lot of questions

AP: it's a matter of presentation

ZH: I am trying to keep these meetings to two hours, and we are now over.

ZH: Community Service Council?

Day care center... we got permission to lower the age ... the funding is there ... the kitchen has violations and we need to do the maintenance... the city will now only pay for the number of children who actually attend, not our capacity... we need to look for paying children... all our teachers are not certified ... we helped them pass the test ... the committee is also seeking new members

ZH: "AP can you tell us about the retreat?"

AP: well attended, discussed vision and mission, looked at our vision for the future. We are also providing the membership with a booklet describing Salem and its leaders. It is now ready to be distributed.

He reintroduces me (he keeps forgetting my name). Someone asks whether all this will be published. I take the opportunity to make my speech about keeping what we hear about Salem confidential.

ZH: Sunday school ministry?

Started on February 10, 17 children were registered, each attended 1 to 5 times.

AP we need to be more aggressive is getting parents of non-affiliated people who come to the church, for example the girl scouts. ... incite the parents to attend services.

ZH: Salem House?

Wendell Harris: close to getting the certificate of occupancy, there has been issues with the selection of tenants. There were 3,000 applicants to the lottery but income restrictions have to be carefully checked with detailed verification needed. One retail store is signed up. These delay may impact our projection

ZH: we will look at the class system. One first part of this restructuring involves consolidating class 13 into class 3

AP: motion to accept this.

Unanimous

Next meetings to be on third Saturdays as usual: April 19, May 17.

One lady looks at her packet of papers, pick up my introduction to the project and asks "what is this" AP, ZH (and others?) point at me, smiling. I not

3:00 adjournment.

The lady who asks the question about the project comes to me smiling and tells me that she will read this carefully. I smile back.