

**Alabama-West Florida Conference**  
**CORE Team Meeting**  
**March 8, 2018**  
**Blue Lake Methodist Camp**

**Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM by Rev. Nancy Watson.

Those present were: Ron Ball, Michael Cobb, Celeste Eubanks, Beebe Frederick, Jonathan Hart, Scott Hohn, Susan Hunt, Steve Lewandowski, Bob McKibben, David Morris, Ron Penton, Martha Rovira, Jeremy Steele, Jason Thrower, Tim Trent, Nancy Watson, and Mickey Wilson.

Introductions were made, to include new members: Celeste Eubanks, Director of Leadership Strategies for the Conference, and Mickey Wilson, Interim Treasurer for the Conference.

Scott Hohn presented a reflection for the day and opened with prayer.

The minutes of the CORE Tam meeting of December 7, 2017, were presented for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ron Penton, with a second by Michael Cobb. The motion was approved by voice vote, none opposed or abstaining.

Rev. Jeremy Steele presented the work of the task force (Jeremy Steele, Martha Rovira, David Morris, Susan Hunt) on the development of a process for awarding grants to support mission and ministry in our annual conference.

Lengthy discussion ensued; among the points raised were the following:

- It is the intent of the CORE Team to challenge ourselves and the local churches to again dream about mission and ministry possibilities.
- Grants are to support churches as they live into the vision of the conference, which is that every church will be invitational and missional regardless of size or location.
- Grants are to support particular mission or ministry projects/programs, not to meet operational costs for the church.
- Grants will be awarded once; there will be no commitment by the conference to ongoing funding for a local mission or ministry.

- A church may apply for subsequent grants for other projects.
- The intent of awarding grants is principally to help local churches. Extension ministries that are tied to local churches may be considered to receive grants. Exact criteria are yet to be established.

A motion to ask the task force to revise their proposal to include the issues raised, and to be based on an aggregate award amount of \$100,000. This work will be presented to the CORE Team at its meeting on June 21. The motion was made by Tim Trent, second by Ron Penton. The motion was approved by voice vote, none opposed or abstaining.

The task force was thanked for its excellent work thus far, and encouraged to continue.

Ron Ball presented information from ACE (Academy for Congregational Excellence) regarding the development of a “ministry accelerator” program that could be offered to churches and agencies seeking grants from the Conference. The purpose of such a program would be to teach skills such as developing a business plan, budgeting processes, creation of goals and objectives, strategic planning, and measures of accountability. The desire is that after completing this program a church receiving a mission/ministry grant from the Conference will be more likely to be successful in sustaining their efforts. Discussion raised the following points:

- All churches or agencies wishing to apply for a conference grant would complete this program *prior* to the awarding of the grant.
- No grants would be awarded to churches or agencies which had not completed this program.
- The program could, and should, be offered to any church or agency, regardless of having applied for a grant or intending to apply for a grant. The goal is to help as many local churches achieve success in their missions and ministries as possible. The program will teach basic skills that will be useful in any setting.
- The program will also include the opportunity for churches to receive continued teaching/advice/mentoring as they begin to implement their mission or ministry program for the first year following launch.

- The program will be made available at more than one location and more than one time, such as to encourage the widest possible participation.
- The desire is for the conference, through ACE, to make an investment in relationships with local churches and to support their efforts in mission and ministry.
- Again, the goal is to help local churches live into the vision of the conference, which is that all churches will be invitational and missional, regardless of size or location.

ACE will continue to develop this program and will do so with input from the CORE Team task force that is developing the grant application/award process. Ron Ball will share the purpose of this program, and ACE's work on development and implementation of it, at the next Extended Cabinet meeting, which is scheduled for April 11 in the Conference Office.

Beebe Frederick briefly explained the recent refund of apportionment dollars to churches who had paid 100% of their apportionments in 2017.

Mickey Wilson, Interim Treasurer for the Conference, reviewed budgeting processes, specifically focused on full disclosure and transparency. He emphasized that it is not the purpose of the Financial Office to determine whether decisions about expenditures or programming are appropriate. Rather, the desire is to make sure that decisions are made based on full disclosure and transparency, and on having all the facts at hand. He explained that often what has been presented as the cost of a staff position or program has not included *all* the costs (e.g., pension, benefits, salary, insurance, etc.) The Financial Office and CFA will work to make sure that all costs are accurately reflected in materials to come before the Annual Conference in June.

Mickey Wilson is available to answer any questions people might have about budget, spending, process, or similar topics.

At the last meeting of the CORE Team, members were encouraged to bring ideas for the "next great ministry." Jeremy Steele suggested that the Conference explore ways to bring together at one time in one location many of the various workshops and educational programs that are offered in our conference and/or in our geographical region. It would save a person from

having to travel several different times to different places to take advantage of the wide variety of high quality programs currently offered. A team of people from a church could, over the period of two to four days, attend several workshops or breakout sessions covering any of many relevant topics, presented by high quality speakers.

A reminder was given that the next scheduled meetings of the CORE Team are:

- June 21 at 10:00 AM via GoToMeeting
- October 4 at 10:00 AM at Christ UMC, Mobile
- December 13 at 10:00 AM in Montgomery (location TBD)

There being no further items for consideration, the meeting was adjourned at noon with prayer by Jonathan Hart.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy A. Watson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Rev. Nancy Watson