

Serve Council
June 10, 2026

SERVE COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, June 10, 7:00 pm

Present:

Caleb Peters, Wren Fiebig, Joanne Westin, Jesse Bassett, Peg Zitzner, Jim Thomas, Melissa Glorioso, Taylor Smith (via web), Donna Sens (via web), Hedy Westra (via web), Steve Chapman, Tim Cuff.

Welcome and Opening Prayer

The meeting, after a round of introductions, opened with prayer shortly after 7:00 pm.

Governance Review Committee Discussion

Tim began the Governance Review Process discussion in SERVE by introducing the process that is happening across FPC. Discussion was focused on SERVE counsel members' reflections on the organizational structure and procedures of our church.

Many members noted that few people had a clear understanding of the church's organizational structure, especially newer members. A need for greater depth in church orientation was a common issue identified.

Several groups/committees/counsels were identified as being "mis-classified" or "mis-placed" on the existing organizational chart. Among these were Earth Stewards and the Memorial Committee. Other comments focused on potential "mis-naming" of some counsels that are unclear or confusing to members and counsel members. SERVE was seen as an example of that (does SERVE do "internal" or "external" service, unclear from name).

Some discussion revolved around whether an elder was required to chair a committee. The answer is "yes" and general happiness was expressed about that.

Some concern was expressed about the amount of "in-reach" currently being done. Some concern about the extent of home-bound member visitation and driving being done by the Deacons (because the number of Deacons themselves has declined and a perceived lack organization of "in-reach" committees [transportation, visitation]).

Issues of communication about the need for "in-reach" support (i.e. additional help by church members) and "who do you contact" in order to help were identified. People expressed frustration at the difficulty of finding out how to help, how to assist with needed work at the church. Some suggested the idea of creating a "this is who you contact if you want to help with X" booklet. The idea of a new members' lunch after a new members' class with presentations by the various committee and counsel chairs. The exact timing of such a lunch was debated.

Jesse Bassett concluded this time by thanking SERVE counsel members for completing the on-line survey and providing their frank input to today's discussion.

Updates for SERVE activities

Hedy Westra provided an update on the efforts of the Foodbank and the work of Fairmounters. She noted that demand for food is high. The current average age of FPC Foodbank volunteers is also high and there is a need for new, and potentially younger, Foodbank volunteers. Questions about who can go and help at the Foodbank were raised (consistent with issues identified in the previous discussions). It was noted that all are welcome and the only requirement is to view a safety video before beginning work.

Steve and Donna (via later email) noted that a grant request was likely to be submitted by North Church in August or September.

Peg Zitzer provided an update on our Batey 105 mission work. Discussions continue between the Batey 105 committee, Mango Tree and IPM (two mission partners) and the Cleveland Foundation. She noted that a request for additional monies from the church (to support administrative work) is forthcoming. Peg noted that the student who has been being supported by FPC, Jose, will run out of his three-year commitment of funding support from FPC on August 31. Absent further donations given specifically to support Jose, his studies and life expenses will not be underwritten by FPC. Some discussions of a low-interests loan to support Jose are in process. Steve Chapman provided a bit of the four decade plus history of the Batey 105/FPC relationship as well as the relationship between the Batey 105 committee and the SERVE counsel.

Steve Chapman noted that Jim Thomas and Tim Cuff would meet to discuss SERVE budget priorities in coming days.

There was a discussion about moving goods (food and diapers) to Refine Church. Additionally, it was noted that the FPC Personnel committee decided to support Rev. Jean Max Lozier, the Pastor of Fuente de Salvación, an immigrant congregation on the west side of Cleveland. Monies will be forwarded to the church to support his work.

Steve read a written report by Pastor Ryan Wallace about SERVE related activities. It is attached below.

Tim Cuff noted that the minutes of the May meeting have been written and placed in the SERVE folder on the Google drive. He asked members to forward corrections or additions to him. [May 2026 Serve Council Minutes](#)

Jesse Bassett closed the meeting with prayer. The next meeting date will be on August 26, 2026 at 7 pm. .

Serve Council Report

Ryan Wallace

June 10, 2026

WAMWAO

I've been part of the "Narrative Change" working group of WAMWAO, which was tasked with proposing a messaging/PR campaign and/or grassroots event to engage members of the community in meaningful conversations about a shared vision for our community. We proposed an event this fall—think of it as Woodstock meets the March on Washington. It would be a music festival that intentionally promotes community/neighborliness, talks from key community leaders, chances to engage with community non-profits, etc. We are currently interviewing event planning firms to see what it would take for us to do a feasibility study. If you know any good large event planners who might be interested in working with us (at a non-profit price), let me know! On May 30, we had a very successful action in Youngstown outside of the Northeast Ohio Correctional Center—a for-profit prison that ICE has contracted to hold up to 800 immigrant detainees. Clergy (including me) have been unable to visit detainees, so we're asking for access. Steve, Jim, Caleb can share more details about the action.

Today (June 10), eight faith leaders (including me) from CLE and Youngstown met with the warden, senior staff, and chaplain of the prison to share our concerns and discuss a path forward. Overall, it felt like a good first step. We agreed to send them a list of clergy in NE Ohio who would be willing to visit detainees to offer spiritual care. They agreed to send us the policies and procedures for pastoral visitation (which are not publicly available). We will review what they send and decide whether we're

IGAH

We hosted IGAH on May 26. IGAH has decided to ask each member congregation to have a delegate to the Leadership Collab, which is essentially the steering committee of IGAH. Carolyn Cuff attends these monthly Zoom meetings, but she's really doing so as IGAH administrator and not as a delegate from Fairmount. If someone from the Serve Council is interested in

this (or can think of someone else in the congregation who might be), I'm happy to talk.

While IGAH continues to actively partner with WAMWAO on immigration-related issues, IGAH is just beginning to explore a new issue: the online radicalization of youth. We are planning to pull together a "focus group" of Heights parents who may be especially concerned about this issue to get their feedback on meaningful ways we might address this at the local level.

GCC

I was invited to speak at a GCC clergy breakfast at Olivet Institutional Baptist Church on June 3. It was a sort of introduction to a new GCC campaign (Not with Our Money) that's focused on putting public pressure on Citizens Bank to end its relationship with Core Civic and GEO—the two largest for-profit prison companies in the US. Citizens is the only major bank that's still working with them. This campaign is being done in partnership with our sister organization—the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization. I spoke via Zoom at GBIO's action a couple months ago about my experience with Core Civic in Youngstown. If anyone from Fairmount is interested in getting involved with this campaign, I can connect them with Denise Shurney from Olivet who is the chair of the team.

EQUAL

We marched in the Pride Parade last Saturday, and it was amazing. We had more than 40 Fairmounters! We also tabled at the event after the parade as EQUAL. Others on Serve were there and can share more!

On Monday (June 8), I attended the Guardians Pride Night game as a guest of the Cleveland Foundation. Fairmount and the other grantees (about 8-10 total organizations) were honored on the field before the game. I have pictures of me awkwardly standing there and waving for a long time.

Other

A couple weeks ago, I was invited to a roundtable conversation of Black faith and civic leaders hosted by the Urban League and NAACP. (Pastor Goods was also there.) They are scheduling a follow-up conversation that I plan to participate in.

Pastor Max and I plan to meet next week to discuss dates and content for accompaniment training. I know a couple of you have expressed interest, but please let me know if you'd like to participate in any upcoming conversations!