

Trinity Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes – January 12, 2021
Reporting: Bev Pillers

Present: Bob Broeder, Cathy Carlson, Jim Christenson, Carolyn Dobler, Doug Minter, Sarah Nelsen, Mary Oberlander, Bev Pillers, Barbara Simpson, Pastor Joy Ekstedt, Pastor Nikoli Falenschek

Absent: Andy Elofson

The meeting was called to order. Pastor Joy gave the opening prayer.

Agenda: The agenda for the meeting was accepted by unanimous consent.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the December Council meeting were amended as follows:

- Correct the pastor's housing allowance: Pastor Joy Ekstedt - \$25,000, Pastor Nikoli Falenschek - \$20,000
- Designate Connections Shelter, Mankato to receive a portion of the 2020 Advent offering.

With these corrections, the minutes were approved by unanimous consent

A. Business Discussed:

1. Pastor Joy's Report

- The week before Christmas made calls to people on our Home Communion list. Checked to see if people had our TLC Care Package.
- I had the intention to use a week of continuing education but only used about ¾ days. Other work responsibilities crept back into the days, things that needed to be done. I have one week of 2019 continuing education that I didn't get to use. Also, I have \$398 remaining in my Continuing Education allowance.
- It was wonderful to welcome new members to Trinity Lutheran Church in December, 6 families and 15 individuals.
- Continue to attend the SW MN zoom meetings.
- Attended the Minnesota Valley Conference meeting via Zoom. The conference meetings and synod meetings are great opportunities for support from colleagues and ideas for ministry are shared as well.
- TLC's Health Response Team met mid-December. Again, I am so very grateful for all the time, wisdom and insight these folks have shared with us for the sake of keeping our congregation and community healthier.
- Nominating Committee met in early December and then had a break for a few weeks. Meetings will resume January 7.
- Simpson Forum is happening via Zoom beginning January 20 and will conclude February 10.
- Wednesday night group, "What Can I Do?!" met in early December and had a break. This group will resume January 6 for two weeks and then take a break during the Simpson Forum scheduled time.
- Christmas worship services, like most of 2020 were out of the usual. Given the circumstance in which we find ourselves, the services were meaningful. As always, we had wonderful music!
- We welcome Kristie Olson as our newest staff member. Kristie began officially at Trinity on January 4. Welcome, Kristie!
- Attended the High School Christmas party via Zoom. It was great to see the kids! It was also a great change of pace to laugh and have some fun in an even busier time of year.
- Readjusting my compensation package so that my housing is \$25,000 for 2021. This does not change my compensation package and is allowed by the IRS.
- One week of 2020 vacation remaining and will carry over to 2021.
- Planning to take the sabbatical that was approved for 2020 in the summer of 2021.
- Recommended that the Financial Secretary issue a check to Pastor Joy for the remaining amount of continuing education (approximately \$398) for her to use with her sabbatical.

2. Pastor Nikoli's Report

- New Hire: Kristie is finally here! We are all super excited—she started on Monday (1/4) and has a nice flexible and easy January at Gustavus which will mean a flexible and front-heavy introduction to Trinity. She'll be spending a lot of her time this month getting to know our families, kids, and volunteers. Kristie will also be working with Pr Joy and myself to set goals for the year and accomplish her probationary plan.
- High School Xmas Party: We had LOADS of fun at the HS Christmas Party, which happened in the evening on December 20. I hand delivered goodie bags to each of the attendees who RSVP'ed—Dominos gift card, cookie dough, game cards, ornament crafts, and hot chocolate packets. We didn't quite get to all of our activities I had planned, but we had loads of fun playing Holiday Family Feud, white elephant exchange, and emoji scrambles. I am so grateful for these high schoolers who always show up with graciousness in their hearts, kindness towards others, and a prayerful outlook. We had 15 kids RSVP and 12 attend. Great turn out!
- SS Xmas Party: We also had a Sunday School Christmas Party on the 20th, which was also a lot of fun. We sang Christmas songs together and decorated our ornaments. We also watched a short video about what we actually celebrate at Christmas, namely Jesus' birthday.
- Pastoral Duties: Pr Joy and I continue to work hard at crafting worship that is both meaningful and safe for our people. I presided over a graveside service in December and have had a few opportunities to connect with folks from a distance—delivering stuff for Xmas parties was a huge help on that front! I'm really excited that Kristie is here to help share the Children/Youth workload, which will free both of us to make more of these pastoral connections.
- Continuing Education: You'll remember that the Mission Team acquired endowment monies to train me as a certified facilitator for the Intercultural Development Inventory. With this training, I'll be able to accompany our own TLC folks who would like to deepen their intercultural skill sets. My training will take place next week on Wednesday and Thursday. These are all-day events, and I will be taking some Continuing Ed time those days but will otherwise (mostly likely) be unavailable for calls or meetings.
- Anti-Racism Update: Our Anti-Racism Team is up and running, and we're really excited for the 2021 year! As we're just getting started, we still don't have a chairperson but hope to have one designated early this month. We are reading together a book called *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism* by Jemar Tisby. We're reading this book in thirds and will be discussing the first 70 pages this weekend. All of our non-white Jesus art has arrived, as well, but we are waiting on framing/matting for three of those pieces. I have also received overwhelming positive feedback from our Anti-Racism Toolkits, that have been crafted and delivered via email to our Sunday School and Confirmation/HS families. These toolkits have featured age-appropriate materials to equip families to talk about race, racism, and white privilege in their homes. There has also been a strong, positive response to the idea of hosting a webinar or virtual discussion, to connect parents/guardians so that they might have an opportunity to support, ideate, and pray together. This will hopefully happen sometime this spring.
- ELCA Extravaganza: Many of you might remember my journey to Anaheim, CA and back, just before the pandemic hit us. You might also remember that the cost was extremely high, though I felt that these endowment monies were well-spent. This year, because of the covid crisis, most of the Extravaganza will be happening online, which is great for bringing down the cost! Instead of spending \$2k for one person to get there and participate, we've instead spent \$60 to get an unlimited amount of Trinity folks access on Zoom. If anyone would like to participate in this special opportunity (February 4-6, please let me know! I will also be taking continuing education time that week!)

3. Treasurer's Report

- General offerings for December 2020 were **down** from 2019: \$48,880 (2020) vs \$63,354(2019).
- General offerings for 2020 YTD were **down** from 2019 YTD: \$409,383 (2020) vs \$442,336 (2019).
- Total spending for 2020 is \$413,465 with net surplus (deficit) of (\$4,092).
- Total spending for 2020 is **under** budget; budget for 2020 YTD is \$453,176.
- Bank balance on December 30, 2020 was \$99,442.

- Controlled savings balance on December 30, 2020 was \$111,261.
- Capital Improvement Fund on December 30, 2020 was \$55,443.
 - Building Improvement \$55,213
 - Equipment Purchases/Improvement \$ 230
- Building Improvement Fund Offerings were **up** \$3,977 from 2019: \$32,302 (2020) vs \$28,325 (2019).

4. Committee Reports

- Personnel Committee: The Committee is hoping for a slow year in 2021. In the past year they filled the CYF Program Director position and hired a couple of cleaning people
- Nominating Committee: The committee has been meeting throughout the month. A slate of candidates will be complete for the Annual meeting and included in the Annual Report.
- Property Committee: Received a bid for installation of 4 ceiling fans from Ryan's Plumbing of \$1,799 which includes installation costs. This will help with ventilation in the sanctuary. Motion made to approve. **See Action Item #1.**
- Community Life: No report at this time.
- Children, Youth and Family: The committee will be meeting next week with the new CYF Program Director. Confirmation and Sunday School are going on. Pastor Nikoli said the new confirmation leader will be Pastor Maggie Falenschek.
- Worship, Music and Arts: They are working on an event, Add Light to the World, looking for a different type of ministry getting people inclusive around Lent or another event, such as Valentine's Day. Would like to work with youth on this. Ash Wednesday is quickly approaching, February 17. Hopefully we'll be in the building, but for those not yet comfortable meeting in the church, would like to acquire small containers to hold ashes dust and send out with TLC care packages, along with Communion cups for those at home.
- Mission: No report at this time.
- Adult Education: - Looking forward to getting back into the building for classes.
- Stewardship: Held a short meeting reviewing pledge cards from the Stewardship event in November. Most responses kept their pledges the same as the past year, with a few increases.

5. Endowment Fund Requests -

- There is an endowment fund request for \$1,400 to be used for honoraria for speakers at the Simpson Forum. **See Action Item #2**

6. Annual Meeting

- To be held January 31 at 10:45 am via Zoom. Will place date and time in announcements and send out notice by post card.
- Agenda:
 - Opening Prayer
 - Approval of last year's minutes of the Annual Meeting
 - 2020 Financial Report- Carolyn D to give a short report
 - 2021 Budget- Carolyn to present. Should screen share budget
 - Elections - Bev present the slate and ask for a vote
 - Closing Prayer - Pastor Nikoli
- The Annual Report could be emailed and a hard copy will be available in the office.

7. **Outgoing Council members**: Pastor Joy expressed gratitude to the outgoing council members, Bob Broeder, Carolyn Dobler, Sandi Francis, Mary Oberlander and Jim Christenson for all their gifts and abilities that they have shared. She said that she has more hope and joy for the coming year as compared with an all time low last March not knowing what the future would bring. We're getting close to the end and need to stay healthy, care for one another and see the new normal ahead.

8. **Synod Assembly election of a Bishop**: Pastor Nikoli said that they will be electing a new Bishop at the upcoming Synod Assembly. No one is on the ballot until they have a pre-recognition process for nominations. The nominations are sent to the SW Minnesota Synod by our Council. They ask that you seek permission from the person you're nominating before nominating them. Deadline is Feb. 15.

B. Actions Taken:

- 1. Move we approve hiring of Ryan Plumbing to install 4 ceiling fans in the sanctuary for \$1799 to be drawn from the Building and Improvement Endowment Fund. M/S/P.**
- 2. Moved we approve a \$1,400 endowment request for the Simpson Forum to come from the Simpson Endowment for the Simpson Forum fund. M/S/P.**

C. Responsibilities Assigned: none

D. Next meeting: February 9, 2021 at 6:30 pm.