

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
**Church Council Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2021**  
**Reporting: Jennifer Hubrig**

**Present:** Marc Bachman, Cathy Carlson, Andy Elofson, Brian Fell, Alie Hermanson, Nancy Kruger, Sarah Nelsen, Barbara Simpson, Pastor Joy Ekstedt, Pastor Nikoli Falenschek

**Absent:** Scott Fichtner, Doug Minter

The meeting was called to order. Devotion was given by Cathy Carlson.

The agenda for the meeting was accepted by unanimous consent.

**A. Business Discussed:**

**1. Pastor Joy's Report**

- Made calls to our homebound members after distribution of TLC Care Packages. They are so grateful for having the opportunity to have Holy Communion when they join us for worship via FB, SPPA Channel 7, or YouTube. Thank you to all who were part of assembling, distributing, and delivering the packages.
- Memorial service planning and offered sermon for Robert Pillers family and friends.
- Options for installing council members.
- Meeting with Minnesota Valley Conference Pastors (1 time/month) and SW MN Synod colleagues (2 times/month) by Zoom.
- Continue to meet monthly with Health Response Team members.
- Will attend the annual Minnesota Valley Conference meeting March 7. It's being offered in-person and via Zoom.
- Grace Bible study meets 2 times per month. It's always great to have conversation with them!
- The Simpson Forums concluded the week before Ash Wednesday. The team will meet soon to "wrap" up the 2021 event and discuss ideas for 2022. This was the first year we had team members from other congregations and will consider if that was beneficial.
- Met with anti-racism team. Conversations have been very good.
- A team is working to reconsider the Endowment process requests. One meeting has happened and we hope to have re-worked the process by the first part of May at the latest.
- In-person worship services began Ash Wednesday.
- What needs to be done to make use of more of the church building (i.e. what improvements need to be made to the Sunday school wing and Narthex?)
- Will be visiting with Pastor Nikoli about options for Affirmation of Baptism services, First Communion blessings and Baccalaureate service.
- Will have conversation this evening with Worship Committee about worship services for Holy Week and Easter the first week of April. Our schedule in the past has been one service on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (suggest 7 pm this year). Easter? Easter garden? Although we are no longer asking people to reserve space for worship service, it would be very helpful to know numbers of potential worshipers for these services (especially Easter). If need be, we can have the fellowship hall set up for worship overflow. However, it's not good use of people's time to set it up if it's not needed.
- I'd like the Property Committee to start talking about expanding the camera booth in the narthex.

**2. Pastor Nikoli's Report**

- Back to In-Person Stuff: Confirmation and HS Youth Group have resumed their in-person activities together. Confirmation in particular has been an amazing hit—we've had folks come out to church who haven't been participating on Zoom. My heart was so happy last Wednesday, which was our single-highest concentration of kiddos in the building. I saw so many friends! Youth Group has also resumed in person, but numbers remain low. I have one die-hard student who always comes and I know we've others who want to come but have had conflicts. I'm currently brainstorming with CYF to figure out how to reach out to the other high schoolers.
- SPAF: I continue to sit on the food shelf board. We ended the fiscal year more than \$150k ahead, which is amazing. The Children's Weekend Food Program, however, is struggling a bit financially.

The board is prepared to support the CWFPP if the situation becomes dire. Until then, I'm spreading the word that the CWFPP is in more need of benevolence dollars than the food shelf itself. I would like to propose that we identify the CWFPP as a recipient of the Lenten worship offerings. Next week, I will bring an endowment request to donate some monies to this ministry.

- **SPAF Volunteers:** I have taken over as the Volunteer Scheduling Officer for the food shelf and have inherited a greatly depleted list of people willing to work right now. Most of the registered and trained volunteers are older and many are uncomfortable working during the pandemic. I am recruiting volunteers to help pad the volunteer lists at the SPAF. You'll see an article in the newsletter about it, but please consider volunteering yourself and spread the word. We need people to volunteer each day of the week and can train you with a one-off meeting with Andie, our new manager.
- **Confirmation Sunday:** The pandemic forced us to postpone Confirmation Sunday until May—originally, it would have been in October. The CYF committee has identified May 2 as the official date. We are hopeful that our Confirmation Sunday service will be in person and somewhat normal. A lot of time separates us from May, but hopefully we can stay the course and continue pulling out of this threat. Pr Joy and I are toying with different options for accommodating family and friends at these services.
- **Anti-Racism Team:** We are happy to report that Judy Schultz has volunteered to act as chairperson for the time being. She is not willing to commit yet for the long term, but Pr Joy and I are grateful for the leadership she's willing to offer this group. We have nearly finalized a letter to the congregation and will be formulating a sort of listening process to get our congregation talking. We want to learn more about how our members are feeling and what we already know, especially in regards to racism and antiracism. Together, we've finished reading *Color of Compromise*, which details the church's contributions to racism in this country. Next, we've decided to read *My Grandmother's Hands*, which will equip us to metabolize the trauma that racism has perpetuated or instilled in our bodies and the bodies of others. The text focuses on the trauma held by white bodies, black bodies, and blue bodies (professional law enforcement) and explores the ways of settling the vagus nerve and opening neurological pathways so we can heal our racially divided communities.
- **First Communion:** We are still planning on accomplishing First Communion classes and service(s), but things are going slower than at first planned. Pr Nikoli will be surveying our families to get a sense of learning preferences, participating numbers, and when families would like to recognize their children's presence at the table. We have identified Pentecost Sunday and Holy Trinity Sunday as potential dates for mass recognitions and will open any 2nd Sunday of the month as well for families wanting to look outside those two Sunday services.

### 3. Treasurer's Report

- Offerings through February were \$61,613. This is down \$4,818 from 2020 (January and February 2020 were before the pandemic).
- Total expenses through February have been \$72,718. This is deficit of \$11,105 between income and expenses.
- The budgeted amount through February was \$82,705. So, our expenses are running \$9,986 below the budgeted amount through February.
- The Controlled Savings Balance was \$131,669.
- The Bank Balance at the end of February was \$97,163.

### 4. Committee Reports

- **Property Committee:** Marc spoke with Tony at ISG to get a better understanding of their report regarding air quality. After the committee reviewed the recommendations from ISG they determined that they really needed a better understanding of the vision for our church building for the coming years. **See Action Item 2.** In the meantime the committee felt it was important to get some more areas of the church useable such as the narthex, offices and library so we can at least return to "normal" business. **See Action Item 3.**
- **Community Life:** They are working on drive-by events for mother's and father's day, gift bags for 2021 graduates, and Moon Dog baseball game attendance.

- Children, Youth and Family: Sunday school is returning to a modified in-person platform but will also continue to be virtual beginning March 14. They are working on plans for Affirmation of Baptism service, Baccalaureate service, GLLM camp, VBS, Shetek Day Camp, Mission Week, and the Luminary Event on Palm Sunday. They identified the Children’s Weekend Food Program (CWFP) as a potential recipient of our Lenten offerings.
- Worship, Music and Arts: They decided on the time of 7:00 pm for the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services. They would like to see a reservation system be used for Easter Sunday to determine if another service would be needed. After discussion it was decided by unanimous consent that we will not require reservations for Easter, rather **we will plan on having 2 services that day at 8:00 am and 9:30 am**. Extra helpers will be needed to disinfect the sanctuary and commonly touched surfaces between services.
- Mission: The committee continues to work closely with the St Peter Area Foodshelf to identify needs. They have also been trying to address the substantial void caused by “The Kitchen” not serving meals at this time. They have started delivering meals 2 Mondays per month to the residents at Estate Apartments as that community consistently attended the Monday night meals prior to Covid. They also identified the CWFP as a potential recipient of our Lenten offerings. Two other potential recipients were identified at this time, the local Somalia Grocery Store (by Marc) and the Food for the People program in St. Paul (by Pastor Joy). **See Action Item 4.**
- Adult Education: They are looking into the possibility of offering an in-person, one time viewing of the Simpson Forum series. Adult Forum will resume on April 11.
- Stewardship: They mapped out a plan for their activities for the year and are currently working on Volunteer Appreciation Recognition in April. They also identified the CWFP as a potential recipient of our Lenten offerings.

**B. Actions Taken:**

1. **Motion M/S/P to approve the minutes of the February Council meeting.**
2. **Motion M/S/P to have Pastor Joy contact the ELCA to set up a 10 week building study that will identify the vision for use of the church building for the next several years.**
3. **Motion M/S/P for Marc to consult with ISG and at least one other company to review what is needed to make more areas of the church useable.**
4. **Motion M/S/P to designate our Lenten offering to the local Somali Grocery Store, and the CWFP.**

**C. Responsibilities Assigned:** none

**D. Next meeting:** April 13, 2021 at 6:30 pm.

**30-60-90**

**February**

- Feb 3, 10 The Simpson Forum
- Feb 17 Ash Wednesday (7pm service)
- Feb 24 Lenten Service (7pm)

**March**

- Mar 3, 10, 17, 24 Lenten Services (7pm)
- Mar 28 Palm Sunday

**April**

- Apr 1 Maundy Thursday
- Apr 2 Good Friday
- Apr 4 Easter (2 services 8 am and 9:30 am)
- Apr 5 Offices Closed