

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
**Church Council Meeting Minutes – October 12, 2021**  
**Reporting: Jennifer Hubrig**

**Present:** Cathy Carlson, Scott Fichtner, Nancy Kruger, Doug Minter, Sarah Nelsen, Barbara Simpson, Pastor Nikoli Falenschek, Pastor Joy Ekstedt, *Jennifer Hubrig*,

**Absent:** Marc Bachman, Andy Elofson, Brian Fell, Alie Hermanson,

The agenda for the meeting was approved with one addition.

**A. Business Discussed:**

**1. Pastor Joy's Report**

- In partnership with TLC Companions, I'm making visits again – both in person and phone calls -- to members. It's great to reconnect with them after my sabbatical.
- Wednesday evening worship services resumed September 15. While this worship time is open for anyone to attend, it is the perfect time for young families with confirmation students. We encourage them to attend worship together and then kids stay for their class time.
- Met with Tim Kennedy and Pastor Nikoli for conversation about new ways to get the word out to the community about TLC
- Met with Anti-Racism team regarding plans for the Sept 26 event supporting American Indian and Alaska Native brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Attended One Body, Many Members event planned by the Anti-Racism Taskforce. I "overheard" some very good conversations.
- Led Sunday School orientation session for 3 year olds and their parents. It's always renewing to see the enthusiasm of the kids that are excited to begin Sunday School
- Led confirmation for 5 & 6 and 7 & 8 grade classes. It's great to be back with them in person!
- Continue to serve as SPAM Chairperson and so gathered the pastors in our community for conversation. Since we hadn't met in person for some time, we welcomed Pastor Jack Kelly (St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran) and Father Craig Timmerman (Church of St. Peter). We also have two interim pastors serving in the area, Pastor Bill Nelsen (First Lutheran, St. Peter) and Pastor Bob Stover (Scandian Grove, Norseland)
- Resumed bible studies with Grace Street Bible study participants. We are digging into some of Jesus' parables recorded in Luke.
- Excited to begin book study the first week of October on *Enough: Discovering Joy Through Simplicity and Generosity* by Adam Hamilton. This book will also be the basis for our Stewardship focus before Stewardship Sunday.
- Met weekly with Pastor Nikoli for conversation about ministry at TLC.
- Met with Kristie to see how "things" are going for her now that the CYF program year is underway.
- The fall is extra busy for me since I meet with the Nominating Committee. This group doesn't meet monthly during the year, but instead puts in a lot of time for about 2 months as they work to fill the ballot for the annual meeting. They will likely begin meeting the end of October. Committee leaders are asked to submit names for openings on their committees.
- Had a wonderful surprise on October 3 to mark my 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ordination. It was a great day to have family and friends here who joined us for worship. Thank you to staff and Community Life for their work in making the celebration. Thank you, as well, to the Quilters and their handiwork in making the gift from the congregation. It is lovely!
- Will be out of the office for vacation October 11 and returning October 19. Since the October Council meeting will happen during this time, I will join that meeting via Zoom.

**2. Pastor Nikoli's Report**

- Queer-Affirming Bible Study: I'll be starting this new bible study on Oct. 7 at Chankaska. We've had an amazing response and have twenty-seven people signed up besides myself! This is a vastly stronger response than I anticipated and have had to modify slightly the way I'm leading the group

through the material—we'll gather as one large group but do a lot of our exploring in small groups via some workbooks I'm putting together. We'll ground our six-week study with *Unclobber* by Colby Martin and *Outside the Lines: How Embracing Queerness Will Transform Your Faith* by Mihee Kim-Kort.

- Confirmation: Confirmation on Wednesday nights is taking up a lot of my time and energy now, teaching two different topics each night and developing recreation curricula for their small-group times. That being said, I think we've found a groove and things are going well on Wednesday nights! I did have one parent approach me very frustrated by our current policy that requires parents to sign out their kids from Confirmation. We'll be chatting about this at the October CYF Committee meeting to revisit this policy. If we think changing the policy would be helpful, we'll share that with the Council at the October Council meeting.
- Confirmation Sunday: Confirmation Sunday is coming up quickly!! I'm developing and redeveloping our 9th-grade curriculum to accommodate this year's new schedule, which will include a 9th-grade lock-in, which Kristie is planning. Confirmation Sunday will be October 31 (Reformation Day) at 11am. I do have one student who can't make it on Wednesday nights to prepare for the 31st, so I'm meeting with them on Sunday afternoons.
- Anti-Racism Team: I'm grateful to ART and to the congregation for another successful event, Culture 101 that happened again in September. We're modifying that experience for our middle schoolers, and we'll be having conversations about culture during one of our October evenings.
- Confirmation Retreats: We took the 6th graders on a retreat to Shores of Saint Andrews (GLLM) for a Confirmation Retreat, which was a great success! Looking to the spring, we'll be planning another retreat for our 8th graders. A huge thanks to Kathy Kukacka for driving and chaperoning the retreat!
- Funeral: I officiated yet another funeral/memorial service, this time for Marvel Prafke who died in 2020. I was able to leave early from the Confirmation Retreat in order to make it back in time for the memorial service.
- Public Presence: We're currently taking stock of our publication and online presences, and are looking to renovate our schedule, method, and aims for publishing things like our website, newsletters, social networking, and even internal communication. We're hoping to roll out a new strategy for telling our story by Easter 2022.

### 3. Treasurer's Report

- Offerings through September were \$283,801. This is down \$16,221 from giving through September 2020.
- Total expenses through September have been \$326,647. This is deficit of \$42,846 between income and expenses.
- Of note, there was an "excess" of \$108,016 on 1/1/2021. That "excess" is now \$66,097.
- The budgeted amount through September was \$353,920. Expenses are running \$27,275 below the budgeted amount through September.
- The Controlled Savings Balance was \$144,149.
- The Bank Balance at the end of September was \$66,097.
- Offering are consistently trending down this year, primarily due to decreased engagement. The Finance and Executive Committees suggest that the Council start to look at the this issue and consider ideas for increasing engagement.

4. **Native Land Acknowledgement:** The Anti-Racism Team is requesting that council approve the placement of a plaque on the pillar by the parking lot entrance. This plaque (along with an orange flag that is already hanging there) would read as follows: *Trinity Lutheran Church is situated on the ancestral homeland of the Wahpeton, Wahpekute, Sisseton, Očhéthi Šakówiŋ, and other Dakota peoples, who were forcibly exiled from this land. Our congregation has benefited from the systematic oppression of these native peoples and resolves to repent of this injustice and participate in healing these hurts.* No motion was made and no action was taken. Tabled for November meeting.

5. **Child Abuse Prevention Policy Check-out Procedures:** A parent has complained to Pastor Nikoli about this process. The CYF committee discussed the matter and was wondering if an “opt-out” waiver could be signed. The Council determined that if this is an issue for several parents we would need to check on the legality of such a waiver. Given that there is only one complaint at this time the procedure will not be changed.
6. **Endowment Fund Request:** Pastor Nikoli presented an endowment request for a book study in the amount of \$1,250. **See Action Item 2.**
7. **Insurance Options**
  - The Finance Committee recommends to Council that we select the Primary Health Benefit option of Silver+ C with a one-time Employer HSA contribution of \$1,200 single/\$2,400 family in January 2022. **See Action Item 3.**
8. **November Committee Meeting Date:** The meetings are scheduled on Election Day, November 2. We are not legally required to move this meeting however each committee can choose to change the meeting date if their members request it.
9. **Committee Reports**
  - Property Committee: They will be meeting with Pastor Joy and perhaps Pastor Nikoli next Tuesday to discuss immediate and long term goals for the building. Also, the Kennedy/Snyders and Bachmans have agreed to split the expense of purchasing 5 high top tables for the narthex.
  - Community Life: Hosted the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ordination for Pastor Joy. Up next is Pumpkin Fest, then Christmas Caroling.
  - Children, Youth and Family: No report at this time.
  - Worship, Music and Arts: They have taken over candle filling and parament changing duties.
  - Mission: No report at this time.
  - Adult Education: Adult Forum continues and is going well.
  - Stewardship: They continue to go ahead with plans for the Commitment campaign and possible congregational dinner on Nov 21. They will make a decision on final plans at our Nov 2 meeting. They will have Temple Talks on Oct 24 and Nov 7. A letter will go out shortly after our next meeting announcing the campaign and theme.
  - Personnel: Staff reviews will be performed yet this year. They are working on finalizing the 20 hour per week Church Building Manager position job description and will look at filling that position next.

#### **B. Actions Taken:**

1. **Motion M/S/P to approve the minutes of the September Council meeting.**
2. **Motion M/S/P to approve the endowment request for Pastor Nikoli’s Bible Study, in the amount of \$1,250 to be taken from the Christian Education Endowment Spendables Fund.**
3. **Motion M/S/P to select the Portico Primary Health Benefit option of Silver+ C with a one-time Employer HSA contribution of \$1,200 single/\$2,400 family in January 2022.**

#### **C. Responsibilities Assigned:**

1. All Council members will bring ideas of how to reengage our members at Trinity.

#### **D. Next meeting:** November 9, 2021 at 6:30 pm

#### **30-60-90**

#### **October**

- 16 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Lock-in
- 19 A.R.T. 102
- 20 NO youth activities-MEA
- 24 Pumpkinfest
- 31 Reformation Sunday  
Affirmation of Baptism Service

**November**

- 7 All Saints Sunday  
Baptism at 9:30 am service
- 14 Commitment Sunday
- 19-21 Jr High Youth Gathering
- 25-26 Holiday-Offices Closed  
No youth activities
- 27 Hanging of the Greens
- 28 First Sunday in Advent

**December**

- 1 First Wednesday in Advent
- 5 New Member Sunday
- 12 Sunday School Christmas Program
- 24 Christmas Eve Worship Service