

Lutheran Church of the Cross
“Making Jesus Known by Sharing Our Gifts”
Council Meeting
February 11, 2021

Call to Order

President Mike Geiermann called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

In Attendance: Pastor Lisa Ahlness, Mike Geiermann, Cherie Krueger, Kylie Blanchard, Ron Borth (online), Kari Harris, Krisi Kunz, Art Wheeler, and Connie Werner (online).

Absent: Deacon Janie Hague and Mark Kunze.

Devotions

Pastor Lisa led the Council in prayer.

Approval of Prior Minutes

No changes to the submitted January meeting minutes.

Krisi motioned/Ron second/Approved

Treasurer’s Report

All bills and statements as of Jan. 31 have been paid. All January bank statements have been reconciled and registries are correct. Total income for January was \$38,301.53. This income included a single annual contribution of \$10,000. The total income was above the Operating Budget goal of \$31,855 by \$6,447. The January expenses were \$35,683.21. The contribution to the Western North Dakota Synod for January was \$1,824.

The Payment Protection Program (PPP) loan totaling \$47,550 was dispersed to the church on Feb. 1. The loan is to be used no sooner than eight weeks from the disbursement date and no later than 24 weeks from this date. Art suggested the PPP loan be used in March, April and May for payroll and Portico benefits paid by LCC. The full loan amount will be used in May. A motion was made by Ron to spend the PPP loan as such and Cherie seconded. The motion passed.

The bank disbursed the PPP loan into the Building Escrow Account (old Building Fund). The council discussed moving the funds to the General Fund, but it was decided to leave the loan amount in the Building Escrow fund and make the necessary transfer to the General Fund each month.

In April, the church’s property and liability insurance policies are up for renewal. The current annual insurance costs total \$8,200. Art inquired as to whether the Council would like to continue to use Bain Insurance as its insurance provider, and the Council agreed to continue to use Bain Insurance, who will now begin soliciting bids for annual insurance policies.

Art also reported Vanco contributions (electronic giving) for 2020 totaled \$42,000, which is 14 percent of the total giving to LCC.

Pastor’s Report

Pastor Lisa said February will be a busy month preparing for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. Wednesday Lent services will include a series of filmed sermons titled “Jesus on the Way.” Sundays during Lent will also include a series titled “Unraveled,” covering different stories in the Bible. Ash Wednesday will be

held in person and online, with ashes “to-go” available for pick up at the church. Maundy Thursday service will include the Living Last Supper and First Communion. Good Friday service will be held at 7 p.m. Easter services will include an 8am in-person service and a 10am online service.

A small wedding was held at the church on Jan. 30 and a private baptism was held on Feb. 12. Pastor Lisa attended the Camp of the Cross Board meeting and Endowment Fund committee meeting and will also attend the Camp of the Cross Annual Meeting on Feb. 28.

Krisi noted she was asked if Confirmation will be moving back to full, in-person classes. Pastor Lisa noted a message was sent to Confirmation families earlier in the year regarding this step and many were not wanting to come back to full in-person classes. She said one grade level attends in-person each week and there are kids that sing/attend Wednesday services and they attend in-person each week. She noted they continue to be cautious as students who attend confirmation have been quarantined throughout the school year.

Director of Discipleship Report

Deacon Janie submitted her report via email to the Council prior to the meeting:

- 1.) The Education team had its first meeting on Tuesday February 9th. It was a great meeting; the team discussed their hopes and dreams for the upcoming year. We imagined what our vision of the education team to be. We plan to meet again March 9th.
- 2.) Four 3rd graders received their bibles in January.
- 3.) I am busy planning for 1st communion classes coming up in March, I have been in conversation with all the 3rd and 4th graders about upcoming classes.
- 4.) Pastor Lisa and I are leading Financial Peace university starting Feb 21st – goes on for 9 weeks.
- 5.) I am looking at some high school bible studies that revolve around mental health.
- 6.) I am planning Palm Sunday activities.
 - a. 5 church Palm Sunday easter egg hunt. Kind of like geo catching. Families get directions to the church. We will walk through the holy week story. At each stop participants will get eggs and an item to remind them of a part of holy week. Participants have to register. I will put this in the March Newsletter and email it out to our church school and confirmation families.
 - b. Palm Sunday virtual parade. Congregation members will take home a palm branch the week before Palm Sunday and record themselves waving a palm. They then have to send the video to Janie. We will show the video during our worship service on Palm Sunday. More information will also be put in the newsletter, bulletin, and email.
- 7.) I continue to attend text study with other rostered leaders in our area.

8.) I will be gone March 13-14th to Camp of the Cross for the spring WND LYO (Western North Dakota Synod Lutheran Youth Organization) board meeting. I sit on the board as an adult advisor for our conference, the Heart River conference.

9.) I attended the ELCA youth ministry network conference February 4th-6th. It was a virtual event. The workshops and general sessions revolved around mental health, racial justice issues, and how to do youth ministry in a pandemic.

Old Business

Donated Painting

Pastor Lisa noted a 1964 original Gary Miller painting was recently donated to the church by Doug and Deanna Johnson. The picture is currently in the conference room, and its permanent place in the church will be determined at a later date.

Special Assessments

Ron noted the church currently owes a remaining \$12,321 in special assessments from a 2010 neighborhood roads improvement project. The interest paid on these assessments is currently 3.9 percent and, with the church's current stable financial situation, he recommended the Council consider paying off the special assessments.

Krisi noted a congregational meeting was held in March 2020, which approved the Council moving forward with paying off the special assessments when funds were available. Ron made a motion to pay off the special assessments balance in full from funds available in the General Fund. Kari seconded. During discussion, President Mike noted he was not comfortable paying off the total in one lump sum, but would rather pay off the total in installments in 2021. Kylie agreed, noting there is still uncertainty in the year ahead and Cherie suggested setting up quarterly payments in 2021, starting with March 1.

Ron amended his motion to pay off the special assessment in four quarterly payments of \$3,080 in March, June, Sept. and Dec. Kari seconded. The motion passed.

New Business

Kitchen Floor Scrubber

Connie provided background on the need for a special floor scrubber for the kitchen because the floor, installed by Garage Logic, is made up of epoxy and small flecks of materials, making it uneven and hard to clean conventionally. When the floor was installed, Garage Logic recommended a floor scrubber be purchased. At the time, many volunteers came forward to clean the floor regularly and the scrubber was not purchased. Conventional methods of cleaning did not work well, and the church recently had the floor resurfaced and cleaned by Garage Logic. They again recommended purchasing a floor scrubber. The church's cleaning team has also requested the floor scrubber be purchased.

J&R Vacuum carries the specific floor scrubber needed and quoted the church \$1,699 (without tax) for the appropriate model. Pastor Lisa noted, \$1,000 from Dan's Supermarket receipts would soon be available and could be used to offset the cost of this equipment. Art noted the floor scrubber would be paid for from funds designated under Repairs & Maintenance.

Krisi made a motion to purchase the Lindhouse Electric Floor Scrubber LW38 at an estimated total cost of \$1,800 (including tax) and use the \$1,000 in Dan's Supermarket receipt rewards to off-set the cost. Kari seconded and the motion passed. Connie will order the floor scrubber immediately.

Payment for Guitar Accompanist

President Mike noted at the Annual Meeting Deb Carpenter recommended the Council consider paying Marin Traynor for her guitar accompaniment on Wednesday nights. Pastor Lisa noted she is the main accompaniment on that night and puts in time to practice on Sundays as well. Currently, the church pays main accompaniment \$40-50 per service and other accompaniment \$10-20 per service.

The Council discussed those options of payment as well as providing a "Thank You" gift card in May, prior to the Wednesday service summer break. Kari noted, while many in the church's volunteers do so without expecting to get paid, it is important to also recognize the efforts of the younger members of the church to continue to encourage them step into leadership roles in the church. Cherie said she supported the idea of a "Thank You" stipend in May. Art also noted if the church started paying Maren regularly, it would also be required to pay social security, Medicare, etc. and treat the payment as if she were an employee. The Council decided to table to topic until the April Council meeting.

COVID-19 Guidelines and Restrictions

President Mike noted COVID-19 numbers are currently going down in the community/state and the Council should begin discussion of how this might change the current guidelines the church has in place. The guidance from the Synod is the state and federal government can provide guidelines for churches, but cannot mandate these guidelines at churches – it is up to the churches to create their own guidelines.

LCC currently allows 50 people in the sanctuary at one time, provides for social distancing, urges masks be used in the building, and completes additional disinfecting as needed. Current attendance is around 50 people, which is what is allowed under the church's current guidelines. Pastor Lisa noted the sanctuary could still safely distance a total of 100 people and the multi-purpose room is also available for overflow needs.

Ron made a motion to keep all current guidelines in place set by the church, with the exception of increasing the number allowed in the sanctuary to 100. This guideline can also be changed to address any future changes in COVID-19 numbers. Krisi seconded and the motion passed.

Council Retreat and Portfolio Assignments

A Council Retreat was scheduled for Saturday, March 20, from 9 – 11am at the church.

Portfolios were assigned as follows:

Worship and Music – Cherie Krueger

Christian Education – Mark Kunze

Congregational Nurturing – Krisi Miller

Congregational Operations – Ron Borth and Kylie Blanchard

Generosity Team – Kari Harris

Next Meeting

Thursday, March 11 at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.