

**Lutheran Church of the Cross**  
**“Making Jesus Known by Sharing Our Gifts”**  
**Council Meeting**  
**April 8, 2021**

**Call to Order**

President Mike Geiermann called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

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

**Absent:** Mark Kunze.

**Devotions**

Pastor Lisa led the Council in prayer.

**Approval of Prior Minutes**

No changes to the submitted March meeting minutes.

Ron motioned/Cheri second/Approved

**Treasurer’s Report**

All bills and statements as of March 31 have been paid. All March bank statements have been reconciled and registries are correct.

The PPP Loan was originally deposited in the “old” Building Fund. Since its principal is being used starting in March for salaries, with concurrence from our Auditor, the total loan of \$47,550 has been transferred to the General Operating Fund. Thus, it also shows as March income. This is a one-time entry.

Total normal income for March was \$31,805.15. The total income was only \$50 less than the Operating Expense Budget. The March expenses were \$29,779.56. This total indicates a net gain of \$2,025.59 for the month. For January – March 2021, expenses are all in a reasonable range and are \$14,220 below the adopted budget.

The contribution to the Western North Dakota Synod for March will be \$1,385.

Krisi motioned to approve the Treasurer’s Report/Kylie second/Approved

Art noted, despite significant research by the church’s Bain Insurance represented, the church’s building insurance coverage is going to increase nearly 60 % for 2021-2022. The church purchased a policy through Auto Owners last year, and the company still offers the cheapest option for the church’s coverage. The new policy will cost approximately \$8,000 and the building coverage for 2020-2021 was \$4,975. That is the lowest quote that was available to the church and a 10% discount is available if paid in full. This would be a total of \$7,255, which would exceed the adopted budget amount by \$830.

The total budget amount for building and liability insurance is \$8,300 and the total insurance package for 2021 would be \$9,120. The discounted amount of \$7,255 for building coverage will be paid April 9, when it is due. Half of the liability coverage cost was paid in early April and the remainder will be due in September.

Ron motioned to pay the new building insurance premium rate. Kari seconded. Motion passed.

### **Pastor's Report**

Pastor Lisa led the Six Weeks on Money course, a Synod pilot project, and noted those who participated said it was a worthwhile course and very different from Financial Peace University, which she is also currently leading at the church.

She has also resumed some in-person visits and was able to visit families that have recently experienced the loss of a loved one. It was the first time in a year she was able to visit with people in their homes.

She continues to participate in continuing education version webinars.

Pastor Lisa noted Holy Week services were well attended and she asked Cheri to recap the services as discussed by the Worship and Music Committee meeting earlier in the evening. Cheri noted the Living Last Supper was well-received at both services, which also celebrated first communion. The 5:30 p.m. service had 99 attendees and the 7:30 p.m. service had 93 attendees. The Good Friday service had 40 people in attendance and the Easter Morning 8 a.m. service had 70 people and 10 a.m. service had 137 people in attendance. All of the services, except the early Easter service, were live streamed.

### **Director of Discipleship Report**

Deacon Janie noted first communion classes went well. The kids participated in making communion bread and next year she hopes to invite church members who make the communion bread to teach the first communion students. The Maundy Thursday Services also went well.

The Palm Sunday Easter Egg story hunt had 213 youth registered between five area churches. The Easter Egg hunt told the story of Holy Week. The Youth Church Services will be held on May 9 and May 12. The Graduation Service will be held May 16 and May 19 to celebrate the church's eight graduating high school seniors.

Deacon Janie has been in contact with the UCC church regarding Vacation Bible School at the beginning of June. It is UCC's summer to host, but the intention is to have most of the activities outside and LCC has more green space to host activities. Although further discussion will take place, LCC will likely be hosting VBS this summer.

She continues to participate in weekly text studies as well as in ministry meetings with the area's youth leaders. Senior High Youth Group will also be resuming this spring, as requested by the youth.

Deacon Janie is exploring the idea of planning an LCC Camping weekend this summer at Ft. Abraham Lincoln State Park. She would reserve camping sites and congregation members could camp there together or just join in gathering together for fellowship and an outdoor service. Another option could be General Sibley park. Deacon Janie will look into options for this summer event.

Two LCC youth are working at Camp of the Cross this summer: McKenzie Johnson and Marin Traynor.

The Education Team met and requested the Council ask the Synod for tools that may be available to guide reopening the church. Pastor Lisa noted the Synod has Covid guidance on its website.

An email was sent to confirmation families to ask their feedback in coming back to confirmation in person for the remainder of the school year. Deacon Janie noted all of the responses she received thus far have been in favor of returning to in-person confirmation. This would start April 21 and would be held in-person for four weeks, with a virtual option remaining in place.

## **Old Business**

### **Special Assessments**

President Mike sent a letter to the City of Bismarck to ask the city to explain why the church, as a non-profit, has to pay special assessments. He received a response from the City Engineer, citing cases that don't apply to his question. He will follow-up with another letter that asks for further explanation.

Janie noted, if the church is required to pay the new special assessments, she has a fundraiser in mind to help off-set these costs.

### **Reopening of LCC**

President Mike noted Holy Week went really well, with almost all in attendance wearing masks. The Council discussed raising the number allotted in the sanctuary and decided 150 is a good place to remain at this time, as they are not expecting more than 150 people at a service. The Council also noted it would like to keep current masks and social distancing signage in place. This will be reassessed at the next Council meeting.

Krisi also noted she has been asked by church members if the Council would reconsider opening up fellowship/coffee time. She noted fellowship is a big gap that is missing for people and the longer we restrict the social aspect of church, we may risk losing people. Kari noted many people are vaccinated and ready to see others. Ron noted it is possible to just have fellowship time and not have coffee available, which means people will be unmasking to drink coffee and someone has to clean up/wash dishes.

Many of the Council members noted it comes down to personal responsibility and comfort and were in favor of allowing those who want to have fellowship to be allowed to at the church. There can be fellowship, but the expectation of masking and social distancing would also stay in place.

Kari motioned to institute fellowship with masking and social distancing, but not provide coffee at the church at this time. Ron seconded and the motion carried.

The Council will revisit this topic at its next Council meeting and adjust the guidelines accordingly.

### **Mother's Day Brunch**

A Mother's Day Drive-Up Brunch will be held on May 9 as a fundraiser for Camp of the Cross, the month's alter focus for "Mother the Camp." A call for volunteers will be put out and sign-up sheets will be available in the narthex. Wishek sausage will be purchased. If the weather is nice, tables will be set up outside for those who want to eat at the church.

## **New Business**

### **Membership List**

Pastor Lisa noted one of the duties of the Council is to do an annual review of the church's membership. A task force of council members and staff will conduct this review. This includes Pastor Lisa, Deacon Janie, Connie, Kylie and Cheri. Kylie will also draft a letter to go out to members regarding their membership status. Each Council member will also look through the membership list and provide feedback/changes at the next Council meeting. A copy of the current directory has also been placed on the table in the narthex for church members to review their information and update accordingly.

### **Church Keys**

Deacon Janie noted she was asked by a member to check out a church key and there were no more left to do so. She noted the church should request members let the office know if they have a key, so there is a list available. An announcement will be made regarding church keys.

### **Wednesday Summer Worship**

Pastor Lisa is working to schedule summer worship days for June, July and August. She said it has traditionally been the 2nd Wednesday of the month, but it would be nice to coordinate the June date with VBS. She noted a BBQ could still be held, but only have pre-packaged/prepared food available and not have a potluck.

Krisi noted members have asked about continuing the Wednesday service through the summer. Pastor Lisa said it has been tried in the past, but attendance was very low.

### **Computer**

Deacon Janie is in need of a new laptop computer and she is next on the rotation for computer replacement. \$2,500 is budgeted and Janie will work with Tom Harris to order a new computer. Ron made a motion to approve the purchase of a new computer within the budgeted amount and Cheri seconded. The motion passed.

### **Next Meeting**

Thursday, May 13 at 6:30 p.m.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.