

Lutheran Church of the Cross
“Making Jesus Known by Sharing Our Gifts”
Council Meeting
May 13, 2021

Call to Order

President Mike Geiermann called the meeting to order at 6:36 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 April meeting minutes.

Cherie motioned/Krisi second/Approved

Treasurer’s Report

All bills and statements as of April 30 have been paid, and all April bank statements have been reconciled and registries are correct.

Total income for April was \$40,321.06, which includes charitable gifts of \$4,600. The total income exceeded the Total Budget by \$2,100 and exceeded the Operating Budget by \$8,466. The April expenses were \$34,220.83, which includes the \$7,200 one-time insurance payment. This total indicates a net gain of \$6,100 for the month. Expenses for January-April 2021 are \$10,302 below adopted budget. The contributions to the Western North Dakota (WND) Synod for April will be \$1,925.

Jo Wilson of Merry-Go-Round has indicated she plans a summer camp the month of June. She will remit monthly rent for June.

Kylie motioned to accept the Treasurer’s Report/Cherie seconded/Approved.

Contributions to the WND Synod through April were \$6,000. The budgeted goal for contributions for the year is \$25,000. In June, the total of contributions, according to the budgeted goal for the year, should be \$12,500. Art asked the Council to consider making an additional contribution in June to meet the half-way point of this budgeted contribution, which, based on current monthly income, would be approximately \$2,000. The Council decided to table this decision until the June meeting.

There is \$11,500 left in the PPP Loan amount and by the end of May, there will be approximately \$800 remaining. Art noted he will use the remaining \$800 in the first half of June.

Pastor’s Report

Pastor Lisa noted three funerals and one baptism were recently held at the church.

Confirmation is scheduled to end on May 19. Pastor Lisa continues to participate in weekly text study, which is now meeting again in person, as well as monthly check-ins with the conference.

She participated in the LCC Women's Retreat "Surviving and Thriving" on April 21 at the Camp of the Cross. She also noted a opportunity for the church to participate in Summer Sundays at Camp at Camp of the Cross. Congregations can sponsor a Summer Sunday through hosting a meal with a \$500 donation.

Weekly Wednesday worship services will end on May 19. Summer Wednesday Worship will be held once a month on June 16, July 14 and August 11.

Pastor Lisa said Jan and Joel Gilberston have officially announced their retirement from the Worship Team. She noted the Council should consider making plans for bringing in an accompanist for worship and suggested putting an ad up at the area colleges to possibly attract a piano major. The Council will discuss further in June how best to thank the Gilbertsons for their many years of sharing their incredible talents with the church.

Director of Discipleship Report

Church school ended on April 25 and the Youth Service was held on May 9. Graduation service will be held on Sunday, May 16, and Wednesday, May 19. There are nine graduates in 2021.

Deacon Janie continues to meet with the Education Team and the group is currently planning a retreat to focus on long-term planning. She also continues to meet with local ministry groups.

Vacation Bible School will be held June 6-9 from 6-7 p.m. UCC is planning the event, but it will be held at LCC. Janie will be gone May 25 – June 8 and will return on June 9. Heather Martin has agreed to be the point of contact for UCC in coordinating VBS.

Old Business

Special Assessments

President Mike received another letter from the City Engineer regarding his question as to why the church, as a non-profit, has to pay special assessments. The letter included a lengthy Attorney General's opinion, which President Mike will review and provide a full report to the Council at the June meeting.

Reopening of LCC

Coffee fellowship has resumed after services, with continued precautions in place. Art noted dishwashers are needed on Sundays, as well as an individual to coordinate volunteers. This could include adults as well as confirmation kids looking for service hours. Cherie will work with a list of previous volunteers and contact them to see if they are willing to help and/or coordinate these efforts.

Pastor Lisa noted the Worship and Music Committee is wondering when regular communion can resume. She said she doesn't know of any other churches that are back to full communion at this time. The Council decided to table this discussion until the June meeting.

New CDC guidance related to masks was recently released, which means many places are no longer requiring masks to be worn. Although the church has not required masks, but has strongly encouraged their use in the building, the church has worked to follow CDC guidelines. The Council discussed removing the use of masks in the church, but also encouraging those who want to wear them to still

continue to do so. Krisi motioned to adopt the CDC guidelines regarding masks at LCC/Kari seconded/Approved.

Mother's Day Brunch

A Mother's Day Drive-Up Brunch was held on May 9 as a fundraiser for Camp of the Cross. The event was a great success. A total of 134 to-go meals were served at the church, as well as through the drive-up option. Free-will donations from the brunch totaling \$3,621 were given to Camp of the Cross, along with an additional \$1,150 in memorials in honor of Roger Pommerer.

Membership List

Connie noted about half of the church's membership has reviewed the membership information in the binder in the church narthex. Kylie will draft a letter to send out to those members that have not had the opportunity to review their membership/contact information that is on file.

Confirmation Pictures

Four of the five missing confirmation pictures that are needed to update the confirmation picture boards are now on file at the church. Connie noted the fifth and final picture should also be at the church soon.

New Business

Drawing Membership

Ron noted that churches are using specialty coffee/coffee shops to draw in additional membership. He said at some churches the youth are raising funds by selling specialty coffee as well. He said this may be something for the church to consider in the future and noted New Life Church and the 12 Stones Coffee shop. Krisi noted a church Peace Lutheran in Lincoln also has a coffee shop at its facility.

Lawn Care

Baron Blanchard will be mowing the church lawn this summer.

Summer Office Hours

Summer office hours will go into effect after Memorial Day and the office will be open 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. through the summer. This provides the church staff the opportunity to take part in visiting and outreach during the summer that doesn't happen during the busy schedule of the rest of the year. The church staff is also available by appointment when the office is not open in the afternoons.

Carpet Cleaning

The carpet in the main traffic areas of the church is needing to be cleaned. Connie will collect estimates for this service and will report to the Council at the June meeting.

Staff Salary Adjustment

When the 2021 budget was being developed there was a significant amount of discussion among the Budget Committee as well as the Council regarding staff salary and raises in the coming year. Pastor Lisa's salary was at the bottom of the Synod's recommended salary range and Deacon Janie's was at the top of the recommended range. The Council wanted to bring Pastor Lisa's salary to the mid-range of the synod's salary recommendation. In addition, it was noted employee reviews had not be completed for a number of years, which could also impact salary raise considerations. The Council decided to provided raises of 2.7% for Pastor Lisa and 1% raises for Janie and Connie, with a review of staff salary

adjustments again in June 2021, when a better picture of the church's finances was available and impacts of the pandemic could be better assessed.

Art provided information to the Council members prior to the meeting outlining the financial impacts of additional raises for the last 6 months of 2021, including social security and Portico. An additional 2.3% raise for Pastor Lisa would bring her salary to the mid-range of the Synod recommendation at an additional cost of \$721 total for the remaining six months of 2021. Providing an additional 1.5% increase to Deacon Janie would be a total cost of \$512 and a 1.5% increase for Connie would be a total cost of \$482 for the remaining six-months of 2021. The total cost for providing the noted raises for all three full-time staff members would be \$1,940.10 or \$323.33 per month.

Art noted the church was in a position, with sufficient cash flow, for the Council to consider the mid-year salary adjustments. The church's General Fund totals \$170,000 and LCC has also received generous charitable gifts which exceed the six-month salary adjustment noted above. To date, the church's expenditures are also \$15,000 below the adopted budget, which allows the salary adjustments to be made without amending the current budget.

Ron motioned to move forward with the mid-year salary adjustments for the last half of 2021/Kylie seconded/Approved in a 5-1 vote.

The option was presented to start the salary adjustment on June 1, which would implement it for seven months of 2021. Ron motioned to begin the pay adjustments effective June 1/Kari seconded/Approved. This adds an additional \$323.33 for a total of \$2,263.43 over seven months.

President Mike thanked Art for his hard work in providing figures to the Council. He also noted the revival of the employee evaluation process will be discussed at the June meeting.

Additional Notes

A special assessment payment of \$3,000 will be made on June 1, as part of the plan to pay off the church's remaining specials in four installments in 2021.

\$40,000 in promissory note redemptions will be made on June 1.

The Council discussed providing a gift card for Marin Traynor to thank her for her guitar accompaniment for the Wednesday night service. Ron motioned to gift Marin a \$200 gift card/Krisi seconded/Approved.

Next Meeting

The Council decided to hold the June meeting in conjunction with the summer Wednesday BBQ and Worship on June 16. The meeting will be held at approximately 6:30 p.m. following worship.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.