

Lutheran Church of the Cross
“Making Jesus Known by Sharing Our Gifts”
Council Meeting
July 14, 2021

Call to Order

President Mike Geiermann called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Pastor Lisa Ahlness, Deacon Janie Hague, Mike Geiermann, Kylie Blanchard, Ron Borth, Kari Harris, Krisi Kunz, Art Wheeler, and Mark Kunze.

Absent: Cherie Krueger and Connie Werner

Devotions

Pastor Lisa led the Council in prayer.

Copier Presentation

The five-year lease on the church’s current copier machine is up on Dec. 31. Patrick Bitz from Fireside Office Products spoke to the Council regarding the church’s options as the lease expires. The church has the option of purchasing the current machine, buying a new machine outright, or leasing a new copier machine. The current lease is a 60-month lease at \$307.64 (includes service contract).

The church could purchase the current machine for approximately \$2,345, plus an annual \$1,211 service contract; upgrade to a new machine for a lump sum purchase price of \$9,470; or enter a lease payment option (which includes the service contract) at 36 months/\$366.08 per month, 48 months/\$319.68 per month, or 60 months/\$278.96 per month. Bitz recommended leasing a new machine, as technologies change quickly, and it would ensure compatibility with changing computers and software. He noted the monthly lease amounts could be adjusted slightly depending on the yearly copier count totals that are figured into the lease agreement.

The Council tabled the topic until a future meeting.

Approval of Prior Minutes

No changes to the submitted June meeting minutes.

Kari motioned/Mark second/Approved

Treasurer’s Report

All bills and statements as of June 30 have been paid and all bank statements reconciled and registries are correct. The total normal adjusted income for June was \$19,279. The June adjusted expenses were \$32,306 for a total net loss of \$13,026 for the month. The expense total was adjusted to not include the prepaid special assessments. The expenses continue to be in line or below the adopted budget, which helps the Operating Fund cash flow. Expenses for January – June are \$19,001 below the adopted budget.

The SBA and American Bank Center have issued a formal letter of acceptance of the church’s PPP Loan Forgiveness application. The loan no longer exists.

Recent payments were made out of the Old Building Fund for the parking lot repair and carpet cleaning. The total of the Old Building Fund is now at \$38,500.

Art noted in previous years the Council has approved semi-annual benevolences payments at the mid-point of the year. LCC contributed \$8,628 to the Western North Dakota Synod in the first 6-months of the year. If the Council wants to accomplish its “half-way” goal of \$12,500 to the WND Synod there is a difference of \$3,872. In addition, the semi-annual benevolence payment to Missouri Slope is \$1,750. Art also noted the Council has sent out semi-annual giving statements and last year these were sent in September.

President Mike suggested deferring the “half-way” payment to the Synod until September after the summer months, as well as sending semi-annual giving statements in September and the Council agreed.

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

Ron motioned to make the \$1,750 semi-annual benevolence payment to Missouri Slope/Kylie seconded/Approved.

Pastor’s Report

Pastor Lisa noted she recently returned from a week off.

On July 25, LCC is sponsoring the Sunday Summer meal following worship at Camp of the Cross. LCC members are encouraged to attend, and service will also be held at LCC that Sunday as well.

Three funerals have recently been held at LCC. Pastor Lisa continues to hold the Wired Word bible study each Friday and continues to participate in monthly Conference check-ins and continuing education webinars.

She thanked the volunteers who came to move tables and chairs before and after the carpets were cleaned at the church. On July 11, A.J. Marx wrote the sermon for the church service and Gary Heaton presided over the service. Pastor Lisa noted the church is moving back to more of a “normal” worship service with attendees coming forward for communion and sharing of the peace being placed back in the service. Those in attendance can still choose to not participate in these parts of worship.

Pastor Lisa recently met with the Education Team and she is looking forward to the start of confirmation and church school in September. She noted she will be gone on vacation Aug. 20 – Sept. 11.

Sanctuary Projector Maintenance

Tom Harris spoke to the Council regarding what is believed to be a failed projector bulb in the sanctuary. He noted the bulbs are rated for 2,000 hours of use and this bulb has logged only 650 hours of use. Unfortunately, the bulb is outside of its warranty period and a new bulb will need to be purchased and installed. He said the options are to have AVI buy a bulb at an estimated cost of \$350 and have them install it or have AVI service the projector to ensure it is the bulb and, if it is not the bulb, just pay for the service done to the projector. Tom asked for approval of a maximum of \$1,000 for maintenance and bulb replacement (with the thought the cost will be less than this amount) and the Council approved this request.

Director of Discipleship Report

Deacon Janie said many Youth Activities are taking place in July. Bowling on July 11; Raging Rivers Day and Outdoor Movie Night on July 14; Movie Theater Night on July 21; and Ice Cream Social on July 28.

The Education Team has also continued to meet. They are now working to plan August youth activities and Rally Day activities.

She asked the Council to consider implementing background checks on all individuals working with youth at the church. She would like to begin to implement this practice as soon as possible and noted Safe Gatherings has packaging options available for churches to conduct multiple background checks. Deacon Janie will bring options/prices to the Council at the August meeting and asked the cost of this practice also be considered when budgeting for 2022.

Deacon Janie was contacted by Camp of the Cross to see if LCC was interested in traveling with them to the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis. She will address this further as planning for the Youth Gathering begins.

She noted three LCC youth, Bayne Blanchard, Megan Bassingwaithe, and Kolton Harris, have been working hard to re-design the Youth Room. They have been cleaning out items and preparing it for painting/decorating. They are also selling unused/unwanted games, DVDs, and CDs for a free will offering to those interested.

Deacon Janie will be at a continuing education workshop on July 21-22 focusing on how to de-escalate situations at work involving youth.

Viewing Windows in Doors

Kylie reached out to Lance Yanish, owner of Yanish Custom Exteriors, to get an idea of the cost of adding viewing windows or replacing the doors of three rooms used by the youth for Sunday School/Youth Room activities. Lance visited the church and determined viewing windows could be put into the current doors and noted he would like to complete the project at no cost to the church. He noted he would need to order the glass pieces and would then be able to take the doors and install the windows. Ron made a motion to have Yanish Custom Exteriors move forward with the project and install viewing windows into the existing three door/Kari seconded/Approved.

Membership Letter Response

Pastor Lisa noted a letter from the Council was sent out to LCC members that had not updated their contact information/membership status while the Council has been working to update the membership roster. Of the 116 letters sent, 30 members responded and there were 86 non-responses. Pastor Lisa noted follow-up will need take place with those that did not respond.

“Congregations Lead” Program Application

Pastor Lisa presented information on a nation-wide ELCA initiative called “Congregations Lead.” The initiative is a new, two-year program that will gather a cohort of 50 congregations from across the ELCA to unleash and harness their collective genius and discover new and useful ministry innovations. If selected, a congregation will learn how to innovate for the future, train with world-renowned innovation thought leaders, received personalized coaching for support and guidance, attend semi-annual learning events, and network with other congregations doing similar innovation work. To be eligible a congregation needs to be willing to experiment with new ministry ideas, commit to shared learning with its congregational team over the next two years, demonstrate an active curiosity about building new and stronger connections with people and groups in its community, and be ELCA affiliated.

Pastor Lisa recommended LCC submit an application for a chance to become one of the 50 congregations selected nationwide. The Council agreed that an application should be submitted, and she noted she would complete the application by the Aug. 15 deadline.

“Passing the Plate” Offering

Deacon Janie noted she has been asked about when the church service will again include the “passing of the plate” for offering. She noted people are liking that many of the elements of the service that were eliminated over the past year and a half are starting to come back. Pastor Lisa noted the Worship and Music Committee has talked about offering practices and has noted they would like to wait until the Fall to implement the “passing of the plate.”

Church Service Accompanist

Pastor Lisa noted the Worship and Music Committee has still been in discussion regarding finding a piano accompanist for church services. Currently, the church pays piano accompanists \$50 per service, with no payment for rehearsal. Pastor Lisa noted she will contact other churches to see what they pay piano accompanists and will provide additional information to the council at the August meeting. Art noted the current budget for church accompanists is \$3,000 and \$1,600 has been expended at the six-month mark of this year.

New Business

Staff Evaluations

President Mike noted he will meet with Pastor Lisa prior to the next council meeting to discuss the process for staff evaluations that will take place in the coming months.

Next Meeting

The August meeting will be held in conjunction with the summer Wednesday BBQ and Worship on August 11. The meeting will be held at approximately 6:30 p.m. following worship.

Adjournment

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