

**Lutheran Church of the Cross**  
**“Making Jesus Known by Sharing Our Gifts”**  
**Council Meeting**  
**September 9, 2021**

**Call to Order**

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

**In Attendance:** Deacon Janie Hague, Mike Geiermann, Kylie Blanchard, Kari Harris, Cherie Krueger, Krisi Kunz, Mark Kunze, Connie Werner, and Art Wheeler.

**Absent:** Pastor Lisa Ahlness and Ron Borth

**Devotions**

Deacon Janie led the Council in an “Empathy Map” exercise and discussion. Devotions closed with prayer.

**Approval of Prior Minutes**

No changes to the submitted August meeting minutes.

Kari motioned/Cherie seconded/Approved.

**Treasurer’s Report**

All bills and statements as of August 31 have been paid and all August bank statements and registries are correct. The August income fell \$6,277 short of the Operating Expense budget. Total normal adjusted income for August was \$25,577.95. The income for the first eight months is 80.78% of the total budget adopted, which includes the PPP program. The August adjusted expenses were \$29,907, which represents a loss of \$4,329.18 for the month. The expense total does not include any prepaid special assessments. The expenses continue to be in line with or below the adopted budget, which helps the Operating Fund cash flow. The contribution to the Western North Dakota Synod for August is \$1,223. LCC has contributed \$11,167 to the Synod in the first eight months of the year. Cherie motioned to accept the Treasurer’s Report/Krisi seconded/Approved.

Art provided the Council with information on 2022 Portico plan options for the church’s full-time staff members. The church currently uses the Gold+ plan and Art noted, if the Council approved the Gold + plan for 2022, the total Portico costs of the plan for all three full-time employees would increase \$700 for the year, one of the lowest increases seen in a number of years. He noted the increase was based on 2021 salaries and could change slightly depending on 2022 salary adjustments. Krisi motioned to approve the Gold + Portico plan for 2022/Kylie seconded/Approved.

Art asked the Council for approval to make a quarterly pre-payment on the church’s current special assessments. This would be the third of four payments that will be made in 2021 to pay off the current special assessment. The last payment will be made in December and the special assessments will be paid off in full at the end of the year. Mark motioned to make the quarterly payment on the special assessment/Cherie seconded/Approved.

Art noted the church received a proposed property tax estimate and the church’s property taxes are estimated to increase by \$82 in 2022.

A contract arrived to renew parking lot snow removal services with Bismarck Septic Excavating. The price of snow removal would raise from \$125 per time to \$138 per time up to 6" of snow. Connie noted, despite the raise in cost, this is still a very reasonable price for snow removal services. The church budgeted \$1,500 for this service in 2021 and has expended \$1,400 thus far in the year. Kylie motioned to approve the snow removal contract/Kari seconded/Approved.

The Council also discussed plans to recognize Pastor Lisa's 30 years of ordination on Sunday, Oct. 17.

### **Director of Discipleship Report**

Deacon Janie has preached each Sunday and completed hospital visits while Pastor Lisa has been on vacation. She also took part in the LCC camping weekend with the Wills at Fort Lincoln State Park.

The Back-to-School Worship at the end of August was well attended by many families and Rally Sunday will be held on Sept. 12. Deacon Janie will also attend the Rostered Leaders Retreat in Medora on Sept. 12-14.

Deacon Janie has continued to meet with the Education Team, and they have begun to implement many new ideas. She noted the Education Team is requesting permission to hang a projection screen in the Fellowship Hall, and possibly a projector, for use with church school and youth activities. The church already has a pull-down screen as well as a projector on hand. The projector could be mounted to the ceiling or placed on a table. Deacon Janie will look into additional costs associated with wiring and mounting a projector in the Fellowship Hall. The Council approved the hanging of a projector screen and recommended a portable projector be used until additional information on mounting/wiring a hanging projector is available.

Confirmation orientation was held on Wednesday, Sept. 8, as well as small group leader orientation and the confirmation mentor/mentee meeting for ninth graders preparing for confirmation. Church school starts on Sunday, Sept. 12, and Wednesday, Sept. 15. Deacon Janie noted a new event planned for the fall is the Confirmation Banquet that will be held on Oct. 30 to recognize the youth being confirmed on Oct. 31.

Deacon Janie noted the Worship and Music Committee requested Time and Talent Sheets be distributed prior to the planned Stewardship Fair on Sunday, Oct. 10, and Wednesday, Oct. 13. Connie said they could be sent and emailed prior that date. She will work on updating the form and send it to Council members for review. Krisi noted she would help create a fillable electronic version available to email to church members.

### **Old Business**

#### **CDC Guidelines/Masks**

Prior to September's Council meeting, President Mike asked the congregation to provide comments regarding the Council's approach to rising COVID-19 numbers in the community and church services/activities. President Mike and Council members noted the common theme in the emails and comments received was that members would like to see in-person worship continue and they did not want the church to shut down.

The Council discussed at length the best approach to keeping the church open and decided masking while in the building was the best option to ensure services and church activities could continue.

Krisi motioned to change the current mask policy to “masks are to be worn when in the church building”/Mark seconded/Approved in a 4-1 vote.

The following statement was drafted to be sent to all church members and posted on the church’s website: “To ensure the health, safety, and longevity of our congregation and staff, masks are to be worn while in the building. This ensures we can continue in person worship and programming activities. Mask will allow us to continue to build our church community and relationships at LCC until a time when COVID numbers begin to decrease. The Council is monitoring the ever-changing COVID environment in our community. We ask for your ongoing patience, kindness, and grace during this difficult time.”

Krisi noted some congregation members are also uncomfortable with going up front and being served communion. She recommended returning to individual communion cups but keep the option to go forward to receive the communion cup and blessing from servers in the front of the church. Cheri motioned, under the new mask policy, to go back to communion by individual cup/Krisi seconded/Approved.

The Council also decided to remove the Sharing of the Peace from the service and to not have kids come forward for the Children’s Sermon for the time being. The Council will re-evaluate these decisions and the ever-changing COVID situation at the October meeting.

### **Personnel Evaluations**

President Mike noted he will send an email to the Personnel Committee (which includes President Mike, Vice President Cherie, Secretary Kylie, and Ron) to set up a time to meet to discuss the process for staff evaluations that will take place this fall.

### **Stewardship Fair**

Deacon Janie noted a Stewardship Fair will be held on Sunday, Oct. 10, and Wednesday, Oct. 13. in the church narthex and fellowship hall. She noted the Wednesday fair may also have people at different locations around the church so confirmation kids can find them where they serve and see what they do for their committee. Cheri noted this event will be helpful in showing new families how they can get involved in the church.

### **Church Opener Position**

Art noted Suzy and Redg Finck have volunteered to open the church on Sunday mornings. They will begin on September 19. He noted the call could still go out for additional volunteers to fill in when needed, and he said he and Jeff Thomas will continue to fill in as well.

### **New Business**

#### **Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center (MSLCC) Annual Meeting Representatives**

Deacon Janie noted the church needs to submit the names of two delegates for the MSLCC annual meeting on September 27 at 7 p.m. Cherie Krueger volunteered to serve as a delegate and Deacon Janie was going to reach out to Stacy Krumwiede (MSLCC board member and LCC member) to see if she would be willing to also serve as a delegate for the church at the meeting.

### **Building Notes**

Kari noted doors are being left unlocked at the church and in particular the back door to the parking lot and the side door to the playground area. Kylie said she would reach out to the Building and Grounds Committee to let them know.

Janie asked about the status of the viewing windows being added to the three classroom/youth room doors in the church. Kylie said she would reach out to Yanish Custom Exteriors to check on the project's timeline. In addition, Janie noted there was one additional conference room door they would like to have a window added to and Kylie will check on that option as well.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct. 14, at 6:30 p.m.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.