

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

**Call to Order**

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

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

**Absent:** Deacon Janie Hague

**Devotions**

Pastor Lisa led the Council in prayer.

**Approval of Prior Minutes**

No changes to the submitted November meeting minutes.  
Krisi motioned/Cherie seconded/Approved.

**Treasurer’s Report**

All bills and statements as of November 30 have been paid and all November bank statements and registries are correct. The November income is \$29,956 above the Operating Expense budget and is also \$23,589 above the total adopted budget. Several charitable gifts are responsible for this increase.

The total income for November was \$61,811.04. The income for the first 11 months is 87% of the total adopted budget including the PPP income. The November expenses were \$27,752.33 and there was a profit of \$34,058.71 in operations for the month. The expenses continue to be in line or below the adopted budget. The contribution to the Western North Dakota Synod for November will be \$2,906. LCC has contributed \$16,771 to the Synod in the first 11 months of the year.

Art noted on November 30, \$50,000 in Promissory Note principle will be redeemed, leaving \$165,000 in Promissory Notes left to be redeemed.

Mark motioned to approve the Treasurer’s Report/Kylie seconded/Approved.

Art asked the Council if it would like to pay the second half of the church’s yearly benevolence to Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center, which would total \$1,750. The first payment of \$1,750 was made in July and the December payment would bring the yearly total to the budgeted amount of \$3,500. The Council was in consensus to pay the remaining benevolence to MSLCC.

Art asked the Council if, following the last Sunday in December, he should calculate the total giving for the month and the amount that would be given to the WND Synod in December. He would then figure out the total given in 2021 and figure the additional amount needed to bring this total up to the \$25,000 yearly total pledged by LCC. The Council approved him emailing the full Council on Monday, Dec. 27, with the amount needed to bring the total giving to the WND Synod to \$25,000 in 2021. The Council would then vote electronically on whether to give the stated amount prior to the end of the year, so it is included in the 2021 giving.

The last payment on the copier machine lease is due at the end of December totaling \$953.04. Art noted the church could save approximately \$10 in interest if the payment is made early. The Council approved Art making the payment early.

The Council has to appoint the Church Treasurer on an annual basis. Art noted he would like to continue as Treasurer and the Council thanked him for his hard work and dedication. Cherie motioned to appoint Art as Treasurer of Lutheran Church of the Cross/Krisi seconded/Approved unanimously.

As the end of the year approached, LCC has been getting more calls for benevolences and to help those in need. Art noted \$500 from the line item for general benevolences was used to purchase a retirement gift earlier in the year to honor the Gilbertsons for their many years of service to the church. He noted \$500 is available in the congregational generosity line item, which could also cover the gift and that would free up \$500 for additional benevolences. The Council was in consensus to move these funds to provide additional benevolences at year end.

### **Pastor's Report**

Pastor Lisa noted she continues to participate in many monthly events including the Gather Bible Study, Women in Ministry gatherings, Conference Deans and Conference check-ins, Synod Lunchtime Zoominars, and Camp of the Cross Board meetings. In addition, she is participating in weekly Text Study, Wired Word Bible Study, and teaching confirmation. She also recently attended a Suicide Prevention Training, which she said was very well done.

The Thanksgiving Day-Eve Service was held at Faith Lutheran Church, and all the many pillows, sheets and blankets that were collected for the month's alter focus were taken to Ministry on the Margins to be distributed.

Pastor Lisa recently noted she attended a workshop conducted by the ELCA attorney on dealing with anger in the church.

Advent Soup Dinners are being held prior to Wednesday Advent services. She noted Janie is cooking the soup and the confirmation groups are serving. The Holden Evening Prayer Service is being used on Wednesdays during Advent.

Pastor Lisa noted there are four upcoming baptisms being held at the church and Sunday, December 26, will be a Pajama Sunday for the story-based service following Christmas.

### **Director of Discipleship Report**

Deacon Janie emailed a report to the Council ahead of her absence from the meeting:

1. Youth team has met and is brainstorming ideas on how to "bring back our people" and continue to grow the faith formation at LCC. Youth have just not been coming to youth groups that have been offered, so we are going to think about new ways to try and bring them in at our next meeting and look at more intergenerational ways.
2. Christmas program practice has gone well. The program is Sunday the 19th at 10am.
3. I went through and completed an eight-week course through the ELCA training and became a level one coach through the ELCA.
4. I met with the church school teachers to check in on how the fall went, everyone had good things to report and stated that communication this fall has been great.

5. We have one youth signed up to go to the Youth Gathering in Minneapolis that will be in July 2022.

## **Old Business**

### **Outreach to Church Membership**

The Council received a suggestion to reach out to all church members to do a check-in, similar to the one completed by the Council and church members in 2020 when the church was closed due to pandemic restriction. It was discussed that Council members could call church members and introduce themselves and answer any questions they may have. Pastor Lisa, Cheri and Kari noted they would call church members. Krisi volunteered to send handwritten notes to those members who may not have access to a phone or like to talk on the phone. Pastor Lisa said she would create a list of questions for use during the calls and reach out to Council members with calling lists.

## **New Business**

### **Annual Meeting**

The Council set the Annual Meeting for Sunday, Jan. 30, following the 10am service. Pastor Lisa noted the meeting can be set up as a hybrid (in-person and virtual) meeting and legislation passed by the 2021 state legislature also allows individuals to vote both in person and virtually.

### **Nominating Committee**

Pastor Lisa noted she will be calling together the nominating committee to find three Council nominees prior to the Annual Meeting. The committee is comprised of three members of the congregation, two members of the Council and Pastor Lisa. The three members of the congregation are Roger Krueger, Jon Hanson and Deb Carpenter, and Pastor Lisa asked for two Council members who may be interested in serving on the committee as well. Krisi and Mark volunteered to be on the committee as well.

### **Personnel Committee**

Pastor Lisa noted she would also like to meet with the Personnel Committee to finalize the Job Description for the Worship and Music Coordinator position. She said she would like to meet the week between Christmas and New Years and would reach out to those on the committee members which include her, the Council Executive Committee and the Church Operations Council liaison. Pastor Lisa said she would also contact other churches for copies of their Worship and Music Coordinator Job Descriptions.

### **2022 Budget Discussion and Finalization**

The Council reviewed the draft 2022 budget and changes made from its first review and discussion at the November meeting. The Council discussed providing a housing allowance for Deacon Janie. All rostered ministers (deacons and pastors) are under the same synod payment and benefit guidelines. As such, the church needed to consider also providing Deacon Janie with a housing allowance, as recommended by the synod. Mark motioned to include a \$7,500 housing allowance for Deacon Janie in the 2022 budget/Cherie seconded/Approved in a 6-1 vote.

Art also noted rostered ministered are compensated for years of experience prior to ordination. Deacon Janie had 10 years of ministry experience prior to being ordained as a deacon and, as such, should also be compensated for that under the synod guidelines. This would mean increasing her base salary from \$41,181 to \$43,660 to meet the minimum recommendations for her years of ordination and service.

Cherie motioned to increase Deacon Janie's salary to \$43,660 to meet the synod recommendations/Mark seconded/Approved.

#### **Part-time Education Coordinator Gift**

Art spoke with the individual who wants to provide this gift to the church to get additional feedback on what this position and gift would be used for in the church. He provided the Council with a written overview of the individual's thoughts on what this gift would look like. This included renaming the position to "Family Coordinator" or plural "Coordinators;" charging the individual with family events, such as movie or game nights; placing them in charge of "Church Greeters" prior to services and in following up with new members; and encouraging this individual(s) to develop outreach to members and families within the church. It was noted the \$10,000 gift is open-ended, perhaps paying one or more individuals to be part-time Family Coordinators and reimbursing event costs through the funds as well.

Kari recommended asking the Education Committee about what they recommend in regard to the gift as well. Pastor Lisa asked if the gift needed to be a budgeted item, which would imply it would be ongoing after the gift funds were used, or could it be placed in a designated account for use. Art noted the funds could be placed in a designated line in a church savings account. President Mike noted there needed to be a meeting of more individuals to narrow down the needs of the church and how best to use these gifted funds.

The topic of "Family Coordinator(s)" will be placed on the January agenda and a meeting will be coordinated with individuals to best plan the use of these funds. The line item was removed from the 2022 budget.

#### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, Jan. 13, at 6:30 p.m.

#### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.