

Lutheran Church of the Cross
“Making Jesus Known by Sharing Our Gifts”
Council Meeting
November 16, 2021

Call to Order

President Mike Geiermann called the meeting to order at 6:27 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 October meeting minutes.
Krisi motioned/Kari seconded/Approved.

Treasurer’s Report

All bills and statements as of October 31 have been paid and all October bank statements and registries are correct. The total income for October was \$41,328.49 and was \$9,473 above the operating expense budget and \$3,106 above the total adopted budget. Art attributed this to the gracious response of the congregation to the Giving Statements sent in early October and thanked the congregation for their generosity. The income for the first 10 months of the year was 80.48% of the total budget, including the PPP income.

The October expenses were \$30,239.85 and there was a profit of \$11,088.64 in operations for the month. The expense total does include the final prepaid special assessments payment. The expenses continue to be in line or below the adopted budget, which helps the operating fund cash flow. The contribution to the Western North Dakota Synod for October will be \$1,760. LCC has contributed \$13,865 to the Synod in the first 10 months of the year.

Art noted the generosity of the congregation has continued into November, with the November budget already having been met at the time of the Council meeting.

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

Art noted he was contacted by Jo Wilson with Merry Go Round Preschool about holding a Christmas program at the church on Dec. 17 at 10am for about 50 people. She asked about the masking policy at the church and Art noted he relayed masks were recommended in the church, but said he would check with the Council regarding approval for the Christmas program. The Council was in consensus to approve Jo’s request to hold the MGR Christmas program at the church on the proposed date.

Art brought to the attention of the Council a request he received from a family that uses a credit card to make their offering to the church via the Vanco online giving program. When a credit card is used, a fee is taken from the total given to cover the cost of the transaction. The giver is provided the option to

cover that fee, so the church is not charged for it, but the giver is still only credited on their giving statement the total amount given less the credit card fee. There are 12 families that give to the church via credit card and others give through direct deposit from their checking account, but the church is still charged for the transfer from the giver's bank account to the church's bank account through direct deposit. Approximately, \$100,000 is given to the church through Vanco, with 40% given through credit cards and 60% through bank transfer. Art noted the church could start covering those fees, but it would cost approximately \$1,000 annually. If these fees were covered, those giving via credit card, would be credit the full amount of their donation. Following discussion, the Council decided not to cover the fees charged by Vanco, but to communicate with those giving via credit card other giving options available that don't have fees association with them.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Lisa said she has continued to meet regularly with weekly bible studies and the Women in Ministry group, as well as participated in Prairie Faith Devotions in October. She toured the new Missouri Slope Lutheran Care Center and noted the first five residents are now living at the facility and the rest will move in over the next 14 weeks. In addition, she helped to plan the ecumenical Thanksgiving Eve service that will be held at First Lutheran Church.

She noted the Holden Evening Prayer service will be used on Wednesdays in Advent and Advent Dinners, hosted by the confirmation students to raise funds to attend summer bible camp, will be held prior to the service. The Confirmation Banquet was held the last Saturday in October and Confirmation was held on Reformation Sunday and both went well. Funerals were recently held at the church for Lois Dolan and Dr. Marlin Johnson. Pastor Lisa thanked the Council and congregation for the celebration of her 30th year of ordination and the generous gift she received from the church.

She said she recently attended a suicide prevention training at First Lutheran Church. She noted she will also be calling together the Personnel Committee to work on an advertisement for the job of Worship and Music Coordinator and to address the supervision of employees as written in the constitution prior to hiring a new employee.

Director of Discipleship Report

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

- 1.) I have been busy planning for Advent dinners, sending out mailings to our confirmation families for the dinners and for confirmation camp this summer (both are new programs that have been implemented this year).
- 2.) The Christmas program has been picked and will take place during worship on December 19.
- 3.) Church school and confirmation programs continue to go well.
- 4.) I hosted the confirmation banquet, and confirmation Sunday went well.
- 5.) I have also hosted a meeting for youth who are eligible to go to the National Youth gathering. So far no one has signed up, but a few youth show some interest.

New Business

Board Conduct

President Mike explained to the Council some of the fallout that has resulted from the masking decision and communications that were sent to the Council by members of the church. Information from letters/emails sent to the Council was shared with people outside the Council, which is a breach of board conduct and the fiduciary duties of the Council to keep communications to the Council

confidential. In addition, he stressed the duty of all Council members to be loyal to the Council and the decisions made by the whole Council, even if they are not agreed with. He noted WND Synod Bishop Craig Schweitzer and Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen were consulted in how best to address these matters.

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.

Highland Acres Neighborhood Historical Designation

Ron noted the Highland Acres Neighborhood is being considered for historical designation and he was looking into how this designation could impact the church. He noted LCC would be considered a “contributor” status, as the building fits into the landscape of the neighborhood. He noted with this status, as long as the church doesn’t use federal dollars, it won’t be impacted much by the designation. He said the church can send a notarized letter to the city in favor of or against the designation if it desires. The city is also holding meetings to provide information and gather comments on the neighborhood’s historical designation. President Mike said he will attend the next meeting to learn more about how the designation could impact the church/neighborhood.

2022 Budget Discussion

The Council reviewed the draft 2022 budget created by the Budget Committee and considered the changes suggested in the draft budget. A final draft will be presented to the Council at the December meeting for final approval and made available to the congregation prior to the Annual Meeting in January.

Mark noted he was approached by a family member of a late LCC charter member about a gift of \$5,000 they would like to give the church for a special project. Mark said they did not talk about specifics of the special project at the time, but that he would get additional information on the family’s wishes regarding the type of special project.

A church member also approached Art regarding a \$10,000 gift to fund a part-time education coordinator. Art noted he would speak to the donor and get more information on the donor’s intent for the use of the funds over a specific time period.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, Dec. 9, at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.