

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MINUTES
FAITH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

January 12, 2021

Present

Beth Sekera (President), Chris Bettin (Secretary), Jim Hall (Treasurer), Sandy Becker (Stewardship), Tammy Daugherty (Communications), Phil Hartweg (Safety), Mark Pedersen (Property), Debbie Rohla (Service), Chris and Rachel Sorce (Faith Formation), Deb Twaddle (Worship), Pr. Shelly Satran, Pr. Joe Yucha

Incoming Council Members Present

Bill Alrich (President), Tim Hohulin (Treasurer), Kelly and Joe Parratore (Faith Formation)

Call to Order

- The meeting, which was held via Zoom, was called to order by President Beth Sekera at 7:04 p.m.

Opening Devotions and Prayer

- President Sekera

Welcome Incoming Council Members

- President Sekera welcomed the incoming Council members. They will be formally approved by a vote of the congregation during and immediately following the Congregation Meeting on January 24, 2021.
- An orientation for the incoming members was held at 6:30 p.m. via Zoom, prior to the start of the regular Council meeting.

Approval of Minutes

- **MOTION** (Jim/Tammy): To approve the minutes of the December 8, 2020, Church Council meeting with revisions. (Carried)

Consent Agenda

- **MOTION** (Debbie R./Sandy): To add "Addressing political views from the pulpit" as agenda item "A" under New Business, and to accept the reports of the Faith Ministries and staff. (Carried)

Financial Report

- Treasurer Jim Hall was happy to report that the 2020 income statement finished well in the black, citing the following reasons for the positive outcome:
 - While regular envelope giving was under budget by approximately \$7,000 year-to-date (a remarkably small amount given the lack of/limitations on live worship due to the pandemic and considering that most regular envelope giving was received

- through the mail), special envelope giving was \$14,000 better than budget for the year, largely because Christmas special envelope giving was a phenomenal \$29,000.
- Expenses were below budget for the year due to the church building being closed and activities being curtailed to a large degree.
 - The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan was forgiven in November by the federal government, with Faith retaining \$73,376 of the \$106,700 loan. Rainbow Place received the other \$33,324. Faith's share was moved under "Special Gifts" in the 2020 financials.
 - For the year, the financials reflect a surplus of \$131,605.

Old Business

2021 Proposed Budget and Distribution of 2020 Surplus

- Jim walked Council through the proposed 2021 budget and a proposed distribution of the 2020 surplus from operations.
- **MOTION** (Jim/Mark): That the 2020 surplus from operations be redistributed from the Year-End Gain/Loss Accumulation Fund as follows: \$36,105 to the Building Life Safety dedicated account; \$64,000 to the Capital Maintenance Fund; \$4,000 to the Seminarian Support Fund; \$5,000 to the Youth Scholarship Fund dedicated account; and \$15,000 to the Glen Ellyn Food Pantry dedicated account. The remaining \$7,500 of the 2020 surplus will be used to cover a projected budget deficit for 2021.
- Jim responded to a question regarding where ESSE appears in the budget, noting that it was moved under "Local Benevolence" starting in 2020. Jim mentioned that ESSE is budgeted to receive a smaller donation from Faith in the new year but reminded the Council that the ministry does not pay rent for its use of space in the church building.
- **MOTION** (Jim/Tammy): To approve the 2021 proposed budget for presentation at the Annual Congregation Meeting. (Carried)

Congregation Meeting

- President Sekera and Pr. Shelly Satran provided a brief update on the logistics of the Congregation Meeting on January 24.
- The following Council members volunteered to assist with the ballot and drive-by voting: Chris Bettin, Jim Hall, and Debbie Rohla, with Mark Pedersen and Chris Sorce as back-ups.

Church Reopening, Resumption of Services

- Pr. Shelly reported that plans to reopen Faith continue to be in a holding pattern due to the pandemic.
- The pastors and church staff have looked ahead in consideration of how Lenten services will be conducted. Plans are to continue with virtual services, and on Ash Wednesday to provide members the opportunity to receive ashes via drive-by distribution at the church. Ashes would be provided in individual cups, and members would apply their own ashes.

- Pr. Shelly noted that Faith's new live-streaming platform will be installed in early February, with plans to go live in March after the pastors and staff have had a chance to practice using the system.

Building Projects Update

- Mark Pedersen (Property) reported that renovations to the building are in the home stretch.
- Thanks to a large number of member volunteers, painting is almost completed. Repairs to washroom ceilings will be inspected and closed up.
- Fire safety doors were supposed to have shipped the day of the Council meeting and should arrive later in the week.
- Plumbing fixtures will be installed the week of January 18.
- New non-slip tiles will be installed at the base of the lower-level stairs for safety reasons after the doors are installed. There will also be new tile installed in the Rainbow Place washroom.
- Mark estimated that all work will be completed within two weeks.
- According to Mark, the next big renovation project the Council will need to address is the roof. Both the flat roof and the shingle roof are old and in need of replacement; however, most of the leaks are in the flat roof.
- Mark requested that Council give thought to other building renovation and safety projects that may need to be considered down the road.

Glen Ellyn Food Pantry

- Pr. Joe Yucha informed the Council that as of January 1 the GEFP had raised \$794,000 for the new building; plans are to break ground after \$800,000 has been raised. Pr. Joe pointed out that with Faith's proposed gift from the 2020 surplus, the GEFP will easily surpass the \$800,000 threshold.
- A construction company for the project will be selected in the next few weeks.
- Pr. Joe added that the GEFP saw a 35 percent increase in the number of new families it served during the 2020 pandemic.

Local Benevolence

- Pr. Joe reported that Faith's annual benevolence distribution was as follows:
 - \$4,000 to ESSE
 - \$2,500 to GE Food Pantry Capital Campaign
 - \$1,000 to People's Resource Center
 - \$1,000 to NAMI DuPage
 - \$1,000 to Walk-In Ministry
 - \$500 to St. Andrew's Lutheran Church and Campus Ministry
 - \$500 to Concordia Place
 - \$500 to Lutheran Disaster Response

New Business

Addressing Political Views from the Pulpit

- Following the January 10 sermon which referenced the events at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, a Council member brought forward the topic of addressing political views from the pulpit for Council consideration and guidance.
- Negative feedback about the sermon was received from one member; most of the feedback received has been positive, including during the online constitution forum on January 10.
- A respectful sharing of opinions on the pros and cons of addressing political views from the pulpit ensued.
- The ELCA's position on the events of January 6, which calls for President Trump's resignation, was noted.
- Pr. Shelly spoke about establishing a "culture of openness" where members are comfortable approaching Council members and the pastors on matters of concern. She noted the importance of "inviting conversation," and asked the Council members to deliver this message at every opportunity.
- It was agreed that individuals who have concerns about the content of a sermon should feel comfortable reaching out directly to the pastors and having an open conversation with them.
- The bottom line of the discussion was that the pastors' call is to relate the Gospel to the world, which will at times touch on or speak to the political. The congregation's feedback on how that is heard is important to the process.
- The discussion ended after a healthy, respectful conversation with essentially no change to the way the pastors approach their sermons which may occasionally touch on current events. It was also agreed that when commenting on political issues during the sermon, it is important for the pastors to keep in mind that Faith's membership represents a wide variety of political beliefs and views, so being respectful of all opinions is essential.

2021 Council

- Secretary Chris Bettin led a discussion on Exec Council and full Council meeting dates/times for 2021. Exec Council will continue to meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 9 a.m. and the full Council meetings will be held on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m.
- For the time being meetings will continue to be conducted using Zoom.
- The Council is not scheduled to meet in July, but that could change on an as-needed basis.
- Council members volunteered to lead devotions and provide treats (if/when meetings resume in person) as follows:
 - February 2021 – Tammy Daugherty
 - March – Deb Twaddle
 - April – Sandy Becker
 - May – Debbie Rohla
 - June – Phil Hartweg

- July – Open
- August – Tim Hohulin
- September – Kelly and Joe Parratore
- October – Bill Alrich
- November – Chris Bettin
- December – Mark Pedersen
- Deb Twaddle reminded the Council that if anyone has revisions to the contact list to send them to her and Chris B. so the list can be updated.
- Outgoing Council members were requested to drop off their binders at the church office by Friday, January 15; incoming Council members will be able to pick up their binders in their church mailboxes starting February 1.

Recognition of Outgoing Council Members

- President Sekera thanked Treasurer Jim Hall and Rachel and Chris Sorce (Faith Formation) for their service and commitment to the work of the Council and Faith Church. Pr. Shelly then thanked President Sekera for her leadership as president and for her two years of Council service prior to that. The outgoing members shared that they had received cards from each of the continuing Council members which contained personal messages of thanks and well wishes. Pr. Shelly told the Council about the floral arrangements delivered to the outgoing Council members as their parting gift.

Announcements and Reminders

- The next meeting of the Executive Council will be Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at 9 a.m. via Zoom.
- The next meeting of the Church Council will be Monday, February 8, 2021, at 7 p.m. via Zoom.

Closing Prayer

- Pr. Shelly

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Chris Bettin, Secretary