



Council Minutes December 17th, 2020

IN ATTENDANCE:

*Pastor Paul Bulgerin	*Jodi Doro (Secretary)	Wendy Freeland (Fellowship)
*Pastor Heidi Borkenhagen	*Lynda Lalley (Treasurer)	Sarah Brogni (Property)
*Mark Barber (President)	*Rachel Langer (Outreach)	Lisa Bernd (Director of Involvement)
*James Newell (President Elect)	Melissa Schmidt (Christian Care)	*Jen Jacobson (Christian Education)
*Mike Moran (Past President)	*Kelly Olson (Worship)	

(*) present at meeting

The meeting began at 7:04 P.M. with President Mark Barber presiding.

✓ Approval of the November 2020 minutes, James motioned to approve, Mark 2nd all approved.

Pastors and DI Reports

PASTOR PAUL'S REPORT:

Stewardship Update: As I reported last month, we are, unfortunately, seeing a decrease in pledged giving for 2021 compared to 2020. As of now, I estimate that this will be about \$20,000.

As of now, I'm not quite sure what we can estimate for our giving for 2021. There are so many factors to take into consideration due to COVID in 2020 and its lingering effects into 2021. We don't know if giving will pick up once COVID is reduced or eliminated. The council will have to come up with our "best guess" estimate and work from there.

We are looking at options for additional funding, including a special offering to celebrate the end of COVID (we pray) and the return to worshiping inside, whenever that occurs.

We do have our contingency fund which will cover any 2020 giving shortfall and will also help us with what we decide to do in 2021. Again, it was a wise decision to put this fund in place in 2018. Back then no one thought about a pandemic and what it would do to giving to churches and other non-profit organizations.

I suggest that the council draft a letter to the congregation explaining this situation, so our members are aware of what is going on and the council's plans in advance of the annual reports and annual meeting (see below).

2021 Budget: The council executive committee has met several times to discuss our 2021 budget and will talk about it at this week's council meeting. The church staff has also met to talk about areas of the budget which could be reduced in 2021. Some of these reductions will be offset by funding from other areas, such as special established funds or Thrivent Action Team grants.

Lynda Lalley has also been working to secure us a new mortgage which will help with our annual mortgage costs. She will report on this at the council meeting.

So, even though our 2021 giving will be less than 2020, our 2021 budget will also be reduced, although not enough to cover the giving shortfall.

Nominating Committee: We have recruited Kirstin Albiero to serve as president elect. We continue to work to find candidates who are willing to serve as Council Treasurer, Fellowship Committee Chair and Chair of the Property Committee.

Endowment Fund Committee: The committee met in late November and voted to give \$3,000 to the Circle of Empowerment, \$2,000 to Family Promise and \$2,000 to the Adult Literacy Center. How great it is to have this fund which has built up to over \$200,000 to enable us to help others.



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Decision on the Annual Meeting: The council needs to decide if we want to go ahead with our annual meeting, which is scheduled on Sunday, January 24, or to reschedule it for a later date. Last month the Greater Milwaukee Synod held a ZOOM meeting for church leaders discussing options for congregational meetings. These included holding a virtual ZOOM meeting, meeting in person during the pandemic or using established guidelines from the State of Wisconsin for passing emergency bylaws which would allow us to delay our meeting until it would be safe to meet in person. Should we choose this last option, the council could pass a budget outside of an annual meeting and have it approved by the congregation when we do meet.

Christmas Day ZOOM Service: I am working with the Durlams to organize a ZOOM worship service at 10:00 a.m. on Christmas Day. This would allow members who attend to participate in various ways in the service. We plan to have worshipers each answer a question posed in the message. Children can show us one of their Christmas gifts and worshipers can also use their devices to show us their Christmas trees. I hope it will be a different and meaningful experience. I will make a video for the congregation explaining the service.

Worship Plans: As we have done all along, leadership and staff will continue to evaluate what we can safely do when it comes to limited inside worship. We had planned to begin this in late October, but the huge increase in the number of COVID cases shelved that. We are waiting until after Christmas to see what we want to plan for January and beyond.

We had Dan Hagerman and Zack Durlam each write special "Grace Notes" articles last week explaining the health, safety, music and building use reasons why we are not worshipping inside now.

Confirmation Classes: We have held ZOOM classes for our seventh and eighth grade Wednesday evening classes the last two weeks. We now have our two-week Christmas break. Erica Dimmett and I will reassess the situation and decide if it is safe to move back to in-person classes, with a ZOOM option, when classes resume in January, or if we should remain holding them online.

In an interesting side note on this, I received an email from a woman in Georgia asking if we were conducting online confirmation classes since her church was not offering any during the pandemic. We have invited her seventh grader to attend this week's ZOOM class.

We had to cancel the December ninth grade Big Brothers Big Sisters activity due to COVID but did arrange another service opportunity which the students can do individually. I plan to hold a ZOOM class with them in January. Plans for their one-day mini retreat in early February are on hold as we wait to see what we can do.

Boundary Waters Trip: In a bit of hopeful daring, we have made reservations for our high school Boundary Waters trip next summer. I spoke with the director of Wilderness Canoe Base who explained their plans and how they are working to make sure their summer 2021 canoe trips are safe. We have planned our trip for July 8-15, 2021.

PASTOR HEIDI'S REPORT:

Christmas Eve Worship: The 3pm and 5pm services filled up right away so we added a 1:30 service. As of now that is half full.

Services will be 30 minutes.

I did a video and a detailed email on the barn service. Another is planned for next week for those who have signed up.

My time has been largely taken up coordinating all the details for this. It is a great deal of effort on many levels.



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We will be recording the Praise Team service on the 22nd, and premiering that on Christmas Eve at 7pm.

Preaching: I preached for two Advent services, and also Ann Turney's funeral.

Visits: This month visits have been over the phone.

Lydia Circle: We decided to do a zoom meeting again this month. I'm hopeful that next month we will be able to offer an in person option for those who want it. It will depend on the Covid numbers and what council decides to do with having groups back in church.

DIRECTOR OF INVOLVEMENT: (Lisa Bernd)

Vanco: I am setting up our new Vanco ACH accounts now. The donation tiles are done & we have our texting number set up. The Vanco support person I have been working with has been super helpful. We will be set to launch on January 1, 2021. Most of my month has been spent working on this update.

This is such an exciting new option for Grace.

Stewardship: The pledge cards are still trickling in & I am entering them as they do. I then pass them on to Pastor Paul so he can work his budget magic.

Statements: I sent out statements last week. Just a reminder for people to know where they are before the end of the year.

Building: Blood Drive – The blood drive for December 16 is full again!! We offered up an additional date next week to accommodate more people but the blood center did not have the staff available. I am so happy that the 2 dates in October & Decembers drives were so successful!

Christmas Eve Service: I am helping in any way I am needed for the Christmas Eve services in the barn. I booked the port a potty & am helping to find volunteers.

End of the Year: The last day to turn in offerings for the year will be December 30, 2020.

Counting: I am counting the offerings every Monday & taking it to the bank. I also continue to process e-giving & PayPal donations.

Attendance Report

Attendance was discussed.

Discussion: Try to find a way to report those who attend via "live stream/views".

Committee Reports

CHRISTIAN CARE: (Melissa Schmidt)

No report provided

FELLOWSHIP: (Wendy Freeland)

No report provided

FINANCE: (Lynda Lalley)

Attached is November financial info. Here's some notes from Arcelia:

Total income for the month shows as \$48,992.74 --(should average \$51,529.75 monthly) --puts us behind \$49,664.54 for the year breakdown of this number is listed below:

- Sunday Offering \$48,345.54 --(\$3,283.71 behind monthly plan, \$47,748.96 behind YTD plan)
 - o E-Giving \$17,855.75 -- (Up by \$363.00 from last year)
 - o PayPal Donations \$1,468.29 --(Down by \$2,353.77 from last month)
- Special Services \$310.13



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- Scrip \$325.34 --(\$2,810.67 YTD Total Rebate, \$60.67 above YTD plan)
****Scrip deposits current month credits into bank account the following month –
December credits will deposit in January 2021
- NO NOVEMBER Building Rentals --(\$308.33 ahead YTD plan)
- Money Market Interest \$11.23

Expenses were under by \$4,954.79 for the month at \$51,179.17 (we should average \$56,133.96).

Income was short therefore we needed to move \$2,186.43 from contingency fund to cover expenses for the month of November. New contingency balance for November is \$104,435.96 from \$106,622.39 in October.

Expenses YTD we are under \$36,265.70.

Income YTD we are behind \$49,664.54.

I've also been working with the Mission Investment Fund to reduce the interest rate on our mortgage, and just found out today that they will offer a lower rate. Here are the details:

- 3.35% on a 5 year adjustable (Please contact MIF in 6 months before adjustment to discuss rate)
- No fee
- Extend maturity 5 years to 06/01/2046
- Estimated new payment: \$8,696.00
- Estimated monthly savings: \$2,269.35
- Effective payment date: February or March 2021

This will be a huge boost to our 2021 budget!

I'm also attaching a rather large spreadsheet that has a column for our 2021 budget information, that we will be reviewing at the meeting tomorrow night. The executive committee went through this last night and came to a consensus on most things, but wanted to review with the full Council and get any other input you might have.

2021 Budget was discussed

OUTREACH: (Rachel Langer)

No report provided

PROPERTY: (Sarah Brogni)

No report provided

WORSHIP: (Kelly Olson)

No report provided

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE: (Jen Jacobson)

No report provided.

Other Business

Christmas Eve Service planning

Annual Meeting – 25% occupancy we wouldn't even have enough for a quorum which would be hard right now. Look to push back the date to February but have this be a hard date of in-person or virtual after we assess the situation in January. James will reach out to Synod on how virtual meetings need to be conducted.

Emergency by laws to reschedule annual meeting to February 21st – Motion made by Pastor Paul & 2nd by Pastor Heidi – carried.

Next Meeting: January 21st 7 PM

Closing Prayer: Pastor Heidi