



Council Minutes February 27th, 2020

IN ATTENDANCE:

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

(*) present at meeting

The meeting began at 7:20 P.M. with President Mark Barber presiding.

Reflection led by Mark Barber; opening prayer by Pastor Paul

- ✓ Approval of meeting agenda with slight modification
- ✓ Approval of the January 2020 minutes

Pastors and DI Reports

PASTOR PAUL'S REPORT:

Nicaragua Mission Trip: Our eight-person group traveled to Nicaragua from February 3-12. We spent the bulk of the trip getting to be with, and know, many of the people served by the Circle of Empowerment.

We attended a renal disease education clinic, visited people in their homes, worshiped at a local church, worked with children at two schools run by the Circle of Empowerment, participated in a leadership seminar for children ages 10-14 and spent a lot of time getting to know the staff of the Circle of Empowerment who work with Meg Boren.

I am preaching on the trip on February 23 and our group will lead a presentation to the congregation on an evening in March; the date to be decided.

What Next for Reconciling in Christ?: The council needs to discuss what steps we want to take next in our on-going discussions about possibly becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation. In January, Pastor Heidi led a session on the possible draft for a welcoming statement. I think we need to continue this discussion getting more members involved in the process.

Worship Attendance: As was stated in the annual report, our average weekly worship attendance in 2019 was exactly the same as in 2018 with 292 in worship. I would like to see that number increase and have at least 300 people at weekly worship.

We had very low worship attendance on February 9 and 16, with only about 230 or so here. Winter weather, illnesses and Grafton's Chili Day on the 16th may have been factors, but attendance was not good.

The first of the videos to encourage worship attendance will be filmed on Sunday, February 23. It is a commercial/promo for the play, "Joni: A Whale of a Tale" on March 15. It will be posted on the Grace website and also sent out to all members as a special "Grace Notes" email. Members will be encouraged to come to the play and to also invite others to come and see it. Printed invitations will also be in the bulletin inserts on March 1 and 8 for Grace members to us.

An in-depth council brainstorming session on ways to encourage worship attendance, and also to discuss why people are not in worship, would be a good use of council time, in my opinion.



Council Minutes February 27th, 2020

Encouraging more of our Grace members to worship regularly, and additional efforts to educate and encourage our members to invite others to worship, should be a congregational goal this year.

Congregational Constitution Revisions: I spoke with Steve Knowles this week and he would like to schedule an adult forum session in early April for those interested in discussing some of the possible changes in our congregational constitution.

We would then schedule a congregational meeting to vote on these changes. A second vote, one taken at the 2021 annual meeting, would need a 2/3 majority to finalize the changes.

One of the big issues to discuss is the length of terms for council members. Many congregations in the ELCA have opted to have two-year terms. We would need to discuss if we want to do this and how we would go about staggering terms.

Increasing Participation in the Scrip Program: This is such a great program, and so easy to do, yet we only have a tiny fraction of our members involved. What are some additional things we can do to hold up Scrip and encourage more people to sign up and use it?

Scrip is free money; money which we are leaving on the table unless more people participate.

- Announcements in worship from those who are participating?
- Have a table in the gathering area where volunteers can show people how to sign up and order?
- Post a list of those who are in the program?
- Is this worth an adult forum (again) or even a message in church?
- Other ideas?

PASTOR HEIDI'S REPORT:

Worship: The Wednesday Lent themes and special activities are set. I am looking forward to some congregational focus on Bible reading, service and giving. We did get a Thrivent Grant to help cover the cost of the cross necklaces we will hand out for Lent and also for supplies/support for the Blessings Bags we will be collecting donations for and assembling for people experiencing homelessness in Milwaukee.

Thanks to all who helped with the special Lord's Prayer Service. It was great to have special music and see many of our youth leading the service. There were lots of good comments, and a suggestion to do a similar service on the Apostles Creed. I will look into creating that for summer or early fall.

I will be busy this month with Lent and planning the Palm Sunday and Maundy Thursday special services for Holy Week. For Palm Sunday we are going to do "The Cry of the Whole Congregation" service which has readers as well as a lot of congregational involvement.

Premarital work: I am meeting with one couple who wedding I'll be officiating in August.

Reconciling in Christ: I will be leading a class this month with HYPE, and hope to get another scheduled for Adult Forum soon.

Visitation: This was a busy month with pastoral visits to shut ins and those who were hospitalized.

Together In Mission: I attended the event on February 15. I went to sessions on RIC and also "Strategies for Conversations Across the Divide" by Dr. Katherine Wilson of the Zeidler Group. It was very helpful! The Zeidler Group facilitates discussions with communities on a variety of issues to help bring about positive change. It could be a really helpful group to have come to Grace sometime to share the strategies and to help us with any issues that may arise in the future.



Council Minutes February 27th, 2020

DIRECTOR OF INVOLVEMENT: (Lisa Bernd)

Voting: We hosted our first vote of the year. It went very well. The village had the building set up so well. They had everyone enter through the front doors under the portico. They had the wards split up between fellowship, Luther & the multi-purpose room. The next vote is scheduled for April 7.

Scheduled Clean Up: Clean up day went really well! We had 9 people help! The kitchen was cleaned top to bottom, all the tables were wiped down & the wood on the pews were all cleaned & they were vacuumed out. I cannot thank all of the volunteers enough for all of their help.

Kitchen Clean Up Check List: I have written a kitchen clean up list for everyone to use after the kitchen is used. I will have it posted & on the counters for people to use.

Holden Evening Prayer: I scheduled the HEP cantors for Lent. I also ordered new HEP booklets. They were paid for through a Thrivent grant!

Regular Things: I also continue doing the coffee hour dishes, weekly insert, Grace Notes, the Good News, responsibility emails, entering contributions, e-giving & the million things that come up daily.

Discussion: first voting at Grace went seamlessly. Next vote is April. Lynda asked if we could do bake sale during voting – Lisa checked into this after meeting and the Village indicated that we could.

Attendance Report

Attendance was discussed.

Committee Reports

CHRISTIAN CARE: (Melissa Schmidt)

I will be making more welcome folders for the desk. No new member events at this time.

FELLOWSHIP: (Wendy Freeland)

No report provided

FINANCE: (Lynda Lalley)

Total income for the month shows as \$58,139 within this number there are \$17,600 in prepaid pledges. So the 'real' income excluding prepaids is \$40,539, this is \$11,924 below what we should be averaging monthly. Other income to note: Scrip Rebate at \$200.55 and Building Usage income at \$25.00.

Expenses were under by \$3,666 for the month at \$52,468 (we should be at \$56,134 or lower).

The only expense I would like to speak to is the Financial Services and Fees, this was higher do to W2's Processing and Quarter End/Year End Delivery & Handling (usual annual fee).

For 2020, I would like to focus on the possibility of getting a 'Contingency Fund' committee together. At the annual meeting, Brooke Napowicki brought this up, so it would be great if we could get this going. Lynda Lalley and Mark Barber will serve on this committee from council.

OUTREACH: (Rachel Langer)

No report provided

PROPERTY: (Sarah Brogni)

No report provided – Lisa indicated that contract with the cleaning company ends September 28. We need to give 30 days notice if we are not renewing the contract.

WORSHIP: (Kelly Olson)

The Worship Planning Team did not meet this month, but I did want to share a few updates since my January report.



Council Minutes February 27th, 2020

- 1) Our first 'come to worship' video, a commercial for the upcoming church play, Joni: A Whale of a Tale, was filmed on Sunday.
- 2) Thanks to a Thrivent grant, new Holden Evening Prayer have been purchased in time for our Wednesday Lenten Services.
- 3) Living Our Baptism, is the theme for Lent, and encourages us to remember our baptismal promises and offers ways we can put these promises into practice. Come join us at the midweek Lenten suppers and dive into the waters of baptism at the midweek Wednesday services, beginning March 4th.
- 4) John Bernd/Tech committee will be installing a TV monitor and audio in the nursery so that nursery attendants can see and hear worship services.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE: (Jen Jacobson)

We met on February 24th, Katie, Pat Murack, Sarah Newhall, and myself were all in attendance. We discussed All Family School events in general along with the Holy Communion meal we had on the 16th, VBS topics, Sunday School curium, and our 2020 goal.

- All Family Sunday School Events discussion extended from the attendance response, we find fewer families attend these events verses a normal Sunday School class where the parents drop off the children.
 - We discussed the value, focusing a lot on if they have been perceived as having value to those that attend. Also, the value of it connecting to promises made at baptism. We talked about the value of the families getting to know each other through these events.
 - We discussed the overall attendance response, with our last one being the example. We had around 100 people (not just Sunday School children) signed up. Due mostly to seasonal illness, we had about 65 in attendance. Katie was happy to see some members without Sunday school students on the sign-up. These events do tend to attract the same families which reinforces they find them valuable.
 - We also talked about the frequency of them per year, along with timing, February is showing to be a bad month. Historically, these factors are based on how the stories in the curium line up with calendar of our program year. Katie is going to look at 2020-2021.
 - Lastly, discussed the past event we had on February 16th where families were invited to share breakfast together served family style while learning the importance of sharing meals together and Holy Communion, as it is one of them. This was accomplished by topic questions, sharing of 5 different bible stories where Jesus shared a meal with others, and lastly by having Holy Communion.
- This year a few of our long-term regular VBS leaders/teachers are unavailable this summer, we discussed the possible needs, highlighting 3K, 5K, and 2nd grade. We are going to brainstorm ways of communicating to recruit new people as well as think about people we could personally ask. These roles normally have some prep work to them. We also talked about the daily schedule, and decided to keep it as is.
- Sunday School Curriculum was our last topic. Katie has done some research into them. How you pay for them is different then when we last purchased curriculum. She found a lot of them charge an annual fee, which isn't much cheaper than we have paid for hard/downloadable copies in the past. We have a few teachers that have expressed it would be nice to use something different. Knowing most curriculum contains the same stories we started to think of ways we can help mix up how the story is told, such as



Council Minutes February 27th, 2020

instead of using the bible every week, use a children's book or visual teaching of the story.

As a team we decided our goal for 2020 is to research and possibly reevaluate Parent Fellowship.

Next Meeting is tentatively set for April 6th.

Katie

- Sunday School
 - Upcoming Events:
 - April 5: 3K-5K Play Bells in Worship
 - April 26: 1st-5th Graders Sing in Worship
 - May 3: 3K-5K Sing in Worship
 - May 3: Youth Education Teacher Appreciation Day
 - May 17: Last Day of Sunday School
 - 5K Lord's Prayer
 - The kids led the prayer during both services on Sunday, Feb 9
 - All Family Sunday School Event: Feb 16
 - We held an All-Family event where families ate as a group, just as Jesus ate with friends and strangers. We also learned about Holy Communion.
 - We got a Thrivent grant to cover the cost of the meal.
 - Attendance was low (there were a lot of sick folks as well), but we're trying to evaluate whether we want to continue these All-Family events in the future.
 - Thanks to Sarah Newell, Sarah Dahl, Jen Jacobson, Lisa Bernd and John Bernd for covering for me when I wasn't able to stay that morning.
 - Pastor Heidi is organizing a great service project during Lent to collect items for the Milwaukee Street Angels. Our Sunday School kids will decorate the bags used for this project.
 - Thanks to a donation from the Grace Christmas Tree project, we have a new TV in the multi-purpose room that we have already used on several occasions. It is a wonderful addition to the space, and anyone who uses the room is welcome to use it.
- Make a Splash for Jesus
 - We have tentatively reserved the date of Sunday, July 19.
 - We will get a Thrivent grant to help cover the cost of the pool rental
- Vacation Bible School
 - Will be held August 3-7
 - Save the date info has gone out to families and staff
 - Volunteer sign up will begin at the beginning of April. Student registration will begin the first week in May.
 - There is a VBS Sale going on now, so I'll be purchasing much of the materials now.
- Parenting in the Pews
 - We continue to get over 60 Worship Thoughts turned in each month. It's such a great way for kids and families to connect with the service.
- Children's Messages



Council Minutes February 27th, 2020

- We continue to do two children's messages each month. Thank you to the volunteers who help out with these messages.
- We will have one every week during Lent.
- Thrivent Grants
 - I've been working with lots of different folks to finish purchasing the items for the last of the grants we acquired in 2019.
 - Last year we had over \$10,000 in Thrivent grants from Grace members. Thanks to all those who helped us purchase items and/or provide valuable seed money for fundraisers.
 - Thanks also to volunteers like James Newell for designing the outdoor banners for Christmas Services and Easter Services along with the Youth Education Christmas cards. John Bernd helped set up the technology purchases we made, and Jim Scott helped assemble the new furniture we got. It's been a team effort!
 - So far in 2020, the church has already received 9 Thrivent grants (\$2,250) for the following projects: Sunday School All-Family Breakfast, Play supplies, support for the Milwaukee Street Angels project, Lent cross giveaways, new Holden Prayer booklets and Lent meals for Confirmation, Bells, Outreach and the Adult Literacy Center.
 - Chris Beloin put together general Thrivent info that Lisa has put in Grace Notes and the bulletin. I also sent it out directly to anyone who indicated they were a Thrivent member on their Time & Talents sheets. I hope we can get more folks to allocate their Choice Dollars to Grace in addition to helping with grants. Choice Dollars can go directly into the church budget and do not need to be spent on a specific project.
 - Please read through my Thrivent information as well. I am stopping in at the meeting to chat with council about how we can all make it a priority to try and utilize Thrivent grants this year.
 - My challenge to council and each committee, is to try and utilize 1-2 grants this year to cover the cost of things that would have been taken out of the budget. If we all did this, we could save several thousand dollars by the end of the year.

Other Business

Katie: passed out a sheet with instructions on how to apply for a Thrivent Grant. Encourages every group at church to apply for 1-2 grants for each year.

Sherry Bublitz: Has been to the Holy Land, is going back again this summer. It was a life-changing experience. Feels called to lead people on a trip there and is asking permission to plan it and publicize it at Grace. She is thinking October 2021 to give people time to plan and save. It was motioned, seconded and passed to give approval to do this.

Mark: All Council Reports need to be sent out at least two days before the meeting (Tuesday).

Goals: Next council meeting will focus on each members' goals for their committees/areas of work.

Devotion for next meeting will be done by Melissa Schmidt.

Closing Prayer: Pastor Heidi