



Council Minutes August 27th, 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 7:05 P.M. with President Mark Barber presiding.

Opening Prayer Pastor Heidi

✓ Approval of the July 2020 minutes with adjustments from Pastor Paul – Paul motioned to approve meeting minutes, second by James; all approved.

Pastors and DI Reports

PASTOR PAUL'S REPORT:

Worship Plans: The pastors sent a video to the congregation earlier this month outlining our plans to continue with outdoors worship as long as the weather allows. The video also discussed the issues involved should we consider worshipping inside. We have continued to discuss this issue. The Worship Planning Team dedicated a good portion of its August meeting to this.

The pastors will probably send out another video about this in early September to keep the congregation informed.

So far, we have had ten Sundays of good weather for outdoors worship. Attendance has run from 80-110. We are getting the knack of holding worship outdoors and continue to look at ways to improve the worship experience.

Outdoors worship will move to 10:00 a.m. on Sundays starting on September 13. Until we are inside again, we will go with one Sunday service.

Stewardship: I continue to work on the schedule and specific plans and documents for the fall stewardship program. The theme is, "Giving for a Bright Future". The first letter about our stewardship will go out in late September. The two Sundays dedicated to stewardship are October 11 and 18.

We will not produce a color brochure this year. Instead we will go with a letter, which includes photos, to highlight some of the aspects of our program. We also plan on a series of videos which we will make available to our members online. These will be personal testimonials and one video, similar to what we produce for VBS, which uses music and visuals to hold up our goals.

"God's Work Our Hands": Three activities are planned for September 13. People began signing up on August 16. Volunteers are asked to bring their own picnic lunch to eat after worship and before they head out to work.

Confirmation: We are planning on holding in-person classes for our 7-9th grade classes. Masks will be worn and social distancing practiced in the classroom setting. If we have any parents who are not comfortable sending their children, Erica Dimmett and I will work to provide an opportunity for students to attend class online. Wednesday evening classes begin on September 16. The first ninth grade class will be on Sunday, September 27.

There will be no fall Junior Youth Group retreat this year due to the coronavirus.



Council Minutes August 27th, 2020

Personnel Committee: The group met for the first time on August 19. The members of the committee are: Mike Moran (council past president), Dave Polka, Alissa Burgos, Steve Buchman and Sandy Luetgen. I serve in an ex-officio capacity. Mark Barber attended the first meeting as well. We are seeking one more member for the committee.

The committee members are currently reviewing all job descriptions, the Personnel Committee Handbook and the Staff Handbook. The group meets next on September 2 when it will select a chair and decide upon terms of office.

Following that meeting members of the committee will set up appointments to meet with our pastors, office and music staff to review and update their job descriptions.

We discussed having a member of Personnel meet with me for each staff mission review meeting this fall. These are usually held in October or November.

Discussion: Stewardship will be video focused.

John Freeland has accepted the custodial position and will start on Sept 8th, cleaning staff stays on through September. He will work through cleaning up the building – painting, specifically.

PASTOR HEIDI'S REPORT:

Worship: I am so thankful we have been able to continue our outdoor services, and I'm personally pleased with the attendance and those who are watching at home.

I officiated at the wedding of Brittany Hagermann and Dustin Lobner, and co-officiated the baptism of Everly Chase Wilterdink. I also officiated at the baptism of Emersyn Paisley Hubner. We are beginning discussions on a possible inside prayer service, most likely on a Thursday evening. There would be no group singing, minimal group talking, and safety procedures put in place. I can talk more about this at council. It would not be something we do unless the council is in favor.

We are also going to meet with John Bernd and Dustin Lobner to discuss what the online worship might look like once we can't worship outside anymore. If you have thoughts or suggestions on this, please let one of the pastors or Kelly Olson know.

Visitations: We have slowed on visits due to several factors: the Covid rise in our area, and other's wishes, schedules or health issues. We have done a small number this month, and some on the phone visiting and prayer with our shut-ins/elderly members also. Cases seem to be going down, so hopefully that continues and people are more comfortable having us come. I have dropped off communion for a couple of families who are doing worship at home.

Outreach: I took the diapers to Family Promise, which they were very thankful for. I asked other needs and they said juice/juice boxes/Gatorade. We are starting this collection and Rachel Langer will take them to FP when the collection is done.

Scavenger Hunt: I've been working with Erica to put together a scavenger hunt for a fun thing to do for families/groups of friends. We are planning this for the first Sunday in October. Publicity will go out this week.

Back to School Blessing: We prayed for and blessed our students, teachers and staff on Sunday, and we are offering another time to come by this week for blessings and prayers.

Continuing Education: The synod offered a zoom call this month with a guest speaker who took us through a new way to interpret tough texts and preach on them. I am going to look for more online opportunities to learn and grow.

Looking Ahead: I've started a list of things we should do when things get back to normal (a blessing for those who have been baptized, married, buried, etc., thanking volunteers and supporters, and so on). If you have an idea you'd like included, let me know.



Council Minutes August 27th, 2020

Discussion: Prayer service (not worship service) possibly on Thursday nights – instrumental or some vocal by music leaders, bible readings, prayer time. Keeping short around 30 minutes, 25% capacity, masks worn. Create a new video explaining this. Sarah motioned to start prayer service, Pastor Paul 2nd, motion carried. Start date Sept 17th at 6:30pm and see how it goes. Sign up both online and paper on Sunday morning limit to 50-60 people. Working through call list again to trim down and start calling again.

DIRECTOR OF INVOLVEMENT: (Lisa Bernd)

No report provided

Attendance Report

Attendance was discussed.

Committee Reports

CHRISTIAN CARE: (Melissa Schmidt)

No report provided

FELLOWSHIP: (Wendy Freeland)

No report provided

FINANCE: (Lynda Lalley)

Attached is July financial info. Arcelia made some changes for the PPP loan, to show both the income and the expenses associated with PPP, reach out to myself if you have any questions. I have been working with Arcelia to get another mortgage quote from Cornerstone, to see if it's better than what is offered by MIF. I will not be available for the meeting on Thursday, but please let me know if you have any questions and I can answer by email.

Here are some other notes from Arcelia regarding July financials:

Total income for the month shows as \$36,607.23 --(should average \$51,529.75 monthly) – puts us behind **\$20,572.13** for the year. Breakdown of this number is listed below:

- Sunday Offering \$36,195.61 --(**\$15,434.14** below monthly plan, **\$18,580.07** behind YTD plan)
 - o E-Giving \$17,102.75 --(Down by **\$1,843.00** from last year)
 - o PayPal Donations \$812.86 --(Down by **\$785.20** from last month)
- Special Services \$6.00
- Scrip \$144.40 --(\$1,427.87 YTD Total Rebate, **\$430.98** behind YTD plan)
- Building Rental \$250.00 --(**\$391.67** ahead YTD plan)
- Money Market Interest \$11.22
- Contingency \$13,129.55 --(explained below)

Expenses were under by **\$6,397.18** for the month at \$49,736.78 (we should average \$56,133.96). For expenses we had Pure Mechanical in for our Spring Maintenance; and Fire Detection came in as well. Nothing out of the ordinary.

For the first time this year we needed to move \$13,129.55 from contingency fund to cover expenses for the month of July. New contingency balance for July is \$135,575.43 from \$148,704.98 in June.



Council Minutes August 27th, 2020

PPP Loan forgiveness application has been submitted to Cornerstone Bank and working with the bankers to get it submitted to SBA portal.

Offerings are typically behind in the summer months, but hope that will rebound in the fall. With the whole Covid situation and if attendance is not able to pick back up in the fall, it could become a concern.

Discussion: Arcelia is planning on implementing a new software system.

OUTREACH: (Rachel Langer)

No report provided

PROPERTY: (Sarah Brogni)

God's Work Our Hands will focus on exterior of church building. John will focus on interior updates. Large tree in lot was taken down professionally – after discussion with Lisa decided to hire due to closeness to building, other trees, and neighboring properties.

WORSHIP: (Kelly Olson)

Present: Pastor Paul, Pastor Heidi, Tori Saunders, Jane Braband, Zack and Eryn Durlam, Debbie Donovan, Kelly Olson

Outdoor Worship

- We've been blessed with great weather and as of the date of this meeting we had held 8 outdoor services
- Attendance has ranged from about 80 – 120
- We will continue outdoor worship through September and hopefully up to Reformation Sunday, on October 25th, if weather allows
- On September 13th, the day we would normally go back to 2 services, we will continue with one service, but move the start time to 10 AM, instead of 9 AM, due to likely cooler mornings
- Pastors have heard several positive comments from members who are enjoying the video services at home.
- We continue to discuss ways to help improve/vary the services and we still need volunteers to serve as ushers and camera operators.
- On August 7th, the pastors sent a video message to the congregation outlining plans to continue with outdoor worship services and all the issues that need to be considered in the decision to return to indoor worship. The video was well received and prompted good communication about the issues we are facing.

Indoor Worship

- The challenge is how to hold meaningful indoor worship services with so many restrictions to keep everyone safe. (25% occupancy, masks, distancing, group singing, communion, cleaning, etc.)
 - Example: Current guidelines for indoor singing require masks, 6 ft between families, occupying the space no longer than 30 minutes and at least 3 HVAC air flow exchanges prior to re-occupying the space.
- Even though other area churches are holding inside worship, they are reporting low attendance and that many of the members are just not comfortable with gathering inside.
- We will continue to monitor the situation as well as how in person school goes in the coming weeks.
- Video recording of the services will continue and posted for online viewing. If/when we are not able to hold worship services, worship leaders/musicians will meet to record services and may consider recording a couple of weeks at a time for efficiency.



Council Minutes August 27th, 2020

Traditional and Contemporary Worship

Normally we would move to two services on September 13th which won't be the case this year. Pastor Paul asked that Erin, Zack and Vince work out the schedule for music through October.

New ideas for worship and looking ahead

- Team discussed ways to encourage all to find the good, focus on positives resulting from the pandemic, create a video
- Focus on missions and how we are supporting them; ie COE, Family Sharing, All Peoples, ALC, etc.-- create videos of the recipients sharing how our support is helping them
- Advent/Christmas: the team will start brainstorming and planning ways to make this worship season meaningful considering we will likely not be able to hold in-person services.

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 9th @ 6:30

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE: (Jen Jacobson)

We met on August 6th to discuss fall planning. Erica, Katie, Sarah, and myself were present, Pat provided input before the meeting via email. Several members of the team watched different webinars about planning fall education and provided feedback on those prior to the meeting. Our meeting was focused around education planning for the fall, budget, and recapped VBS.

Considerations for Fall Education

- Health Department and other organizations recommendations
- Worship Committee planning – wanted a plan that made sense with Worship planning
- School Districts plans – What the surrounding school districts reopening plans and changes were. Most of our members come from different surrounding school districts
- Volunteer Survey – Sunday School volunteers were asked for their input, of the those who responded many were not comfortable volunteering in person this year.
- Physical space and numbers – do we have enough space for our numbers to gather
- Webinars and resources on Education planning, provided both by Sparkhouse and the Synod – the resources supported non-traditional approach.
 - Many of the themes in the webinars were:
 - Grace – for all, the parents, church staff and volunteers, and the children. We all have different opinions, situations, and needs.
 - Acceptance – We need to accept this isn't a normal year and it is ok if planning isn't normal, if participation isn't normal.
 - Quality over quantity – aim for a well planned out activities that will meet needs of families and offer a benefit over a bunch of activities/programs that just doesn't work.
 - Opportunity - to really put focus on building faith in home-life, and giving the tools and guidance.

Confirmation and Youth Groups

- Confirmation: We will attempt to meet in person with a virtual option
 - Class sizes are small and we have space for them to spread out in the church
 - Parents gave input
- Youth Groups: We are still figuring out our plan here but looking into



Council Minutes August 27th, 2020

- Outside activities – for services projects and fellowship
- Goal is to create a virtual way for them to stay connected, possibly more youth led
- HYPE: Over the past couple of years Erica as done a lot of research and work into understanding the trend of high school youth groups and challenges facing that age group. 2020/2021 was going to be an evaluation year, there are ideas but we are still planning.

Sunday School: Based on the consideration listed above we decided not to plan on having in person Sunday School. In spring we had virtual weekly Sunday School, when looking at the number of times the videos were viewed we saw a rapid decline in participation. We also discussed the “virtual fatigue” that many of us felt in spring and how we might encounter that again in fall, especially for families doing virtual schooling. The webinars gave us hope and guidance in still offering quality education and opportunities for our Sunday School Families.

- Monthly offerings beginning in September
 - Offer socially distanced family activities that families can sign up for, hopefully outside (examples: outdoor story time, outdoor games, and volunteer opportunity)
 - Faith at home kits each month, centered around a familiar bible story (families can pick these up, but they do not need to be done at a certain time or by a certain day). Kits will continue to remain available, so families can pick up any story at any time. Kits will contain different items and activities. It will be similar to the VBS set up, some will have a video completed. We encourage members to pick up kits to share with grandchildren or other children in their life.
 - Katie plans on sitting down with John to learn how to post videos (both believe this is a task she is capable to learning) this will take way from the demands of his time.
- At Home Faith Gift Box: These boxes will be available for pick up in early fall and we might mail them. The idea behind the box is to give them some items to help grow and keep their faith at home. Examples of what is in box is backpack blessing, a cross, pre-stamped postcard to send to church with a prayer request or note, and tips for incorporating faith in everyday life. (UPDATE: they were given out at Worship on August 23rd and a drive through backpack blessing and box pick up on Wednesday, August 26th, the rest will be mailed)
- Communication: We are working on ways to communicate with both parents and children/youth in many different forms, to stay connected while we are not seeing each other as often.
- Tying the children back to building: we want there to be a sense that we are all still together even if we aren't meeting up or even in the building together.
 - Katie is working on making a chicken wire cross and tie fabric strips (thanks to the quilters) on it with each child's name written on a strip. They did this at Pine Lake. We could keep it at the alter of the church or put it in the window so it will be something that is seen during virtual worship, in her messages, etc. When we are doing outdoor service, we could bring it out each week. Pictures of it could be used in communications to the families.



Council Minutes August 27th, 2020

- Possible doing window displays.
- Community Service project: We would love to come up with a community service project. If any of you have any ideas or connections that would help us in accomplishing this, please share with a team member.

Parents: we would love a low-key way to connect and support our parents too.

- Education Staff members connecting with parents
- Possibly setting up an opt-in group for parents to connect with each other: sharing stories, asking for advice, sharing things that just make them laugh.

Budget:

- Although we will not have traditional Sunday School we use our Sunday School and Family Ministry budgets to cover the cost for kit items, activities, and postage as needed.
- Thrivent Grants will be applied for when applicable. Katie already has been granted on for the backpack blessing and at home gift boxes.
- Sunday School Offerings – we sponsor 2 Circle of Empowerment students (\$200) with Sunday School offerings. We might do a coin drive or use the Sunday School budget to cover this.

VBS Recap– Bolt Backyard VBS: 3 weeks of sessions plus one pre-week in July that families could do on their own time. Families could pre-sign up for a supply bag but was not required for participation.

- 100 bags were created through donations from members and a Thrivent grant, 95 of them were sign-up for, I believe the remaining bags found participants.
- Grace members recorded instructional videos to give the purchased program a familiar feel to our normal VBS program. Our slideshow credits gave thanks to 13 families.
- Views and Feedback
 - Weekly views (a view does not equal participants ie. I have 3 kids but we only viewed the weeks video once). The links were kept up on our site and may have had more views.
 - Pre-week – 76 views
 - Week 1 – 57
 - Week 2 – 32
 - Week 3 – 24
 - Katie heard a lot of specific comments which let us have a gauge that people were watching and enjoying the videos.
 - The VBS email received good picture response. Thank you to Adan for putting pictures into a slideshow.

VBS Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tdcqo5WAX2c&feature=youtu.be>

Katie

- At this point, we will not be offering in-person Education Hour. We will continue to monitor things and assess how schools are doing, etc. But I do not foresee us returning any time soon. That being said, we have some exciting new things that we plan to try this year. Some may work and some may not, but we want to give some ideas a try!



Council Minutes August 27th, 2020

- We are going to promote faith at home through two different opportunities:
 - Family Faith Kits: I will put together 2 kits each month. Each kit will feature a “well-known” Bible story and include a video component along with a bag that can be picked up at church that features craft or activity supplies. The idea is that there are no dates or deadlines associated with these kits and families can do them on a date and time that works for them.
 - I also learned how to create web pages, so I will be able to do the majority of my own postings for this.
 - A fun online bonus for this will be including some camp songs that I recorded at Pine Lake Camp with the directors when we were there last week. I think it will be a fun addition to the kits!
 - Anyone will be welcome to pick up these kits (families, grandparents, etc). If we do a more costly kit, I will work to get Thrivent grants to help with the cost.
 - Family Faith Activities: For those that feel comfortable, 3K-5th grade students AND at least one adult can sign up for various outdoor events at Grace. So far we a few events we are offering:
 - Glaze glass cross making activity (Thrivent Grant will help cover the cost)
 - Nature walk through Lion’s Den park
 - God’s Work Our Hands Day
 - Family Scavenger Hunt
 - Family Faith Start-Up Kit: This kit was put together as part of the blessing that was done during worship on August 23. Pastor Heidi and I are also doing a Drive Through Back to School Blessing on Wednesday, August 24 for anyone that wasn’t able to attend worship, but would still like a blessing.
 - Items in the start up kit include: faith stickers, wooden cross, prayer postcards to send back to Grace, activity booklet, FAITH5 info and ideas on how to grow faith within a family. Most of these items do not require families to do anything with them, they are more to provide reminders around the home and school that God is always with us no matter where we are.
 - We have a Thrivent grant to assist with the cost of postage.
- We are going to continue to monitor and adjust these events and activities as we go throughout the year. The hope is to provide families with resources to strengthen their faith at home, while not overwhelming them with more virtual activities (especially if school turns virtual for all students).
- Other activities we plan to do:
 - Phone call, email or text to each Grace family to follow up with them. Not asking them to do anything. Just say hi and check in.
 - Several of the webinars Erica, Jen and I listened to, spoke to the idea of “including” people and especially kids in worship/church building even if they are not inside. We will work on several ways to remind kids that they are a part of the Grace family, even if they are not in the building.
 - I created a cross window are mosaic that includes the name of every Grace youth 3K-12th grade. We will swap this out every few months.



Council Minutes August 27th, 2020

- Thanks to Dan Hagerman for building a chicken wire cross for me. The quilters also donated fabric to us. Erica and I will work to write each child's name on a piece of fabric and tie it to the cross. The cross can be brought to outdoor worships, including in video worships, etc. Again, the idea is that we are all together even when we are apart.

Closing Prayer: Pastor Paul

Next Meeting: September 24th 7PM
Budget planning to start in September.