



Council Minutes January 21st, 2021

IN ATTENDANCE:

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|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| *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) | *Scott Nielson (incoming Treasurer) |

(*) present at meeting

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

- ✓ Opening prayer by Pastor Paul
- ✓ Approval of the December 2020 minutes with amendments, Wendy motioned to approve, James 2nd all approved.

Pastors and DI Reports

PASTOR PAUL'S REPORT:

2020 Giving: It was very gratifying to see how we ended 2020 with offerings and expenses. The council executive committee met on Tuesday, January 19, to discuss the 2021 budget and giving estimates.

Nominating Committee: We have filled three of the four council positions. Kirstin Albiero will serve as President-Elect, Scott Nielsen as Treasurer and Brittany Lobner as chair of the Fellowship Committee. We are still working to fill the Property Committee position.

Synod Online Assembly: The voting members to the Greater Milwaukee Synod assembly are meeting online this Saturday, January 23, to conduct some needed business for the synod. This will be a good chance to see how to conduct an online business meeting.

Annual Meeting: The council executive committee discussed options for our planned February 21 annual meeting. We are looking at holding an in-person meeting which also has a ZOOM option. There will be a lot of details to work out for this.

This year we are mailing copies of the annual report to all members.

Confirmation Schedule Change: Since we are not holding live, in-person Lenten Wednesday evening worship services, we have decided to run confirmation classes on Wednesday evenings through Lent instead of taking a five week break like we normally do. This means that we should finish up our Wednesday evening confirmation classes on March 24.

I am continuing to meet with our ninth-grade students. Because of a scheduling conflict with one family, the class members have agreed to have Affirmation of Baptism Sunday on May 2 instead of May 16. We will probably hold an afternoon service for the families of the members of the class only. We have a very small class this year, so this should not be a problem.

When to Resume Inside Worship: The synod is holding a ZOOM meeting on Tuesday, January 26, to discuss the latest Wisconsin Council of Churches recommendations for worship. After what happened at St. Joseph Catholic in Grafton last month, where the priest contracted COVID and they had to cancel all their in-person Christmas services on December 23, we need to continue to be very careful about how and when we might resume inside worship. St. Joseph had been worshipping inside at 25% since June with no issues but then this happened and worshippers the previous Sunday may have been exposed to COVID during the service.



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Boundary Waters Trip: We have opened registrations for the trip which will be held from July 8-15. For the first time, the trip is open to students who are currently in eighth grade. Wilderness Canoe Base is optimistic that they can run safe wilderness trips this summer.

PASTOR HEIDI'S REPORT:

Christmas Eve Worship: All three services were either full or nearly full. We only had a small handful people not come because of the cold, and a couple families let us know they were in quarantine.

From everything I've heard, people enjoyed them and want to do them in some form in the future.

Thanks to all the staff and volunteers who worked very hard to make this happen.

Ash Wednesday: We wanted to offer some safe in person worship for Ash Wednesday, and contemplated some outdoor options (around fire pits!). Then I found an interactive service that is made up of several worship "stations", each with a different element to reflect with based around a Biblical meaning or verse about ash. They will be set up in different rooms around the church to allow for social distancing. We will be open from 12-3 and 6-8, with a special time for families to come through from 4-5:30. Katie Eippert is going to make some modifications for that time.

Wednesday Lent Services: These will continue online for now. We will use Holden Evening Prayer, have a reading done by a confirmation student, skits (possibly done by confirmation families), and a sermon.

Preaching: I am preaching twice this month.

Visits: I've been checking in over the phone and trying to set up visits with a couple people.

Lydia Circle: We are trying a blended meeting- in person with a zoom option- this month.

Grafton Police Meeting: I met with the new Grafton Chief of Police and the community outreach officer. They wanted to get to know community leaders and have a conversation about how we can be a welcoming community for people of differing backgrounds. I hope this will be a conversation that we can continue.

Synod Assembly Online: This weekend is the synod assembly, held online. It seems that it will be pretty basic and streamlined, but we can share any news from that with you next month.

DIRECTOR OF INVOLVEMENT: (Lisa Bernd)

Vanco: I have been working on learning the new Vanco system. I have been taking some Zoom classes to make sure I understand all of the ins & outs. I still have a few more things to master but I am on my way.

Statements: End of the year statements went out on Wednesday.

Building: Blood Drive – The blood drive for January 21 is full again!! We have six drives set up for 2021. What a wonderful way to serve our community.

After more than 15 years the key holder on the shed broke. I purchased a new key holder & Jon was able to get the key out of the old box & hang the new box.

A few building repairs needed to be made. A sink in the new women's room sensor stopped working & one of the ceiling lights needed to be repaired.

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 & Vanco donations.

Annual Report: I finished the annual report & statistical report this month. I will be printing them & mailing them out early February. We received a Thrivent Grant to cover the costs.

Discussion: working through Vanco has been going pretty well, very available for service.



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Attendance Report

Attendance was discussed.

Committee Reports

CHRISTIAN CARE: (Melissa Schmidt)

No report provided

FELLOWSHIP: (Wendy Freeland)

No report provided

FINANCE: (Lynda Lalley)

Total income for the month shows as \$68,318.46 --(should average \$51,529.75 monthly) --puts us behind **\$33,809.16** for the year breakdown of this number is listed below:

- Sunday Offering \$67,943.10 --(**\$16,313.35** ahead monthly plan, **\$31,435.61** behind YTD plan)
 - o E-Giving \$16,694.75 -- (Down by **\$1,981.00** from last year)
 - o PayPal Donations \$2,511.35 --(Up by **\$1,043.06** from last month)
- NO DECEMBER Special Services – (Behind **\$959.32** to YTD plan)
- Scrip \$364.13 --(\$3,174.80 YTD Total Rebate, **\$174.80** above YTD plan)
 - ****Scrip deposits current month credits into bank account the following month – December credits will deposit in January 2021
- NO DECEMBER Building Rentals --(**\$308.33** ahead YTD plan)
- Money Market Interest \$11.23 – (**\$160.97** YTD)
- Contingency **\$0** --(\$45,401.49 was used in 2020 to balance Total Receipts with Total Disbursements)

Expenses were over for the month due to end of year benevolence disbursements. Year to date we are under by **\$35,014.57**.

We had a wonderful month of giving we were able to move \$12,038.37 to contingency fund for the month of December. New contingency balance for December is \$116,474.33 from \$104,435.96 in November.

Expenses YTD we are under \$35,014.57.

Income YTD we are behind \$33,809.16.

Also, I received the loan documents from MIF and forwarded them to the church office so they can be printed out and signed by the appropriate people. I've asked Arcelia to look at the last loan documents to see who signed them the last time. Since we are in a transitional period for council positions, we may need to ask the legal person that's looking at our constitution, who should be signing the loan documents.

OUTREACH: (Rachel Langer)

The only activity I have to report for this month is the pick-up and delivery of more jackets, warm clothing and blankets to Milwaukee Street Angels earlier this month. I will continue to collect and deliver through these colder months.

PROPERTY: (Sarah Brogni)

No report provided

WORSHIP: (Kelly Olson)

Team met on January 5th

Technology update:

Dustin moved the soundboard & some new equipment closer to the musicians to improve the sound. The cost of the new equipment was covered by a Thrivent grant. Because the mics



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were cutting in/out due to interference, he also moved the wireless receiver to the front left behind the altar. Will also unplug Baptismal font when recording services.

John advised that volunteers are needed to run the PowerPoint for the Livestreamed services. That way one person can run the camera while the other runs the PP.

Pastor Heidi commented that all leaders should be aware of their speaking delivery pace. It is different without a congregation present.

Review of Christmas Worship:

Congregation-wide Christmas Program: was wonderful for both those who participated and those who watched. Much positive feedback. Should consider doing more like this.

Barn Service: very pleased with # of people who came, despite bitter cold, all but a handful who signed up, did attend. Heaters were not very effective, but if we do it again, Dustin advised that one heater is required to keep the electrical cords from freezing.

Christmas Day Zoom Service: Very nice; enjoyed by about 15 families. The format allowed everyone to see each other, share and interact. Should consider doing more Zoom worship. Could also add Breakout rooms. Might consider for Lent.

Return to in-person worship: The WI Council of Churches is not expected to recommend in person worship until the positivity rate is less than 10%. Question was raised if we should consider opening up the Livestreamed services for a limited number. After a short discussion, we agreed that not much has changed in the last few months and we should just stay the course. People seem to realize and accept that we're being smart to not meet in person. People are welcome to sign up to help with the PowerPoint or for Worship Assistant if they want to attend worship.

Lenten Worship: discussed some ideas for Ash Wednesday and possible themes for the Wednesday Lenten services. Subsequent to our meeting, Pastor Heidi found and proposed doing a self-guided in-person worship experience on Ash Wednesday using the booklet "The Seven Symbols of Ash". It involves setting up 7 stations where people could go through at a time that works for them and stay socially distanced. Details are being worked out.

For Wednesday services, Pastor Heidi has selected a wilderness theme, using the Holden Evening Prayer service. They will be online. More details to come.

Deb added that the handbell choir is interested in recording some pieces for Holy Week/Easter and Eryn may have interest and time to put together a choir anthem as well.

Church Play: Pastor Paul said that the cast and crew from last year's play, "Joni: A Whale of a Tale", (that was cancelled last March due to the Covid lockdown) is interested in reviving and performing the play WHEN it is safe to hold a few rehearsals and schedule the performance.

Baptism, January 31st: a baptism during the Sunday worship on 1/31 is being considered. Family asking how many people they could invite, maybe up to 25. Worship leaders were comfortable with proceeding with it.

Next meeting, February 2nd @ 6:30, virtual.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE: (Jen Jacobson)

We met virtually on January 14th to we touched on winter and spring programming; our main focus was on the older Youth, especially the high school age. Erica, Katie, Pat and myself were involved

Sunday School age:

- Faith Kits will continue. We currently have an Epiphany kit for families to pick up now which includes the supplies to make 3 Kings Crown Cinnamon Rolls and carry out a house blessing, which is an Epiphany tradition.



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- 5K Lord Prayers: It is a milestone event for our 5K Sunday School children to learn the Lord's Prayer and lead the congregation in the Lord's Prayer during worship.
 - 5K Families have been invited to a virtual event much like when we had in person Sunday School the parents were involved in a special event to learn with their child.
 - Katie will be putting together a recording of the Lord's Prayer from our 5K class to be used in the March 14th Worship

Youth:

- Weekly bible studies for JYG and HYPE
- Will have a Soup to-go Sale on Ash Wednesday, this is in place of their normal Soup and Chili fundraiser on Ash Wednesday.

Looking at summer and beyond:

- VBS - Hoping to have an in-person scaled down VBS. We will survey our normal and any potential volunteers in March.
- Boundary Waters Trip planning has begun
- Confirmation Camp is tentative

Re-evaluating/Restructuring HYPE:

- We have mentioned before that 2020/2021 was going to be a low-key year with gathering information and re-evaluating HYPE. Both Erica and Pat have read books on the trend of youth groups getting smaller and struggling that so many churches, including Grace, has experienced and felt. The books have explained the trend and even gave some reasons for it, what they haven't helped with is a solution or suggestions.
- Erica shared some starting off points she would like help with
 - Building a bigger adult leadership team for the Youth
 - Setting Goals/purpose for our Youth Groups (ie greater participation, connecting youth to church, building a strong faith community between them)
 - Communication with parents and youth
 - Gathering feedback to understand what is causing this trend specific to our church
 - Gathering feedback from parents and youth as to their needs or hopes (this will help form the goal/purpose)
- The rest of the group offered our initial thoughts back to Erica, but ultimately we all left with things to brainstorm about for our next meeting.

Katie

- Family Faith Initiative Update
 - Family Faith Kits
 - I continue to coordinate one Family Faith Kit each month. January's kit focused on new traditions to celebrate Epiphany, and February's kit will focus on Valentine's Day and sharing God's love.
 - These kits are paid for through Thrivent grants.
 - Family Faith Activities



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- Feb 7 we will hold an Outdoor Fun & Fellowship event for families at Grace. We will have fun outdoor activities such as sledding, snow man building, frozen water balloons and more.
- 5K Lord's Prayer Event
 - We will continue to lift up our kindergarteners and the promise made to them at their baptism to learn The Lord's Prayer during a virtual event on Jan 24.
 - At least 7 children and their families are attending.
 - We will record the children saying the prayer and virtually share it with the congregation in March.
- Thrivent Grant Updates
 - We ended 2020 by applying for and utilizing over 49 Thrivent grants. That is \$12,500 towards Grace projects and outreach opportunities. I highly encourage us to continue to utilize these grants and I am more than happy to help those who have not applied for them in the past to learn how the very simple process works. This is a great way to help the bottom line of our budget along with supporting other organizations in need.
- Lent
 - Thanks to John Bernd and Justin Lobner for teaching me how to use video editing software. Using these newfound skills, I am happy to help put together the virtual Lent services. I'm also looking forward to assisting Pastor Heidi with the interactive Ash Wednesday event.
- VBS Update
 - We are working to plan a smaller, but in-person, Vacation Bible School at Grace this summer. Over the next few months, we will begin coordinating volunteers and updating our procedures to ensure a safe and meaningful faith-filled event.
- Children's Messages—I continue to do children's messages each week for online worship.
- Grace Window Décor—We once again updated the window art in the gathering space. This time, each one of the chains includes the names of one of our 3K-12th graders at Grace.

Other Business

Groups meeting at church: ALC, quilters, confirmation, Lydia Circle, and blood drives.

Discussed plan for opening up for in-person church services: opening plan, moving forward plan, and back up plan. Look to have plan put together to discuss with congregation at annual meeting. WPC to create the opening plan, metric for opening criteria – Motion by James to approve, Kelly 2nd.

2021 Budget which was presented in December, only discussions from executive committee meetings was for discussions on the decrease. PPP line item was updated on how to report the income. Motion to approve Proposed 2021 Budget by Wendy, 2nd James.

Council Meeting – February 18th at 7PM to review/approve the opening plan for worship.

Monthly Council Meeting – February 25th at 7PM

Closing Prayer: Mark Barber