



## Council Minutes November 19<sup>th</sup>, 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 7:07 P.M. with President Mark Barber presiding.

Opening Prayer Pastor Heidi

✓ Approval of the October 2020 minutes, updates to the Vanco discussion (simplify) motion by Pastor Paul, 2<sup>nd</sup> by James.

### Pastors and DI Reports

#### **PASTOR PAUL'S REPORT:**

**Worship:** With the increase in COVID cases we do not have any current plans on holding worship services with members in attendance. The weather forecast for this coming Sunday is not looking good, so we are most likely done with outside worship. We will move the livestream inside worship services to 9:00 a.m. soon and the congregation will be informed of this. We are inviting members who do not have internet access to attend the livestream services, but only a couple of them have done so.

We are having a live stream Thanksgiving Eve worship at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25. *I encourage council members to share a short Thanksgiving video with the congregation as part of this service.*

Plans continue for our hoped-for Christmas Eve services in the Fugate barn. My thanks to Pastor Heidi for all her hard work on this.

**Stewardship:** I will keep the council updated as more commitment cards come in. As stated in my first report, we are dealing with a lot of significant giving decreases, for a variety of reasons, and need about \$27,000 in overall giving increases just to be where we were in 2020. As of my first report, we had received about \$16,000 in increases.

A letter is being sent this week to all members who have not yet returned their commitment cards. This will be followed with phone calls the week after Thanksgiving.

**2020 Giving:** After doing very well through August, offerings were low in both September and October leaving us with a significant deficit for the year. Expenses are also lower than budgeted. We will send a giving reminder letter to all members in early December and letters are going out this week to members who made a written commitment for 2020 but are behind by a significant amount.

**Nominating Committee:** Kirstin Albiero has agreed to serve as president-elect on the council. We continue to work to recruit candidates for the other positions, treasurer, chair of the Fellowship Committee and chair of the Property Committee.

**Endowment Committee:** The group is meeting online on Sunday, November 22 at 11:30 a.m. We plan to distribute \$6,000 this year. The pastors will come up with suggestions for where this money can go and share these with the committee. Bob Dries is completing his second term and we will need to find a replacement for him.

**Confirmation:** We held in-person classes, with a few students attending by ZOOM, from September to early November. However, with the increase in COVID cases, we moved to



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virtual classes starting last week. I am filming short presentations on the week's lessons and sending these to our students by email, along with some discussion questions for them to share with their parents/guardians.

**Congregational Meetings:** I am attending a synod ZOOM meeting on Tuesday evening, November 17, about how to conduct virtual congregational meetings. Our Grace annual meeting is on Sunday, January 24 and we need to have options in place if we are not able to have an in-person meeting.

*Discussion: Pledges are still coming in, but we need more to reach our 2020 pledges amount. Requested of the Endowment committee for an additional \$2000 due to additional request needs, have not heard back yet. Additional stewardship email updates will be coming out.*

### **PASTOR HEIDI'S REPORT:**

**Advent Plans:** We are assembling the Advent Faith Kits this week. They will include an advent wreath and candles, prayers/readings for the wreath lighting, a copy of the Grace Advent Devotional, honey sticks and bug cookies (to represent John the Baptist eating locusts and wild honey), a magnet, a CD of Grace Music groups, a craft to return for decorating the barn for the Christmas Eve Services, a card addressed to a Grace Elder, and various Advent/Christmas items for kids.

I got 25 devotions submitted by Grace members. My thanks to them all for sharing! I formatted them and paired them with verses. I am so excited for the congregation to read them and to be able to connect with each other in faith in this special way.

We covered the cost of most of the kit items through Thrivent Grants.

I'm still planning to have a Social Media daily word for people to post photos about each day. For example, the word could be "Joy" and you would post a picture of something that brings you joy and include a hashtag so that others from the church can see it. It is going out in Grace Notes today

**Christmas Worship:** Plans are moving ahead for the worship services in the barn. I spoke with Dr. Dan Hagerman to get his take on this plan and he said as long as there is ventilation in the barn and people aren't congregating before/after it should be safe.

The plan is to have services at 3pm and 5pm. There will be an online sign up. We can fit 100 people per service, so signing up ahead of time will be necessary. I will make a video explaining how things will work. We will publicize this with the congregation in a couple weeks and put out a sign-up genius for help- we will need many volunteers to help make this happen.

I ordered heaters so that will help with the temps.

We will provide a recorded Christmas Eve service of the Praise Team done in the Worship Center with just the worship leaders.

**Lydia Circle:** We decided to do a zoom meeting this month due to the rising Covid numbers, and also because several of our members are quarantining either by choice or necessity. We will evaluate the situation each month and decide which method we think is best/safest for the group.

*Discussion: Christmas Eve service - parking possible concerns if it snows will need to make other plans, look to create a layout and plan to distribute. Most feel it's really important to find some way to meet in person. Time frame looking to be under an hour closer to 30 minutes. Communion is not planned as of right now but can be added.*

### **DIRECTOR OF INVOLVEMENT: (Lisa Bernd)**



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**Time & Talents:** I sent out a modified Time & Talents to all of our congregational members. There are still a lot of ways people can stay connected to church & their church family during this time.

**Vanco:** I had a Zoom meeting with a member of the Vanco staff. We went through a lot of the information, I will need to switch our ACH giving from Cornerstone to Vanco. They will also be giving us a phone number for us to be able to implement text giving. I will be meeting again with them at the beginning of December to learn how to set up our new system.

**Stewardship:** I am entering the pledge cards coming in & preparing the information for Pastor Paul. I sent out 92 reminder letters to members who have not turned in their pledge cards. I also sent out 39 letters to members who are not up to date on their pledges or have not donated for this year.

**Statements:** I will be sending out statements at the beginning of December so everyone can see where they are.

**Building:** Blood Drive – We have a blood drive scheduled for December 16. Hopefully we will have a great of a turn out as we did in October!

I had the electrician at church on November 2. The lights in the hall near the office were not working. They were in the hall where people would need to wait for voting the next day. The electrician also found an electrical box without a cover so he replaced that too.

**Sign Up Genius:** I set up the December sign up for Worship Assistants & sent out the link in Grace Notes. I will also be setting up the signup for Christmas Eve next week.

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

**Grace Notes:** As well as emailing Grace Notes on Wednesdays (special Grace Notes during the week & on Sunday), I have been printing the Wednesday Grace Notes & sending them to members who do not have internet access at their home. I felt like people were missing important information especially since they were not all were able to go to worship to hear the announcements or have the ability to watch the service live & get the announcements. This gives them the opportunity to know what is happening at Grace.

### **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)**

Here's the monthly update from Arcelia regarding finances:

Total income for the month shows as \$39,481.80 --(should average \$51,529.75 monthly) --puts us behind **\$46,194.19** for the year breakdown of this number is listed below:

- Sunday Offering \$37,162.81 --(**\$14,466.94** behind monthly plan, **\$44,465.25** behind YTD plan)
  - o E-Giving \$17,102.75 -- (Down by **\$305.00** from last year)
  - o PayPal Donations \$3,822.06 --(Up by **\$2,149.05** from last month)
- **NO September** Special Services \$0.00
- Scrip \$781.13 --(\$2,485.33 YTD Total Rebate, **\$14.67** behind YTD plan)



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- Building Rentals \$250.00 --(\$391.67 ahead YTD plan)
- Money Market Interest \$10.86
- Contingency **\$14,553.23** --(explained below)

Expenses were under by **\$2,098.93** for the month at \$54,035.03 (we should average \$56,133.96).

Income was short therefore we needed to move \$14,553.23 from contingency fund to cover expenses for the month of October. New contingency balance for October is \$106,622.39 from \$121,175.62 in September.

PPP Loan has been 100% forgiven

*Discussion: Arcelia is working on 10-year trend which takes into consideration the building addition, increased giving and increased expenses during that time. Executive committee will meet next week to try to work on a balanced budget. Lynda is still working to see if there is another option for the mortgage.*

### **OUTREACH: (Rachel Langer)**

Since I have been the Outreach Coordinator/Committee, I have been impressed with our congregation's response to our communities' needs. Since September, I have delivered multiple loads of jackets, clothing, shoes and blankets to the organization Milwaukee Street Angels (donations provided by our loving members). In October alone 6 boxes of beautiful hand knit quilts were provided by our wonderful quilters. Milwaukee Street Angel's needs are ongoing for these items especially with the cold months ahead.

Today I also delivered my first full yellow canned food/ non-perishable bin items to Family Promise of Ozaukee Co.

I will continue to pick up and deliver items to these two organizations throughout the winter months.

### **PROPERTY: (Sarah Brogni)**

No report provided

### **WORSHIP: (Kelly Olson)**

Virtual attendance: Pastor Paul, Pastor Heidi, Tori Saunders, Jane Braband, Zack & Eryn Durlam, Debbie Donovan, Vince Olson, Kelly Olson, Dustin Lobner

Worship Online vs In-Person: Due to the increasing COVID cases and deaths in recent weeks and reports that the area hospitals are at capacity, the team decided that it was prudent to hold off doing in person, indoor worship services. Outdoor services will continue to be held if the weather is favorable. Either way, the service will be streamed LIVE and posted to Grace's YouTube channel for later viewing. The pastors drafted an email that was sent out to the congregation on 11/5 to communicate the next steps for worship as the weather turned colder. On 11/8, we were blessed with great weather and the service was held outdoors.

The Affirmation of Baptism service was held on 10/25, with 40 people in attendance. COVID procedures-no singing, masks and social distancing were required. This indoor/in person service was discussed by the council and it was decided that this special service merited in person worship even when regular services are not being held indoors. The families of the Confirmands appreciated that the service was also livestreamed allowing distant family members, who would not have otherwise attended, to watch.

Two people attended the Service of Remembrance on Nov 1<sup>st</sup>. The service was also watched via livestream.

Thanksgiving Worship and Videos: A worship leader recorded Thanksgiving Eve will be Livestreamed. Congregation will be asked to create and share short videos of the things they



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are thankful for. Instructions and a Google drive link will be provided for submission. The short videos will be compiled and shown during the service Livestream.

### Advent & Christmas

Vince agreed to compile the recordings from the music groups into an mp4 for download and onto CDs to be included in the Advent Faith Kits for families and adult members.

12/13—Grace Christmas Party Give Back—since this event will be held outdoors, we may sing some Christmas carols and possibly do some nearby caroling in the neighborhood.

Zack & Eryn are working with Katie on the congregation-wide virtual Christmas Program on Dec 20th to provide music and possibly a small choir. Deb and the handbell choir have recorded a piece to be included as well.

Plans are moving forward for holding two Christmas Eve services in Tom and Jean Fugate's barn with Eryn & Zack (and possibly a small choir) doing the music. Services at the barn will be held at 3PM and 5PM; attendance will be limited, sign up will be required. A Thrivent Grant was approved to order heaters and the Fugate's ordered flameless candles. Many volunteers will be needed—a sign up genius will be put out.

A third service will be recorded and Livestreamed @ 7PM with the worship leaders and Praise Team in the Worship Center.

Christmas Day Worship- This carol service will be Livestreamed OR we discussed the possibility of doing a virtual service on Zoom or another platform where Pastors, musicians and congregation could join online.

### **YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE: (Jen Jacobson)**

I don't have a report because we have not met since the last council meeting. However, I know Katie and Erica have been busy. We had Trunk or Treat outside on Friday, October 30th, it was well attended, and nicely social distanced with candy brought by Grace using a grant. Katie has put out the November Family Faith kit, it is themed around the ways we give thanks in our faith. For those of you that are curious about the kits, I have included a picture of my girls each holding up a project, the thankful tree and blessing jar are from the Thankful kit, and the Grace sign is from the reformation kit. All three of these were a group project and really brought them together (with minimum fighting). There is also a song and story to go along with each theme. From a previous meeting with Pastor Heidi, I know she is working hard putting together an awesome Advent Kit geared more for any member. Please watch for those.

Katie:

- Family Faith Initiative Update
  - Family Faith Kits
    - I've created 4 kits so far. All kits have been taken home by families, except the November "Give Thanks" kit. So we're still encouraging families to pick that one up.
    - I am not creating a December kit, as we've been working with Pastor Heidi on Advent kits that families can work on. This will be an awesome kit for families and individuals of any age alike!
    - I did add a box outside of the worship center for folks to pick up kits anytime, as we aren't having as many in-person services, and that is when most kits were picked up.
    - If you haven't checked out our Family Faith page, you can check it out online here: <http://www.gracegrifton.com/family-faith.html>



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- Family Faith Activities
  - Here are the upcoming activities:
    - November 20-- congregation wide virtual BINGO. We are encouraging members of all ages along with friends and family to participate from the comfort of their own homes.
    - December 13—Grace Christmas Party Give Back. We're coordinating a donation drop off event to support Christmas Meal Bags at All People's Church. We will also be collecting items for LaSata (or another nursing home). There will also be music by Eryn & Zack and an opportunity for folks to decorate a tree around the Grace property.
- Grace Youth Education Christmas Card—I've put together this year's youth education Christmas Card. This year, we'll send it to all Grace families with kids and some shut-ins as well. We got a Thrivent grant to cover the cost of the printing and postage for this.
- Grace Congregation-Wide Christmas Program Dec 20—We are putting together a pre-recorded Christmas program that will be used for the December 20 worship service. We have 21 households participating in readings (ages 3-83). I am super excited about this!! Eryn & Zack are coordinating a few virtual choir songs (and there are some "guests" that will be joining the choir for this). Bells has already recorded a song we will include as well. I will be editing the program together.
- Thrivent Grants—We've been very busy doing lots of online shopping to use all the grants we have received. They are a wonderful blessing to help support all of the work we are doing now along with some wish-list items for church!!
- Healthcare Worker Snack Donations—We are working to collect snacks for our Grace healthcare members and their co-workers. We will be collecting them now through Monday, November 23. So far, we have heard from members that work at two area hospitals, Grafton EMS and the public health department. We will share the snacks we collect with all of these locations. If you know of another Grace healthcare worker that would appreciate taking snacks to their work, please let Pastor Heidi or myself know. Please also consider making a donation! They go a long way in boosting the moral of these workers that are working so hard to help our community in these unprecedented times.

### **Other Business**

Personnel Committee: making lots of progress, looking for any overlaps (not finding any) and making plans for future (in next couple of years and in regards to changes/roles). The committee will be involved in mission reviews this year to get better understanding for the future as well.

Annual Meeting: Constitution reads that it must be in person so we will need to investigate this further. Might want to reach out to synod how to work through this. Council may be able to enforce the Wisconsin statute –regarding emergency bylaws, can be created. Steve Knowles could also help with this. The Synod Zoom meeting also had discussion on how to conduct the meeting virtually and in good manner – what to prepare and provide, be very open and forthcoming with information to the congregation. FAQ sheet will be shared.

Church Usage: Trip to Holy Land trip 2021 informational meeting asked to meet in person – will recommend meeting virtually.

**Closing Prayer:** Pastor Paul