



Council Minutes October 22nd, 2020

IN ATTENDANCE:

*Pastor Paul Bulgerin
*Pastor Heidi Borkenhagen
Mark Barber (President)

*Jodi Doro (Secretary)
*Lynda Lalley (Treasurer)
Rachel Langer (Outreach)

Wendy Freeland (Fellowship)
Sarah Brogni (Property)

*Lisa Bernd (Director of
Involvement)

*James Newell (President
Elect)
Mike Moran (Past President)

*Melissa Schmidt (Christian
Care)
*Kelly Olson (Worship)

*Jen Jacobson (Christian Education)

(*) present at meeting

The meeting began at 7:09 P.M. with President Elect James Newell presiding.

Opening Prayer Pastor Paul

✓ Approval of the September 2020 minutes with one spelling correction – motioned to approve Lynda meeting minutes, second by Melissa- all approved.

Pastors and DI Reports

PASTOR PAUL'S REPORT:

Stewardship: The second stewardship message was preached on Sunday, October 18. The faith commitment packets were mailed on Monday, October 19. The second special stewardship video, created by Adan Burgos, is being made available to the congregation on Tuesday, October 20. Another video, made by Pat and Chantal Murack, was sent to the congregation last week. Members can begin mailing in their commitment cards later this week.

PPP Loan: The news that our PPP loans has been forgiven was very good to hear. This will help us with our 2020 budget and the contingency fund.

Worship Plans: We sent an update to the congregation on October 9 that we are going to hold off on having people attend inside worship until further notice. With the spike in coronavirus rates we want to be as cautious as possible. We are planning to worship outside as long as possible. If the weather does not cooperate, as was the case last Sunday, we are live streaming the service and posting it online later, on Sunday.

We have invited a few members, who do not have internet access, to attend the inside services. Two members did this last Sunday.

The Worship Planning Team will continue to monitor the situation and decide when we feel it is safe to have a limited number of members attend on Sunday and begin the Thursday evening worship services again.

We are going ahead with our plans for the in-person Affirmation of Baptism service at 1:00 p.m. this Sunday, October 25. We did not want to cancel this for a second time. We will have about 50-60 people in attendance, keeping the service to immediate family only. Everyone attending will wear masks and practice social distancing in the worship center. The service will be kept brief and will be live streamed for those who cannot attend.

Nominating Committee: Because of the pandemic, the full committee has not met yet. The staff members who serve on the committee have met to discuss names and have shared these names with the full committee by email. This week we will begin to assign potential nominees to members of the committee so they can be contacted.

Confirmation: We have been meeting in person since September 16. We are offering a ZOOM option for families and two eighth grade students have been participating this way. However, we



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now have three eighth graders who are on quarantine, and Erica Dimmett, whose son is one of them, is going to work from home this week.

Because of these growing numbers, we are going to not have in person class for this week and will go with a pre-recorded lesson for the eighth graders. The seventh graders will have a different lesson approach for this week, watching a video at home which was going to be shown in class. As with all other things, we continue to monitor the situation.

I did meet in person with the small, five-member ninth grade class last Sunday.

Service of Remembrance: I am going ahead with plans for an in-person Service of Remembrance on Sunday evening, November 1. I do not think we will have many people here, probably less than twenty. We will make this video available on video or live stream it for those who choose not to attend.

Discussion: Stewardship letters went out, really happy with videos completed. Did not have confirmation last night due to portion of the class needing to stay home. Will meet next week to further work on the potential nominations.

PASTOR HEIDI'S REPORT:

Advent Plans: I have begun looking at plans for how we will celebrate these important times in the life of the church during the pandemic.

I'm getting some of the devotions back for our Grace Advent Devotional, written by our members. We are even having kids write a sentence or two and color some pictures. I will add a bible verse and a short prayer to each devotion. I am so excited to put this together and share with the congregation.

We are waiting for some Thrivent Grants to come through so we can order what we need for the Family Faith Kits. Again, we will have a kit for families with kids as well as households that are just adults.

Music leaders are going to be doing some recordings for a CD, and I'll add in some Bible verses read by Grace kids.

We will 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.

Christmas Worship: I met with Jean Fugate to discuss having worship services in the barn that is on her and Tom's property. They are graciously willing to host us there. She had several really neat ideas to enhance the worship as well as a list of volunteer jobs (parking help, lighting, etc.). There are a lot of logistics/planning that will go into this, but I am very thankful that we have this option.

As of now we are thinking that we will do two services there, with 100 people possible at each service. There will be an online sign up for this. If any of you have thoughts, questions, ideas, or want more information, please reach out to me.

Calls to Members: I made my calls this month, as well as some in home, masked visits. It felt great to connect with everyone!

Lydia Circle: We had our first meeting in September. We were joined virtually by a new member! We have a couple others who are not going out much and aren't coming in person, so this month I am going to try to set up a virtual option for those three people so they can still participate.



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Discussion: Decided not to proceed with Lydia Circle next week due to situation. Applied for Thrivent Grants for barn services- heaters, battery candles, Advent kits, also plan to apply for one for an FM transmitter for drive in type services or movie nights.

DIRECTOR OF INVOLVEMENT: (Lisa Bernd)

Custodian: It is great having Jon working in the building. He is getting a lot of the little things that got left behind caught up. We have a calendar system that we have been using that is working great for us. We talk daily to make sure we have all of the updated information & that I can make sure he has what he needs.

Stewardship: I sent out the first stewardship letter earlier this month to the congregation members. Then last week I put together the family stewardship envelopes. I mailed out 250 envelopes. Each envelope had a letter from the Stewardship Committee, a pledge card individual to every family, an e-giving form & a return stamped envelope. I also got information together for Pastor Paul on our giving so that he can plan for next year's budget.

Statements: At the beginning of the month I sent out third quarter statements.

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.

Member Calls: I made my church member calls. It was so nice to catch up with the people on my list. That is one of the things I miss the most about not having worship on Sunday. I miss connecting with the members.

Building: Blood Drive – We have a blood drive scheduled for October 21. They had so many people sign up that we have a second drive scheduled for next week October 27!! Usually they have 23-25 people come in during the session. This time they had 39 people sign up!!! They needed that second drive to accommodate all the people. What a great problem to have. I said of course we would host another drive.

Prayer Chain: I have been organizing the prayer chain & starting the chains when I receive a call.

Service of Remembrance: John updated the photos & music for the service of remembrance video.

Annual Maintenance: We had our bi-annual service from Pure Mechanical on our heating & cooling system.

Attendance Report

Attendance was discussed.

Committee Reports

CHRISTIAN CARE: (Melissa Schmidt)

No report provided

FELLOWSHIP: (Wendy Freeland)

No report provided

FINANCE: (Lynda Lalley)



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Total income for the month shows as \$39,402.19 --(should average \$51,529.75 monthly) --puts us behind **\$33,212.91** for the year breakdown of this number is listed below:

- Sunday Offering \$39,209.75 --(**\$12,420.00** behind monthly plan, **\$29,998.31** behind YTD plan)
 - o E-Giving \$17,102.75 -- (Down by **\$1,023.00** from last year)
 - o PayPal Donations \$1,673.01 --(Up by **\$806.44** from last month)
- **NO September** Special Services \$0.00
- Scrip \$181.58 --(\$1,704.20 YTD Total Rebate, **\$545.80** behind YTD plan)
- **NO September** Building Rentals \$0.00 --(**\$391.67** ahead YTD plan)
- Money Market Interest \$10.86
- Contingency **\$15,182.34** --(explained below)

Expenses were under by **\$1,549.43** for the month at \$54,584.53 (we should average \$56,133.96).

Income was short therefore we needed to move \$15,182.34 from contingency fund to cover expenses for the month of September. New contingency balance for September is \$121,175.62 from \$136,357.96 in August.

Also, as Pastor Paul noted in his update, the PPP loan was forgiven, so that definitely helps the current situation.

We had also contacted other lending institutions over the past few months, to see if we could get a better rate on our mortgage. Unfortunately, we weren't able to get a better quote. Even though residential mortgage rates have been dropping over the past couple of months, commercial lending rates don't necessarily follow the same pattern. There are other factors that banks/lending institutions consider when setting the rate. Since we have been running deficit budgets over the past few years, that could be one reason why our current rate went up and why the other 2 lending institutions we talked to couldn't offer a better rate.

As for the 2021 budget, once we get into November, we should be able to project what pledges will look like. I'll be working with Arcelia to figure out rostered staff benefit projections and council should start discussing what to do with rostered and non-rostered salaries for 2021.

Discussion: Submit to Portico by end of October to remain on the Gold+ plan for 2021; agreement by council and Lynda will let Arcelia know tomorrow.

Year to date expenses are about \$9k under so that is good.

OUTREACH: (Rachel Langer)

No report provided

PROPERTY: (Sarah Brogni)

No report provided

WORSHIP: (Kelly Olson)

Present: Pastor Paul, Pastor Heidi, Tori Saunders, Jane Braband, Zack & Eryn Durlam, Debbie Donovan, Vince Olson, Kelly Olson & Tech Committee guests John Bernd and Dustin Lobner



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Discussion at this meeting was primarily focused on our plans *at that time* to begin **limited*** indoor in-person worship on October 25th. We were also planning to resume Thursday evening services (**limited**), beginning on November 5th at 6:30 PM. ***limited to 50 people**
The weekly Sunday services would continue to be LIVE streamed and also posted to Grace's YouTube page for later viewing.

Keeping everyone's health and safety a top priority, we established the following list of mandatory procedures and precautions:

1. Our capacity will be limited to 25%, or about 50 worshippers at each service. Those who wish to attend a service must reserve a spot by signing up via Sign up Genius or calling the office no later than Thursday of the week prior. A new reservation is required for each service you wish to attend.
2. **Traffic flow in and out of the worship center will be controlled by signage and dismissal.**
3. Socially distanced seating will be in place. Pews will be roped off for proper social distancing. (there will be no seating in the section on the left of the altar or in the first 2 rows in the front) **Please note:** Your 'regular' seat may not be open for seating 😊
4. **Masks will be required for everyone in attendance.** All worship leaders and musicians will wear masks
5. **There will be NO congregational singing**
6. Services will be about 45 minutes long
7. **For Communion, participants will remain in their seats and use the pre-packaged wafer and juice packs**

10/8: Revision of plans for in person worship: Two days after our meeting, our Greater MKE Synod Bishop Paul Erickson sent an email urging congregations to hold off on inside worship until at least mid-November due to increasing COVID cases in the area. Based on this, the team decided it was best to reevaluate and hold off on beginning in person indoor services. The team will continue to monitor the situation and decide when we believe it is safe to begin Sunday and Thursday services with limited attendance. In the meantime, outdoor services will be held when the weather is favorable to do so.

The **Affirmation of Baptism service** will be held on Sunday, Oct 25th. Attendance is limited to immediate family members and/or baptismal sponsors. Provisions will be made to safely celebrate the baptismal rite. The service will also be livestreamed for family and friends unable to attend.

Service of Remembrance, Nov 1st: Pastor Paul is planning to lead this service, in person, although attendance is expected to be smaller than usual. John Bernd will update the video of loved ones. The video and service will live-streamed or available for later viewing.

Thanksgiving Eve Service: plans for this service were not finalized. Pastor Paul is scheduled and willing to lead if we hold a service. We will decide at our next meeting. We will plan to collect food for donation either way.

Advent: Music leaders are arranging to make recordings (3-4 pieces from each group (Zack & Eryn, Handbells and Praise Team) for the Advent CD Pastor Heidi is putting together to be distributed to families and adult members.

Christmas Worship: Team discussed necessary Covid provisions and options for indoor/in-person Christmas Eve worship, including the possibility of holding one service in Jean & Tom Fugate's barn. Tentatively, we discussed holding services at 3 PM and 7 PM in the Worship Center and 5 PM service in the barn. If the services are 30 minutes or less, we could allow



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congregational singing if everyone wears a mask. We would also Livestream & post the earliest service for later viewing.

For those that watch the service online, we could make candles available to pick up and use at the end of the service for Silent Night.

Plan B is to pre-record a service that could involve different families to be posted on the website.

Next meeting: November 3rd @ 7 PM (this will be Virtual due to voting being held at church)

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY COMMITTEE: (Jen Jacobson)

We met on October 15th to discuss fall programming. Erica, Katie, and myself were present. Our meeting was focused around fall education efforts.

Faith at Home Kits

- Sunday School Age Kits (also up for any member to pick up to share with kids in their lives).
 - Katie has created instructions and videos and post them on our website, bags with supplies are available for pick during worship on Sundays and in the doorway throughout the week.
 - Bags have items to assist in array of activities. Katie has been using Grants to help with the cost. Some examples of these supplies are the necessities to make giant bubble mix, cake mix and M&M to make friendship cookies.
 - There have been 3 bags so far and plans for one more in November. Below is a recap of the bags created. Note views don't equal number of participants as most families have more than one child.

Bag	Number Picked Up	Views
David and Goliath	33	27
Love is ...	20ish	12
Reformation	Just went out	N/A
Thankful	November's Bag	N/A

- December will not have a bag as we want to encourage picking up the Advent Kit.
- Feedback on the bags have been positive from those that are doing them
- Most of the bags were picked up during worship, we are expecting pick up to slow down without/limited in-person worship.
- Youth Kits
 - Erica put together kits for the older youth. She gave out a total of 30, all the Confirmation Students received one at their meeting, plus 6 others chose to pick them up.

Other activities/content

- Confirmation is meeting in person
- Youth Groups



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- Erica is mailing out monthly newsletters
- Erica just got information about a weekly bible study from the ELCA, she used them in spring. She will look into using them again.
- Family Events
 - The events we have had so far based on the feedback as been meaningful to those that attended but have been low in attendance. There was a glass cross making day, a scavenger hunt, and a nature walk.
 - Up coming events are
 - Trunk or Treat on October 30th. We are providing the Candy and there is a sign up for people decorating trunks which will be spaced out in the parking lot, along with some outside activities.
 - Virtual BINGO Night – planning is in still in progress
 - Holiday Drive – some sort of food/item drive where people can drive up and drop off stuff, we will also possibly have fire pits and music and option to “adopt” a bush or tree at church to decorate.
 - Youth hosting Big Brothers Big Sisters Holiday event – Erica is still working on this with BBBS, unlike other years there will be no lunch it sounds like it will be a drive though event for the littles to get toys and possibly hot chocolate.

Other communication

- Erica and Katie have made contact as a check in with each family with children/youth 3k-12th grade
- Kids postcards that were in the Faith at Home Back to School packet have been coming into the church and the staff members personalize a card back to each child. Katie and Erica mentioned they have gotten a lot back and have really enjoyed them.

Katie:

- Family Faith Initiative Update
 - Family Faith Kits
 - These are the kits that we are putting together each month to help families bring faith into their homes while we are not able to have in-person Sunday School. If you haven't checked out our Family Faith page, you can check it out online here: <http://www.gracegrafton.com/family-faith.html>
 - In October I created a kit for the Reformation and in November I will do a Thanksgiving related kit. In December, I will encourage families to pick up one of the Advent kits, so I won't do an additional kit.
 - Family Faith Activities
 - These are the activities we are holding for families that would like to safely meet at church or other outdoor locations.
 - In October, we held a nature walk through Lion's Den Park (Thanks to Kate Peterman for leading)
 - Erica and I are also coordinating an outdoor Trunk or Treat for Friday, October 30.



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- On Friday, November 20, we will host a congregation wide virtual BINGO event. We are encouraging members of all ages along with friends and family to participate from the comfort of their own homes.
- In December we are looking to put together a donation drop off/possibly outdoor caroling and tree decorating event. More details to come on this.

- Grace Window Décor—I'm working on changing the window decoration in the gathering space. It will again include the name of every one of our Grace youth.

- Grace Youth Christmas Program—Obviously, we will not have a “regular” Christmas program this year. However, we are going to work to put something together. We are still in the planning stages of how it will work. But, likely, folks will record things at home and we will edit them together.

- Children's Messages—I continue to do children's messages each week. Thanks to Christy Loeffler who helped me out when I was out of town.

- Thrivent Grants
 - In an effort to try and “use up” the grants that Grace members have remaining for this year, we have been applying for lots of grants. Thank you to all of the members that are applying for grants on behalf of Grace!! Here are the grants Erica and I have applied for in the last week:
 - Cleaning supplies
 - Big Brothers Big Sisters bags
 - LaSata shopping trip
 - Christmas donation drop off event
 - TV or bulletin board for the gathering area
 - White board for multi-purpose room
 - 2 grants for the Advent kits
 - Baskets and carts
 - Christmas youth postcards
 - HYPE room decorating
 - New athletic equipment
 - Heater rental for barn service
 - Supplies for Christmas Eve
 - Thanksgiving kits
 - **If you have an idea for using a \$250 Thrivent grant, please let me know. We still have members that would like to use their grant money before the end of the year.**



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Other Business

We had Peter Johnson, guest speaker from Vanco, for discussion on their product. Vanco is an online program that can aid in electronic giving. Various topics were discussed regarding the usage, options, compatibility, etc of their program. More discussion will be had with Arcelia on possible overlap and email vote to occur next week.

Closing Prayer: Pastor Heidi