

**Grace Lutheran Church**  
**Congregational Council Meeting**  
**July 13, 2020**

A meeting of the Congregational Church Council of Grace Lutheran Church was held on July 13, 2020, via Zoom online conferencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was called to order by President, Bob Keith at 6:48 pm. Video attendees, in addition to Bob Keith were: Rebekah Hadlock (vice president), Nancy Bond Hemming (secretary), Pastor Wendell Hendershott, Pastor Netsie Griffith, Dave Lundahl, Anne Schroeder, Jim Leklem, Jaya Conser Lapham, Sandie Williams, Meredith Junge, and Kendra Wollert. Bob thanked guest, Michael Beachley, for attending the meeting.

Sandie Williams said that she had recently moved to Roseburg, but was going to be in Corvallis fairly often. She expressed her desire to remain on the council for as long as possible since we were now conducting business online. The council welcomed her continued participation.

Devotions

Kendra Wollert read Romans 8:12-25 and asked for thoughts from those assembled on the meaning of these passages. A discussion of the meaning ensued with Pastors Wendell and Netsie adding very important insight. This stimulated others to add their interpretations.

Consent Agenda

Bob said that he saw nothing that needed to be removed from the Consent Agenda. He would, however, ask Dave Lundahl to address an issue in the Stewardship Committee report. *It was moved and seconded to accept the Consent Agenda as it stands. The motion passed unanimously.*

Dave said that last month's generous donation Giving It Forward (GIF) from the Palmgrens brought the church closer to achieving the goal of paying off the mortgage. This month, another (anonymous) donation was received which has achieved the goal. In fact, the money in the account exceeds the amount needed by \$24.00. He noted that we still have some outstanding pledges and the artwork donated earlier to the proposed art auction. These funds can be used in another project. Dave asked the Council to consider how it can be used. He felt that the congregation should not be told that the full amount has been received until all the funds are in-hand. The time to tell the congregation is at the end of the year when the books are closed. Using any excess funds will be a good topic of conversation at the annual meeting in January. The Council felt that this was a good approach and that we should consider having some kind of celebration of achieving the goal next winter after the announcement is made. The celebration would be to thank the congregation for their efforts and to launch any new endeavors that can be accomplished through the same type of "Giving It Forward" effort.

## Staff Reports

1. Pastor Netsie: Netsie asked if the "new members" issue on the agenda could be moved up since she and Pastor Wendell will not be present for that part of the agenda. It was agreed to do this. Netsie announced that Mike and Elaine Franklin, who have recently moved here from Tennessee, would like their membership transferred to Grace Lutheran Church. The Council must ratify receipt of new members after which, when the paperwork is received from their former church, they will undergo a reaffirmation of baptism at a regular worship service. We hope to do this as soon as possible. *A motion was made to accept the Franklins as new members. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

Zoom communion seems to be growing in popularity. Netsie noted that the oldest participant has been Betty McCauley who turned 93 in April and the youngest has been Ellie Harrington who turned 8 also in April. Netsie thanked God for giving us the ability to keep the connections among us in these trying times.

2. Pastor Wendell: Wendell noted that he had received a "beautiful letter" from Judy and Sally Winkler who said they very much enjoy the online church services. He also said that the Music and Worship committee has been working on holding a confirmation service in August. Wendell also let people know that the Property Committee will be working on the parking lot this Wednesday (cleaning) and Saturday (re-applying white line markers.)

Netsie added that there will be an Oregon Synod Assembly on November 7. It will be held online. Bruce and Mary Stephens are Grace's representatives and will participate in the assembly with the interim pastor.

3. Treasurer's Report: Hal Brauner was not in attendance, but had sent his report in. He had also briefed the Executive Council at their meeting on July 11. Hal reported that donations and income are down due to lack of plate donations, as well as rent for church facilities and the rental houses. However, because expenses have been down, the church's finances are actually on the positive side. Nancy noted that Hal had reported that he and Robin Comforto are working on the paperwork that will (it is to be hoped) convert the loan to a grant.

## Continuing Business

1. Church Picnic: The picnic is still planned for August 23. Bob Keith reported that he has talked to Jude Geist who says that we should know within a week or so if the City Parks and Recreation Department will cancel reservations through August. It is most likely that reservations will be cancelled for the first part of August as Parks and Rec have been cancelling them 3 weeks at a time. If our reservations are cancelled, we could still use the Rotary Shelter on a first come,

first served basis. However, there would no electricity or water available in the shelter. Bathrooms would be open. Also, no food would be allowed. At this point, the State of Oregon continues to allow faith community gatherings of up to 100 people with all necessary precautions.

Other ideas of gathering were suggested including a drive-by picnic of some kind, how to deal with the food issue, etc. Meredith Junge said that a food truck would be possible. She had talked with Molly Hallgrimson who had hired a truck for a gathering at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. There were 150 people present and the cost of the truck was somewhere in the \$1000 to \$1200 range, or slightly less than \$10 per person. The food handlers would be licensed professionals. Netsie asked Michael Beachley about how the Music and Worship Committee is progressing with outdoor worship. Michael said that the committee is meeting every week and discussing this issue among others. They had come to the conclusion that an outdoor service is possible, but that no food would be shared. The truck idea is new and he will discuss it with the committee when they meet on Tuesday. However, he pointed out that having no power is a problem for using microphones, etc. The committee has also identified the arrival and direction of attendees as an issue. They have already considered placing tables and chairs at appropriate distances and requiring Personal Protection Equipment. The Property Committee has also been involved in consideration of a confirmation service. He feels strongly that the congregation wants to get together.

Michael also said that the committee has been moving toward live services online. They have already begun to record a live service rather than having a service made up of assembled recorded pieces. The concern is the 10-person limit as the people needed to man the services is just about that number. Michael says that he thinks we will not be getting together until about year from now and that we shouldn't press forward prematurely.

Dave Lundahl said that Mary and Bruce Stephens are leading the tech team for the services. He sees the future as a live service online with a recorded copy available afterward for those who do not watch it live.

2. Re-opening Grace Committee: Bob Keith says that the committee has been meeting every week, but now will meet only every other week. The protocols are in place at the church and the committee is working with the Music and Worship committee.

### New Business

Church Constitution: The Synod has informed Grace that our constitution needs to be reviewed to make sure that it is in line with recent changes in the Synod. A task force

needs to be formed to handle this issue. Netsie suggested some names for the task force

Bob Keith said that he would make phone calls to see if these people would be interested and if there are others who might be. The constitution needs to be updated before the Annual Congregational meeting in January so that it can be ratified at that time.

1. Pastoral Transition: Bob Keith welcomed Bishop Laurie Larson Caesar to the meeting to discuss matter associated with the retirement of Pastors Netsie and Wendell. The pastors left the meeting at this point. Bishop Laurie introduced herself and asked the council members to introduce themselves.

After the introductions, Bishop Laurie showed a flow chart of how the transition process works. She encouraged the council to listen to what we are called to do and to consider discernment. The potential interim pastor will be interviewed by us. The Transition Team will not be formed until after the interim pastor comes on board. Bishop Laurie will be our liaison with the Synod through this process and she will find the candidates for us. To this end, a Ministry Site Profile will be done.

The first task that must be done is to determine how much compensation we can offer an interim pastor and if we envision this person to be full or part time. She wants this information as soon as possible. This will be very important in identifying experienced candidates. She said that interim pastors usually have at 2 years of training specifically for being an interim pastor. The process can take up to 18 months or so before a permanent person is found.

Bishop Laurie said that she would like to preach for us on September 20. She would also like the council to participate in an online "retreat" on September 9 to enter into a process of discernment. It would be between 9 am and 12 pm on that day.

Bob Keith asked who makes up a Call Committee. Bishop Laurie said that the interim pastor would help us through the process. She also said that the transition team members need to be good at listening and it should comprise "an intentional mix of ages and experience." This committee will make the decision on a pastor.

Bob also said that the Executive Committee will get busy on the compensation issue. Dave will contact Hal Brauner and ask him to participate. We may want to include Robin, too.

2. Youth Director: The other issue discussed with Bishop Laurie was the addition of a youth ministries director. Rebekah asked if it was too soon to be looking for one at this time. Bishop Laurie said that before we consider hiring a youth director, we need to have a solid job description. At this point, Bishop Laurie left the meeting and the discussion regarding the youth director continued. Rebekah said that it appeared we need both a discipling ministries director and a youth pastor/director. Dave said that we need to honor the existing budget through the end of this year and that the Personnel Committee needs to be consulted. Setting the budget for next year happens in the fall; this is a good time to be considering the issue of a new staff person.
- There were questions about how the two positions would overlap and work with one another. It was decided that the new position must be clearly defined. Kendra, Anne, and Rebekah will work to define the position. Other persons could be added to the committee.
- Rebekah said that she and Kendra have made a video about the progress on the youth program that grew out of the questionnaire sent to parents early this year. How to distribute it is still a question.
  - Sandie Williams suggested that a Zoom meeting be held with the parents to get their input on the project. It could be billed as a virtual retreat. She also said that there should be a list of conversation points.
  - Anne said that we need to find out what other churches are doing with their youth programs and share that information.
  - Michael Beachley said that the committee needs to get information about what kind of person is needed and to build buy-in with the congregation.

#### Adjournment

Bob gave the closing prayer after which the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Submitted by

Nancy Bond Hemming  
Congregational Council Secretary