

Grace Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Meeting
April 12, 2021

A meeting of the Congregational Church Council of Grace Lutheran Church was held on April 12, 2021, via Zoom online conferencing due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was called to order by President, Bob Keith, at 6:50 pm. Council members present were: Pastor Dorthy Nielsen, Kendra Wollert (vice president), Nancy Bond Hemming (secretary), Dave Lundahl, Sandie Williams, Meredith Junge, Mike Franklin, Rebekah Hadlock, Mary Ann Matzke, Jeff Beck and Isaac Hadlock.

Devotions

Sandie Williams read the devotion from 1 John 1-1-14. A short discussion followed. Comments received included 1) it was impressive because it was an eyewitness account, 2) it demonstrated that faith is very important, though it was justified by an eyewitness, 3) it was a greeting to a group of people with whom John identified, and 4) it is a very sensory passage and highlights touch, sight, and hearing.

Treasurer's Report

Hal Brauner presented the treasurer's report. He said that we were "behind in other revenue" but that we have both houses rented. Operating expenses are slightly lower. Income was down in February and up in March. Hal commented that contributions are usually highest in Holy Week and Advent.

He said that when he and Robin set up the annual budget, they look at the past 5 years for each month. It is complicated by the fact that some bills are due quarterly. Also, such items as heat and water fluctuate from summer to winter, but they are handled by taking the total for the past years and dividing by 12.

The pandemic has changed giving patterns somewhat. In May, he and Robin may look at the past 3 years rather than the past 5. Also, he noted that, if people give their annual contributions in a lump sum in January, it is spread across the 12 months in the budget. They are considered "pre-paid pledges."

Mike Franklin said that he wanted to see a note on page 1 of the report giving the total cash in the balance sheet. Hal said that he could do that and that, currently, there is about \$133,000 in cash.

Hal asked Dave Lundahl if he knew how much income was coming in from non-members who are watching the online services on YouTube. Dave replied that Mary Stephens has those figures, but that it wasn't significant. Mary will have the numbers for next month's Council meeting as she does them 3 times per year.

Hal noted that he was in favor of the recommendation contained in the Stewardship Committee report which appears later in the Council meeting's agenda.

Consent Agenda

Bob said that there was a request from the Stewardship Committee to remove their monthly report from the Consent Agenda. Mike Franklin said that he wanted all the committees who have not submitted a report to be deleted from the Consent Agenda. No action was formally taken on these issues.

There was a discussion regarding upcoming staffing changes, job descriptions, and development of an employment manual covering these concerns. Pastor Dorothy mentioned that there are plenty of resources available if a subcommittee were to be formed to address staffing at Grace.

This stimulated a discussion about whether or not there were Council liaisons for all of the committees. Neither Personnel nor Property currently have liaisons. Nancy Strohlein is the chair of Personnel and Ron Larson is the chair of the Property Committee. Isaac Hadlock volunteered to be the liaison for the Property Committee. There was no volunteer for Personnel.

There was a question about whether or not there currently is an Outreach Committee. Dave said that the committee has not functioned in recent years. Mike Franklin said that it is in the Constitution that we must have one. Dave said that perhaps we need a Council liaison to start the ball rolling on re-forming the committee and that we need to have focus to pull things together. Sandie Williams said that Norma Moody and Ardis Koester have continued to give rides and provide dinners for those who are needy. She suggested that perhaps we could put out feelers to people like Norma and Ardis to see how their program is going. Pastor Dorothy said that this topic should appear under New Business.

Bob Keith asked the Council to return to the issue of removing the Executive Committee minutes from the Council agenda permanently. The Executive Committee meets prior to the Council meeting in order to set the Council's agenda.

A motion was made and seconded to remove the Executive Committee minutes from the Council meeting agenda permanently and to remove the Stewardship Committee's report from the Consent agenda, allowing it to appear later in the agenda.

It was suggested that it be noted on the agenda when reports have not been submitted by committees. Another suggestion was to add the Disaster Preparedness and Library committees to the Consent Agenda. Pastor Dorthy said that the topic of Consent Agenda reorganization should be discussed under New Business.

- Stewardship Report: Dave Lundahl said that information on giving has been tracked since 1997. He noted that giving to the church was down in 2020. He also said that the church has regularly given a total of 10% through benevolence to Luther House, Camp Lutherwood, and the Pastoral Council Center among other causes and institutions. His graphic showed a large increase in giving in 2016; this was due to the Giving It Forward campaign to retire the mortgage. Approximately \$147,000 was raised in this campaign.

Dave said that "Miracle on Kings & Harrison" was an earlier effort at boosting giving. It was based on the premise that the amount given in gifts to family at Christmas should be matched by giving to the church. This approach hasn't been undertaken in the past several years. He noted that giving to youth ministries has been low in recent years.

Kendra asked what the category of "Stock/Other" was. Dave said that some members have funds transferred from their stocks or IRAs directly to the church's account monthly or as end of year donations.

The Stewardship Committee recommends waiting until later in the year to consider the church's giving of 10% of the PPP funds. The level of giving to the church should be clearer at that time. Nancy asked if it was legal to do this. Dave said that the PPP loan was applied and used. It was not made clear in the discussion that it had been converted to a grant and that this was the reason why a tithe could come from those funds. Dave said that the church has more "cash in the bank than expected" but that it is too early in the year to make decisions about giving from it. It will be looked at later in the year. Mike asked if that meant that the PPP funds were spent in 2020 and now there is an excess in 2021? Dave said the report would be re-issued and that action would be taken at that time.

Office/Staff Reports

Pastor Dorthy's Report: Pastor Dorthy said she had forgotten to add information on the New Legacy Project Concert that was held in March. She said that some complaints had been received and a policeman arrived to check on the situation. He was unaware that Grace Lutheran had received a city permit for the concert which ended at 7:45 pm. A local person had complained that it was setting a bad example for the college students. Pastor Dorthy is thinking about calling this person directly.

She said that she and Pastor Mike Ostrom of Luther House will be continuing their meetings which are focused on how the two ministries can work together.

The focus of the Council at this time should be Leadership and Mission. There are 3 major issues: identity, context, and mission. The Council needs to help the congregation understand that when we get back together, it will be different from before. We need to help the congregation understand why and how we can proceed in this new territory. We must keep asking questions and ponder the answers. The Transition Team is putting together a history timeline of Grace Lutheran Church.

The Council needs to envision leadership and mission in "new territory." Nothing is predictable and we must move the congregation through the forthcoming metamorphosis. The basic question is "Where is God pulling us?"

The idea was advanced that the Council needs to get together for another retreat session. There is work for the Council to do around leadership and mission. David and Meredith will not be involved in the Council's efforts in reviewing the Mission/Vision statement because they are on the Transition Team. The Transition Team wants the Council to be the lead on the mission, core values, and vision.

We need to re-energize the church's Mission Statement by making it short and memorable. Pastor Dorthy distributed some examples of other Mission and Vision Statements that she had assembled. She re-iterated that it should be simple and that the statements need to reflect who we are.

Questions arose about the order of things related to the Transition Team's efforts. Pastor Dorthy said that the Transition Team is working on history now. When the Transition Team ready to engage the people of the congregation to with the MSP (Mission Site Profile), there will be a chance for all to respond. Mary Ann asked if the congregation would provide its input before the work was

complete. Mike said he thought that the effort would need full support of the congregation before completing the work.

Pastor Dorthy asked if the congregation knew the defined Mission, Core Values, and Vision of Grace Lutheran Church. She suggested that small groups could be formed to discuss these issues under the auspices of the Council. This would be a time to talk about dreams and visions. Meredith said that the Transition Team is putting together a history survey and will analyze the results. After the history survey, there will be the time to revisit core values of Grace.

Sandie said that we are to be leaders and guides. Our goals should be expressed in "dynamic, quick statements." If we are looking for changes, we must assume leadership that will bring people into the process. She asked what was meant by "history of the church." Kendra said she understood it to mean that we must know who we were before we can define who we want to be. Pastor Dorthy said the purpose was to discover who we were and what was our context. Grace came from the Lutheran Student Movement and the Lutheran Ladies Aid group. They helped the Augustana Synod plant the seed that became Grace. The history will allow us to remember who we are, who we were, who our neighbors are and where God is calling us. There needs to be a "goal setting element" involved. Bob Keith said we need to schedule a meeting on a Saturday.

Reopening Committee: This Saturday, there will be a Synod seminar on Reopening which will cover such things as 1) what have we learned over the past year plus of COVID, 2) how can we re-open safely? 3) How can we become a "hybrid" church? Mike said that, if we have reservations, we need to leave a few spaces for visitors.

Continuing Business

Youth and Family Ministries: Pastor Dorthy said that, initially, there were 4 applicants: one took another job and one removed himself from consideration. The search team interviewed the remaining two. Another person then expressed interest and that person will also be interviewed. Kendra asked if it would be good to have the applicants participate in the Bald Hill hike this coming Sunday so that they could interact with the families. The problem envisioned with this is that all of the applicants would be there at the same time. Rebekah suggested that we could have each one teach a lesson or lead an activity with the children so that the children could have input into the selection process.

Council Retreat: Bob said that the Council had been asked to read the book "Canoeing the Mountains." The subsequent discussion centered on the pastoral call process in light of the substance of Chapter 1. Bob asked if the Call Committee would be operating differently this time from in the past when new pastors were called. He noted that the number of people affiliated with the church is dwindling. Pastor Dorthy said that, in the past, there would usually be 5 to 7 candidates for pastoral openings. Now, a church is lucky to get 3. Also, many churches are not hiring full-time pastors, so pastors must be "bi-vocational." Some churches are hiring pastors who specialize in community organizing. Dave said that we need to adopt a "top down, bottom up" approach. Council liaison with the committees is important.

Sandie said we all need to support each other and be positive so that others will not be afraid. We need to "get the Spirit." Rebekah said we need to keep communication open as we go along.

Bob asked the Council to read Chapter 2 for next month's meeting.

Transition Team: This subject was discussed earlier in the meeting.

Chairlift: Ron Larson has contacted Sandie Williams who gave him some information about grants, etc. She did not know what he was planning to do next.

New Business

Reparations: Pastor Dorthy has formulated a statement addressing the fact that the land Grace Lutheran Church occupies was once land that was occupied by bands of the Kalpuya.

It was moved and seconded that discussion of this statement will be postponed until the May Council meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The Consent Agenda: Nancy suggested that a letter be sent to all of the committee chairs asking that they send in their reports to the office by close of business on the Thursday before the Council meeting. If they haven't met during the month, they should inform the office of this also. Bob Keith said that he and Pastor Dorthy will work on this issue. He said that he would put "No Report" in parentheses behind the names of the committees that did not submit reports.

Hospital Visitations: Sandie said that the visitation committee is now able to start visiting persons in the hospitals again. Everyone must sign in to let the hospital know who they are visiting and why. Sandie also said that she is looking for a

replacement for herself as she will be moving permanently to Roseburg in the near future.

Mary Ann brought up some more thoughts regarding staff and a discussion followed. Because this discussion involved staff, no specific notes are included in these minutes.

Adjournment

Pastor Dorthy gave the closing prayer. Bob Keith adjourned the meeting at 9:25 pm.

Submitted by

Nancy Bond Hemming
Secretary
Grace Lutheran Church Council