

TLC Church Council Meeting – April 13, 2021
Transfiguration Lutheran Church

Attendees:

Staff: Pastor Arthur Murray, Pastor Eva Jensen, Pete Erickson

Council: Melinda Chau, Dave Dickson, Steve Jorschumb, Melissa Klement, Steve Mattson, Janice Milford, Cary Pao, Gretchen Schroeder

Regrets: Becky Woll

Devotions: Melinda Chau

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 6:39 pm.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Gretchen Schroeder with second by Dave Dickson to approve the agenda. Motion carried and approved.

Review and Approval of Minutes: Gretchen Schroeder

Annual Meeting: Motion by Dave Dickson with second by Melinda Chau to approve the Annual Meeting minutes, pending approval from the congregation at the 2022 Annual Meeting. Motion carried and approved.

March Council meeting: Motion by Dave Dickson with second by Melissa Klement to approve the March Council meeting minutes. Motion carried and approved.

Financial Report: Melissa Klement

- General Fund receipts for March 2021 totaled \$119,838, including \$53,406 towards the benevolence giving match that will go out to the various agencies in the coming months. Disbursements totaled \$67,005, resulting in a surplus of \$52,833 for the month. Without the benevolence giving match included, the monthly deficit is \$573. The YTD balance is a surplus of \$76,655.
- The Mission and Outreach Team will review and make recommendations to Council for approval on how to distribute the benevolence giving and matching funds.
- Capital campaign receipts totaled \$25,610 with expenditures of \$21,546. The March surplus is \$4,064 and the YTD surplus is \$7,933. There remains a surplus of \$41,522 for the entire campaign to date. An extra payment of \$5,000 was paid toward the mortgage principal as previously designated.
- Nancy Waldack submitted for an Employee Retention credit of \$37,000.
- The bank has recommended approval for full forgiveness of our 2020 PPP loan, which has been forwarded to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for final approval.
- Motion by Gretchen Schroeder with second by Dave Dickson to approve the March financial report. Motion carried and approved.

Pastors Report: Eva Jensen

On this Tuesday morning when I write to finalize my report for this month, we arise in this greater Twin Cities area with the reality that another young black man – Daunte Wright—has been shot and killed by

police. My heart is heavy with sadness and grief. I'm sure the pain is deeper yet for the family and friends of Daunte Wright and George Floyd, as this pattern of killing persists in our city. I have read the words of ecumenical leaders who spoke and prayed during a vigil last night in the Brooklyn Center neighborhood where this most recent tragedy took place. I experience healing in the Easter faith by which we live – the way of the cross and God's power to raise up new life from death. I also hold dear the promise of scripture that witnesses to God who weeps over the brokenness of God's beloved creation. I am thankful to be serving among you as a people who are committed to inclusive welcome, diversity and inclusion – committed to living into this vision. I pray for God's wisdom to guide and strengthen us for this walk and journey of faith.

Our Lenten Journey of prayer, following Jesus' way of the cross, led us in reflections on God's commitment to love, heal, teach, and walk with us in ordinary life *and* to raise us up to live as beloved community with all life. Easter Sunday with TLC was a joyful and powerful witness to our hope and faith. We were able to celebrate the risen body of Christ as a community of faith gathered **in person and virtually, outdoors** – making real and visible God's incarnation in the body of Christ. How wonderful it was to worship together *as* congregational members and friends, leaders, staff and pastors raising our voices in song and prayer, accompanied by instrumentalists and choirs. The entire season was a witness to faith in the Holy One who continues to walk with us in the struggles and celebrations of life.

Areas of focus in ministry over the past month has included:

1. **Worship planning and leadership:** Eleven different services were offered by TLC – 5 Sunday services, including Easter; 4 mid-week Lent services, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Week-by-week the services are carefully planned in staff team meetings with a shared commitment to quality worship that inspires and nurtures faith as well as supports the faith journeys of members. Attentiveness to theology, biblical scholarship, liturgy, music, community and the participation of all is at the heart of our planning. Worship reflects the multiple gifts and contributions of all members of the team who collaborate and support one another. This past month I preached in 2 Sunday services, presided in 4 services, and participated in 8-9 of the services. A significant increase in recording time was required this past month. We were well supported by Brad Nolte who weaves a whole of the many parts that we each contribute.
2. **Pastoral Care:** Pastor Arthur, Marilyn Erickson and I continue to meet every Tuesday to review pastoral care and prayer needs of congregational members. We currently carry 48 families on our pastoral care and prayer list and regularly communicate with all. Several families have experienced deaths within their extended families.
3. **Children, Youth and Family Ministry:** Pete Erickson and Melanie Heuser-Hill bring creative leadership and vital ministry and faith formation to the children, youth and families of TLC. This month Pastor Arthur and I met with Pete and Melanie in the first of what will be on-going weekly planning meetings for Children, Youth and Family ministry within and as part of the whole life and ministry of TLC. We will initially focus on the interim and transition process of CYF, a first significant ministry focus of the TLC Interim Transition Process.
4. **Assessment of the many ministries, committees, and groups that constitute the ministry of TLC as a congregation.** This is a first step of review that will inform the design of many participatory workshops with staff, TLC leaders and members, which will seek to generate a

mission statement update, related values, “big picture” vision, and priorities. The process will include an assessment of TLC external context as well as internal context. In April, the focus of my work to support the development of this process has been one-on-one interviews and ongoing meetings with committees and task force groups. CYF and Strategic Planning Teams are leading focus areas in this initial phase.

Summary of engagements in addition to the above:

Staff meetings every week: pastoral care, all staff, worship-planning, extended worship planning and pastoral team leadership

Worship recording sessions with Brad Nolte

Finance meetings with Nancy Waldack and Pastor Arthur and the Finance Team

Stewardship Team meeting

Weekly gatherings with My Grandmother’s Hands study group, led by Pastor Laura Thelander, Jordan Zahrte, Irene Amon, and Pastor Arthur

RIC Committee meeting – preparatory meeting with Chair, Allison Lindman & team gathering.

Brainstorming about planning forward: consider a concert series and outdoor banners.

Mission and Outreach Committee meeting: promotion of the “Double the Gift” campaign and planning for distribution of the gifts received.

Personnel Committee meeting. We have begun an assessment of the current staff positions and roles, multiple ministries, and staff alignment with current ministries of TLC.

Strategic Planning Team meeting – continuation of review and updates from each TLC strategic planning team - what has been done/is happening.

One-on-One in-depth meetings with Michelle Reber, Marilyn Erickson, Karen Daniels & Rob Reid, and Steve Jorschumb.

Council Meeting

Monthly meeting of the Minneapolis Area Synod Interim Ministers Association Team

I pray for God’s blessings of wisdom and grace to continue to guide us.

Pastor Eva Jensen

Pastors Report: Pastor Arthur Murray

Holy Week Services

- Much gratitude to the many staff and volunteers who faithfully and creatively labored to provide such meaningful services throughout Holy Week.
- Literally every single staff member made incredibly meaningful contributions, in addition to many lay people. It was a joy to be a part of such a committed and enthusiastic crew.
- Easter was a highlight to be back together in the parking lot with great weather. Thanks be to the Risen One!

Pastoral Acts

- No funerals, weddings or baptisms in the last month.
- We still have a number of each pending in-person possibilities.

Mission and Outreach

- The congregational response to the matching grant for Benevolence has been outstanding. We have exceeded our goal by more than \$10,000.
- Pastor Eva has asked me to step back in as primary pastoral liaison with this team, though she remains involved.
- I am coordinating with Eva, John Thomson, and Marilyn Erickson to lead us through the recommendation process while Jordan Zahrte (Mission and Outreach chair) is on maternity leave. We expect to have recommendations as to allocation of the funds to the Council by the May meeting. They will be based on the voting of the congregation along with an evaluative rubric designed by the team. So far both sets of data are yielding very similar results with a prioritization of local Bloomington Covid-related relief efforts (VEAP, MOW, Sheridan Story, etc.)

Synod

- Many thanks to the Council members who took time out of their weekend to attend the Synod Toolkit on Saturday, March 13. There were some technical difficulties, but it ended up being a successful and worthwhile event for those who hung in there.
- Many thanks are due to the Synod for providing another service to congregations this past Sunday (their fourth offering of the pandemic). It provided much needed respite to some very exhausted staff members. There will be one more Synod offering on Memorial Day long weekend.

In-Person Worship

- The first in-person, indoor Sunday morning worship service in a year took place on March 14 at 8:30am. 10 people attended in addition to 8 staff and volunteers. Thank you to the Covid Team and Council members who provided support.
- It went very smoothly, everyone followed protocol, online and/or phone registration worked well. It was a great first step. There was genuine joy and excitement about being back together for worship.
- Unfortunately, the April in-person worship has been cancelled due to rising Covid numbers. The next opportunity for in-person, indoor worship will be May 16. Which is also being considered as a date for a Mental Health Awareness Sunday (could be a good fit!)

Adult Education

- The My Grandmother's Hands book study led by Jordan Zahrte, Pastor Laura Thelander and Irene Amon continues to be very worthwhile and provides a much needed venue for processing the ongoing racialized trauma and violence going on in our city as a result of the trial and now the shooting death of Daunte Wright this week.

ELC Board

- There is a desire to re-activate a committee that focuses on increased collaboration between ELC and TLC. I have volunteered to serve on it along with Angie Larson. We are seeking others who may be interested. Please contact me if interested.

Looking Ahead in the Coming Month

- All-staff semi-annual reviews
- Advanced planning for program year 2021-2022
- Confirmation Sunday May 2 (outdoors)
- Taking reservations for BWCA trips
- Plans in the works for an ELC collaboration on VBS themed community nights on 4 Wed nights in June and July.
- Graduation Sunday June 6.

Covid-19 Response Team Update:

- The Covid-19 Response Team is meeting weekly.
- Hennepin County numbers are up to 43.9 cases per 10,000, which puts us in Phase 2 of re-opening.
- A survey was done last August, and it showed 85% of the congregation would be ready for coming back to church based on case numbers and being vaccinated. The team suggests it's time to send out another survey and review where the congregation is currently at.
- Based on current case numbers, there will be no indoor in-person worship in April, but hoping to resume in May. Confirmation is being planned for an outdoor service as weather allows.
- Currently planning for in-person outdoor service the 1st Sunday of the month and Covid permitting, indoor service the 3rd Sunday of the month.
- Motion by Dave Dickson with second by Cary Pao to approve the Covid-19 Response Team sending out a survey with support of the Council. Motion carried and approved.

Old Business:

- **Pastor Arthur Review:** Still pending. Waiting until after Holy Week and hopefully will happen in the next month.
- **Synod Tool Kit March 13th:**
 - Those who attended the Synod Tool Kit workshop found it very useful and shared what they learned.

New Business:

- **Council Retreat**
 - Discussed possible use of Council retreat for discernment process. Eva shared what the Council's role in the discernment process could be.
 - There is an interest in having an orientation for new council members, team building, and to gain a better understanding of the discernment process. The session is scheduled for Sunday, May 2nd, 1-3pm, tentatively outdoors at TLC.
 - Discernment process:
 - Starts with an assessment to get a clear understanding about what our goals are and helps establish a vision for the planning team;
 - Establishes what are the key questions we need to address;
 - Makes clear what issues we face, along with the current reality and situation;
 - Identifies who needs to be involved in the process;

- Assists in understanding our strengths and struggles;
 - Establishes our values and confirms our ministries align with our values;
 - Establishes what our vision is for the future.
- **Pastor Arthur Housing Allowance adjustment**
 - Removed from discussion since no action is needed.
 - **Capital Campaign Surplus**
 - Item based on Annual meeting discussion to use the surplus for paying down the mortgage principal.
 - More information to come in the future, after the finance committee has had time to discuss. Need more information on PPP loan forgiveness, employee retention credit, and building maintenance needs.
 - Too early to set an amount to pay toward the mortgage principal.
 - **Discernment Process**
 - Previously discussed (see Council Retreat item).

Next Meeting Date: May 11, 2021

Devotions: Janice Milford

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Janice Milford with second by Dave Dickson. Motion carried and approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.