

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

Attendees:

Staff: Pastor Arthur Murray, Pastor Eva Jensen

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

Devotions: Cary Pao

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm.

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

Review and Approval of Minutes: Gretchen Schroeder

Motion by Dave Dickson with second by Melinda Chau to approve the June Council meeting minutes. Motion carried and approved.

Financial Report: Melissa Klement

- General Operating Fund receipts for June 2021 totaled \$62,488. Disbursements totaled \$129,125, which included \$70,000 for the Benevolence Giving Campaign (and leaves \$59,125 after the match). This results in a deficit of \$66,677 for the month. The YTD balance is a deficit of \$8,063.
- Capital campaign receipts totaled \$7,792 with expenditures of \$16,852. The June deficit is \$9,060 and the YTD is a deficit of \$14,706. There remains a surplus of \$18,883 for the entire campaign to date. There will be a letter going out to the congregation on the Capital Campaign to promote finishing strong.
- Motion by Dave Dickson with second by Janice Milford to approve the June financial report. Motion carried and approved.

Pastors Report: Pastor Arthur Murray

Re-Opening

- The word of the month for me is “backlog.” Re-Opening has released the floodgates and we are now in the midst of a torrent of pent-up feelings and events. They run the gamut from the joyous to the painful. From weddings to funerals. From joyful reunions catching up with friends we haven’t seen in over a year, to heavy renditions of a year’s worth of pain that has been held silent too long.
- Along that note, I have been grateful for the slow trickle back to church. Every service, every week, is like a reunion bringing faces I have not seen in a long time. The fact that everyone is not there all at once allows time for conversation, rather than a mere “hello, good to see you!” in passing. I am grateful for the slow speed of re-gathering.

Pastoral Acts

- The intensity reported last month continues, especially in regards to funerals.
- In the last month there have been six funerals (5 - Arthur, 1- Eva) and a wedding (Arthur). 3 out of the 6 funerals had been postponed due to Covid.
- There are three funerals currently scheduled in the coming month.
- We are preparing several families for baptisms.
- Our Funeral Coordinator, Patti Johansen, arrived just in time, and is working with the pastors and staff to update our funeral planning procedures.

Staffing

- For discussion later on the agenda.

Community Nights

- Pastor Melanie, Pete E, and Karen W. are working together to produce two TLC/ELC Family Friendly Community Night gatherings on June 23 and July 21. Volunteers are needed. Please sign up and help out.
- The first event was a great success with a nice mix of TLC and ELC families. Please plan to join us for the next community night on July 21. This is an event for all ages.

Children, Youth and Family

- Pastor Melanie is running Bookmobile events in parks for younger families this summer.
- Pete Erickson is leading camping/BWCA efforts and has coordinated a number of social and service opportunities for youth this summer.

BWCA

- The first Boundary Waters trip of the summer was a success. 5 youth and 2 adults and one leader in training took part.
- Second BWCA trip Aug 2-7 – Trip is currently full and has a waiting list. Loop trip for high school students through Wilderness Canoe Base.
- The Family Mission Camp at the end of August is looking like it will be very well attended with a great mix of folks of all ages. There is always room for more.

Looking Ahead in the Coming Month

- This Sunday we will be welcoming two guest preachers from the Liberian community. Covid is currently surging in Liberia and we are combining their presence with a Mask Drive along with a special offering.
- Community Night – July – 21 – guest musician, Jake Pernsteiner.
- Fourth Imagination Event – July 18 – Diversity and Neighborhood Engagement (Membership)
- I will be taking one week of Continuing Education and one week of Vacation at the end of July and the beginning of August. Continuing Education will be an offering for pastors through the Eastern Montana Synod at Christikon Camp. We will also be visiting with former TLC Youth Minister, Ben Cherland, at his church in Red Lodge.

Personal Note

- On behalf of Stephen Nushann and his mother and father, I appreciate all your concern and prayers. He was released from the hospital today following the first 3 weeks of in-patient treatment for leukemia. (I found out about his diagnosis as we were exiting the Boundary Waters on June 19.) His treatment lasts 2.5 years. If all goes well, the rest of the treatment will be out-patient. Please keep him in your prayers. He is like a son to me.

Pastors Report: Pastor Eva Jensen

During the past month, June 8 through June 13, we have moved fully into the season of Pentecost, a season of our liturgical year when the biblical texts invite us to reflect on God's presence in the world, in all that God has made. The season invites us to reflect upon our experiences of God and our relationship with God – who we are as disciples and a community of faith? How do we live in relationship with God? How do we experience, reveal and share God's love, mercy and grace in our lives and the world? We live these questions as we gather as a community of faith in worship, in relationship with one another, in ongoing pastoral and congregational care, in steadfast leadership, management and planning that sustains the ministries and discipleship commitments of members.

As a congregation, we have fully entered into our intentional commitment to invite a collective and inclusive review of the current community life and ministry of TLC. The six congregational Imagination Events, focused on key areas of ministry in the life of TLC, are designed to elicit a shared understanding of the current reality related to each ministry and identify related ministry aspirations for the future. Additionally, TLC staff are meeting in extended meetings to discern the current scope of TLC ministry, staff roles, and evaluate how we can collectively build a collaborative ministry staff team that shares a collective resolve to empower and enhance the mission, values and ministries of TLC. Pastor Arthur and Pastor Eva, Council President Steve Jorschumb and Council member Janice Milford have attended every event. Several other Council members have attended at least one event.

Three of six Congregational Imagination Events have been hosted. Attendance and participation has increased with each event. Each event has generated congregational interest and strengthened member commitments to TLC ministry. Reports on the current situation related to the ministry of focus are presented by member leaders and staff. All participants engage in conversation together about the strengths, challenges, opportunities/aspirations, and short-term outcomes of the ministry programs. An initial vision and values related to the ministry is identified. Reports are published in the TLC Weekly on the Friday following each event.

The May 23rd Children, Youth and Family Event was our first “coming out of COVID event”. Nine members and four staff participated in person and 2 participated via zoom. While the Covid-constraints to in-person gathering and programming remain, enthusiasm among families with young children is strong.

June 27th, 27 members and three staff participated in the session that focused on Property and Grounds – a significant asset of the congregation and how it does and can support the mission and ministries of TLC. The significant loss of contributions of Thursday Volunteer work group men was noted, and example of the aging-out of a volunteer base of support that leaves a critical gap to be addressed.

July 11th, 27 members and three staff participated in the event that focused on Congregational Care Ministries, which support the Pastoral Care ministry of the Pastors. Four TLC members presented reports that provided an overview of Parish nurse ministry, Stephen ministry, Caring ministries coordinated by Marilyn Erickson, and Addition Awareness care and support. Again, the significance of volunteers in service was highlighted.

Each Congregational Event involves at least 4 hours of planning and preparation by the TLC Co-Pastor Team. Additional staff and members are engaged in parts of the planning and preparation. Dedicated time and commitment is invested in designing each facilitated session, personally inviting members to the events, creating communication to encourage congregational participation, and writing reports to share insights and learning at each event. Conversations with members and among members is fostered; relationships are growing. Personally, I am getting to know more members and TLC through these events. Together, we are deepening our awareness and understanding of the current reality of community life and ministry of TLC. Our hope is that faith, commitment, enthusiasm, and energy for the future of TLC grows.

Three of five Extended Staff sessions have been facilitated with two major goals:

1. to develop an image that documents the expansive scope of TLC ministry programs and services and highlight the staff positions that support these ministries;
2. to work together as a staff to identify our strengths as a team and how we can build a more coordinated and collaborative ministry team to support the Mission and Ministries of TLC and member engagement.

The overall aim of these extended staff meetings is to strengthen the overall ministry of TLC.

On-going ministry

1. Worship planning and leadership: Five Sunday services were offered by TLC. All services are now offered in the sanctuary and as live-stream worship events. I have preached once and presided at three of the five services.
2. Pastoral Care: Pastor Arthur, Marilyn Erickson and I continue to meet every Tuesday to review pastoral care and prayer needs of congregational members. Our pastoral care and prayer list continues to average around 50. The number of funeral services has increased significantly, both recent deaths and previously postponed services being requested as we are able to safely gather. I officiated at one funeral service in June.
3. I have participated in staff transition planning focused on updating coordinated funeral planning procedures with Pastor Arthur, Marilyn Erickson, and Patti Johansen (who was hired as a Funeral and Wedding Coordinator). The support and role of Patti as the Funeral Coordinator is essential to serving the congregation members as we respond to the current volume of funeral services.

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.

Finance Team meeting

Stewardship Team meeting

Racial Justice Team: planning meeting with Jerry Olson for Diversity and Neighbor engagement Imagination Event and July Racial Justice meeting.

Covid Team Meetings – I attend as possible. The caution and care of the Covid Response Team in planning our in-person gathering and tending to the whole congregation is significant.

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. Focus this month on immediate need for communication, office administration, and facilities support.

Strategic Planning Team meeting – continuation of review and updates from each TLC strategic planning team. We are working to develop a TLC Organizational chart.

Council Meeting

The focus of attention for July and August will involve defining the role and responsibilities of the TLC Transition Team, recruiting members to serve on the team, and planning the specific gatherings and events that will facilitate the work of the team. The transition team will review and consolidate the Congregational Imagination Event outcomes, participate in the October 9th Congregational Visioning Event and a Leadership Strategic Planning Retreat, as well as communicate updates and outcomes to the congregation at large.

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

Pastor Eva Jensen

Covid-19 Response Team Update:

- Team met yesterday to develop the current plan for July.
- The plan for August is to add more services to worship. Volunteers will need to come with it. Suggestion is to have different teams host hospitality each week. Addiction & Awareness to take August 1st and Stephen Ministry to take the next week.

Old Business:

- **Property and Building Imagination Event (June 27th):**
 - Summary of reports can be found in the TLC Weekly emails and on the website.
 - Highlighted the role of volunteers in building maintenance.
 - Refer to Pastor Eva's report for additional information.
- **Seniors and Care Ministry Imagination Event (July 11th):**
 - 30 people were in attendance.
 - Showed the support and care of the congregation.
 - Refer to Pastor Eva's report for additional information.

- **Transition Process and Transition Team:**

- Team will consist of 20-25 people to work with the data being generated from the Imagination Events to help determine what is our practical vision. The team will capture our vision for the next 3 years. They will help identify what are the blocks and how do we get around them.
- Commitments for the Transition Team include attending an Imagination Event, October 9th Visioning Day, and early November retreat on strategic planning process (date TBD).

New Business:

- **Congregational Imagination Events:**

Encourage as many people as possible to attend these future events. This provides a good cross-section of ideas.

- Diversity and Neighbor Engagement – July 18
- Missions and Outreach – August 15 (In combination with celebration of the 1+1 Campaign)
- Financial Sustainability – August 22.

- **Staffing:**

- A job description has been created for the youth minister position. Thanks to Karen Wenge, Sandy Stooke, Linnea Anderson, and Megan Muff for their hard work on the CYF Transition Team. A meeting will be set for next week to review with parents.

- **Communication:**

- Discussed an email communication received from a member. Gretchen Schroeder to send a draft response to Council for review prior to responding to the member.

Next Meeting Date: August 10, 2021

Devotions: Becky Woll

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Dave Dickson with second by Becky Woll. Motion carried and approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:12 pm.