

## Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

September 21, 2015

### CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

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**NEXT REGULAR MEETING: Monday, October 19, 2015 at 7pm.**

**Devotions: David Krig**

**Refreshments: Jeff Olsen Biebighauser**

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**Present:** Council members: Jay Carlson, Ingrid Rasmussen, Sara Jensen, Josh Becker, Laura Bolstad, Kari Kleven, Cliff Brown, Sean Gosiewski, Gerry Werth, Jeff Olsen Biebighauser, David Krig, Gerry Berglin., Melanie Townsend, Linda McMahon

**Absent:** Theresa Rian

**Visitor:** Deb Sodt (for part of the meeting)

**Call to Order:** Sara Jensen called the meeting to order at 7:05.

**1. Devotions:** Josh Becker read from a sermon by Nadia Bolz Weber and gave thanks for GRACE.

**2. Check in:** Members shared important events from the past month.

**3. Minutes:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the August, 2015 minutes. Motion carried.

#### **4. Reports:**

##### *a. Lead Pastor*

- Sue Megrund from Interserv has started as temporary staff 10 hr/week working with children and family ministry. There will be a meeting on 9/24/15 of a team that will be working w Sue regarding the permanent position.
- Jay and Ingrid will be attending the bishop's theological conference Sunday through Tuesday afternoon.

##### *b. Associate Pastor*

- Racial Justice small groups have filled up. 24 people will meet in 3 small groups of 8. They will meet 6 times. Leaders had a great training with Sara Jensen and Allison Johnson who helped them think about how to lead the conversations. We anticipate having another round of groups offered in January.
- Worship Leaders Training Tuesday night 9/22. We have about 35 congregants (not counting the choir) who help lead worship on any given Sunday! Two changes will be introduced:
  - Communion servers will now go up to the front earlier, during the offertory hymn.
  - We will now line up at the railing from the center to the outside.
- Plant Sale. There is a plan in place for this fall to take out the plants from the east side of the building that will be displaced during construction and hold a plant sale. Money will go into the building fund.

##### *c. Treasurer*

- We are a little more behind than last year, but not at a concerning level. Our "summer slump" was as expected.
- We have over \$34,000 towards the capital improvements fund.
- Average weekly attendance is 205, compared with 192 last year.
- A motion was made and seconded to accept the financial report. Motion carried.

##### *d. Secretary:*

David Krig has devotions for October. Jeff Olsen Biebighauser has snacks.

*e. Vice President:*  
none.

*f. President*

There is a congregational meeting this Sunday to discuss additional funds due to Miller Dunwiddie so that we can get the more details drawings/documents needed for the contractor. Council members are encouraged to attend. Kari Kleven is not able to attend so Linda McMahon will take minutes.

## **5. Committee and Task Force Reports:**

*a. Design Team (report by Deb Sodt)*

- Last month we tasked the Design Team to bring us a recommendation for a contractor. They solicited bids from four companies and interviewed them all. They unanimously chose Watson – Forsberg.
- Other projects they have done or will be doing include: Seward Food Coops, Walker Methodist church in Powderhorn, Salem Lutheran, Edina Community Lutheran Church, Redeemer Missionary church, St. Joan of Arc.
- We had a discussion with Deb about how and why they chose this contractor and some of the details about what is to come. Some of the points that came up are listed here:
  - no preconstruction costs.
  - the contractor thinks the \$750,000 target is doable
  - they seem like they will be good w communication
  - they were excited that we asked about environmental stewardship
  - the team asked about how they work with subcontractors, specifically if they hire women and minorities working on site as sub contractors. The team was satisfied with their response.
  - the team really liked the individuals from the firm that they met, including the president and the person who would be the supervisor on site.

Recommendation from the Design Team:

"The Design Team recommends that we choose Watson-Forsberg General Contractors of St. Louis Park as our general construction manager-at-risk, to work with us and Miller Dunwiddie Architects to create construction documents dealing the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing elements of the proposed renovation of the east entrance."

Motion made and seconded to accept the recommendation of the Design Team. Motion passed.

*b. Fundraising Team update (report by Josh Becker and Pastor Jay)*

Pledged so far = \$390,000 , or 55% of our goal of \$700,000. We hope to reach 60% (\$420,000) by the congregational meeting on November 22. Note that this is also Stewardship Sunday.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

*a. Source of the 37,000, if approved, to Miller Dunwiddie.*

Payment will not come from anything that has been pledged to the capital campaign. We will likely use the rest of the 40% fund then draw from other undesignated funds.

*b. Communication Audit*

Discussion about whether to continue sending a weekly Community Church. We looked at some parts of the Communication Audit as it related to how members access information about Holy Trinity. A variety of views were expressed.

Plan: Staff will put together some ideas and bring them back to the council.

## 7. New Business

### a. *Solar Garden Subscription*

- We have applied for funding for solar panels for Holy Trinity for 3 years and haven't gotten it. The current proposal is to enroll in Community Solar. It could save us about 10% per year on our current energy bills or about \$2,000/yr. We would "break even" after about 10 years. We would save about \$45,000 over the 25-year contract.
- This is a good time to get involved due to tax credits for development of solar gardens (that will be expiring next year).
- Are there drawbacks?
  - Maybe a better technology will come around in the next 25 years and we would be locked in to this technology. We could try and find someone to buy out our contract but that might be difficult. Or we would pay about \$10,000 to get out of the contract.
  - Proposal is to budget for our current energy bills and put the yearly \$2,000 savings in an "energy account" of some sort, to be used as needed to help us transition to a new technology if needed. It would take 5-10 years to put away the money needed to buy out our contract if needed. In this way we can take advantage of this timely opportunity but not tie our hands for later if we want to take advantage of a better technology.
  - The committee debated the extent of our participation, and leaned towards 100% participation.
  - The "subscription letter" is where we need to start, but it is not binding. We can get the contract and have it looked at by the Faithful Energy and Property Committee before making a final decision about our level of participation.
- The Financial Stewardship Committee offered the following action item for the Council:
  - **The Financial Stewardship Committee recommends that the Church Council approve Holy Trinity signing a subscription letter for 100% participation in a solar garden, to offset its electrical bill. The Committee agreed that Holy Trinity should participate at least at the 25% level, up to 100%, after more information can be obtained on the details of the final contract. Since this letter is not binding the actual participation amount will be determined before the final agreement is signed.**

Motion made and seconded to approve the signing of the subscription letter as recommended by the Financial Stewardship Committee and task the Property Committee together with the Faithful Energy Team to review and execute the contract. Baring any concerns about the contract, the Council recommends the 100% subscription. Motion passed.

### b. *501(c)3 status for Exodus Lending*

- Due to lack of capacity/personnel time the synod did not approve affiliation with Exodus.
- The Financial Stewardship Committee offered the following action item for the Council:
  - **The Committee recommends that the Church Council approve Exodus Lending's initiative to affiliate with Holy Trinity to apply for 501(c)(3) tax status under the ELCA's group exemption**
- Discussion of the recommendation: One benefit of Exodus Lending becoming their own 501(c)3 would be that they could hire someone to conduct their own business. (Vicki is doing a lot of it now.)
- There is no additional risk for HT.
- We would not have more responsibility than what is already outlined in the bylaws we have with Exodus.

Motion made and seconded to accept the above recommendation from the committee. Motion passed.

### *c. Congregational Goals*

Pastors passed out the following goals.

#### **Congregational goals:**

- 1. Nurture faith, life and relationships in worship experiences, small groups and meaningful volunteer opportunities.**
- 2. Grow in ministry with children, youth and families.**
- 3. Grow in intercultural understanding and competence.**
- 4. Advocate for alternative energy sources and payday lending regulations.**
- 5. Launch a capital campaign for building renovation.**

#### **Strengths to preserve:**

- 1. Inspiring Sunday worship service and a strong music program for all ages.**
  - 2. Engaging educational opportunities for all ages.**
  - 3. Reaching out to others and welcoming all people to the full life of this community of faith.**
- Discussion about how these are more “guiding principals” than measureable goals.
  - Jay talked about where these goals came from: vision task force from some years ago ... originated in the congregation ... pastors looked at themes they see what keeps coming up ... along with what the pastors understand to be the emphases for this year.
  - This set of goals can be used by staff, the council and committees to guide our work.
  - Pastors expressed hope that council will identify yearly goals during the council retreat.
  - Suggestion to add under Strengths to preserve: something about Social justice and involvement in the neighborhood

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:45 pm. Motion carried.