

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

April 27, 2020

Present: Pastor Ingrid Rasmussen, Pastor Angela Khabeb, Nicki Hines, Connie Adams, Tom Cahoy, Donna Scott, Amy Froiland-Parada, Scott Cole, Aric Sorenson, Katelyn Hollaway, Steve Murray, Ben Martinez, David Broberg, Kathy Ohler

Nicki reviewed the agenda.

Devotions: David shared devotions, including scripture from the Book of John about the Good Shepherd.

Council Member of the Month: Donna Scott. Donna shared about how her father influenced her faith, her hopes for the next 10 years at Holy Trinity, and her dream of one day joining the Peace Corps.

Minutes:

- *A motion was made and seconded to approve all three council minutes from (1) the March Church Council Meeting, (2) Council Meeting re: Pastor Mork Call 4/9, and (3) Council Meeting re: CARES Loan on 4/10. Motion carried.*

Reports

Steve summarized the financial reports for March. Regular offerings were lower than budgeted by \$23,000, but YTD was in line with budget and with last year's giving, so we feel no reason for concern.

Stepping Out in Faith Funds are not showing up yet, but will show in next month's reports.

The balance sheet shows a negative balance for Trinity Housing Corp due to the loan for the Opening Doors mortgage, which was paid off in April. Opening Doors fund donors will be invited to redirect their giving to the general fund. By the May financial reports, the Opening Doors fund line should be gone.

All COVID-19 expenses are coming from the Pastors Discretionary Fund.

- *A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial reports. Motion carried.*

Institutional Racism Audit

(We were joined by Alicia Sojourner, consultant, and Libby Olstad, chair of the Racial Justice working group for this discussion)

Alicia introduced herself and discussed her duties for St. Louis Park as a racial justice coordinator, working to change systemic racism. Libby gave the background on Alicia's work for Holy Trinity. Last year Holy Trinity applied for and received an Imagination Grant through the ELCA to hire a consultant to take a hard look at ourselves re: institutional racism. The Racial Justice group wanted to look at structure, policies, and practices that we have instituted at our church over the years.

Alicia presented a summary of her findings from all the information she gathered from interviews, document review, focus groups, SWOT analysis, MCOB inventory and various other audit tools. The Audit shows that Holy Trinity has work to do in various aspects of our congregational life to move toward a more inclusive multicultural organization.

Possible next steps:

1. Support and commitment from leadership level
2. Create a Change Team with multiple voices, not sitting in Racial Justice Committee
 - a. Think about time, resources, funding needed
3. System readiness – clarify the vision
4. Communication – buy-in from community

Strategic long term actions are needed; this is a lifelong journey. The church and the council must have accountability.

The council agreed on two key “considerations”, which were presented by Alicia:

1. Council agreed that there are levels of institutional racism within HTLC practices, policies, and culture.
2. Council agreed to make institutional changes within HTLC to dismantle practices, policies, and culture that support racism.

We discussed the important difference between Welcome and Inclusion. Alicia’s guidance is: Do not focus on “welcome” because then it’s like the other person is coming into our space. Focus more on INCLUSIVE; change the mind-frame.

At the right time, Alicia will roll out her findings and information to the community (post-pandemic).

The Council thanked Alicia Sojourner for her thorough and insightful work for this audit, and we look forward to working with her further as we take action on the considerations above.

Pastor Angela’s report:

- We were disappointed to be unable to have new member orientation due to the virus.
- We are very excited to have hired Deacon David Rojas Martinez as Community Engagement and Education Coordinator for Holy Trinity! Angela shared about the interview process and all the very positive feedback she received on David from interviewers and references. Angela and David are doing community organizer training coming up.

Pastor Ingrid’s report summarized the following activities since our last council meeting:

- We closed the transaction for Trinity Apartments!
- We closed down Holy Trinity building for pandemic response, we moved congregation and staff work to online and we developed our worship online.

- We changed the schedule of the construction work at Trinity Apartments for the safety of the tenants and workers during this pandemic; we moved up the outside work to be completed first.
- We had a full and faithful Holy Week
- We paid off Opening Doors loan.
- We were saddened by the death of Marge Torgerson.
- Leadership Grant: we received \$35,000 to advance new Prayers of the Day to promote expansive language. There will be 56 new prayers of the day, one for each week of the three-year lectionary cycle.
- We initiated the discussion and voted on Pastor Doug Mork's potential part-time call to HTLC.

Pastors declared 2020 housing allowances:

- \$45,000 Ingrid Rasmussen
- \$25,000 Angela Khabebe

Old Business

Stepping Out in Faith Update: second meeting will be on Friday. The task force has divided work into three phases:

1. Reflections on what's important to HTLC
2. Discussion with HTLC and wider community – get inputs, information
3. Analyze and synthesize the inputs into recommendations

New Business

Maternity leave planning is underway for while Ingrid is out, considering backup for Angela, etc. We have hired a videographer to help with service videos for online worship, since Ingrid has been creating those.

Christian education committee will meet to discuss regarding moving some adult education to Zoom.

Eventually, we will be back worshipping together, so we should plan for how we would do that. We will discuss this as a church council when the time is appropriate to do that.

ACTION:

Caring for Creation Statement: Council members should email Aric with any feedback, revisions, suggestions. Give feedback please by this Friday May 1st. Aric will pass that along to the committee. This statement will be up for vote at HTLC Annual Meeting in January 2021.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)– Call of Pastor Mork

This was created by the Synod attorney upon request of the Bishop and it essentially says we have no control over what Pastor Mork does as Executive Director of BDC. Personnel committee will address what success will look like next March so we will have criteria on whether to extend his call.

Motion

Motion was made and seconded to authorize the completion of the MOU. Motion carried.

Conclusion

Next meeting May 18th.

Closing question: in 10 years, what would you want to be most proud of for this congregation?

- To have made progress on eliminating institutional racism.
- Would love to have solar.
- Be a choral destination.
- Live up to our reputation of being “heroes”.
- We have been bold and progressive in many ways, but we can do so much more to meet our community’s needs.
- Be as courageous as we can be.
- Still be a strong faith community supporting our children.
- That the walls of our building have become more porous. That our church has porous walls, we don’t exclude people, we don’t lock out people.

Meeting adjourned 9:20 pm.