

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2020

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

Absent: Pastor Doug Mork, Steve Murray, Katelyn Hollaway

Devotions:

Aric shared a devotion from author Karen Armstrong, the *Charter for Compassion*, which focuses on activating the golden rule around the world.

Council Member of the Month:

Kathy Ohler shared that she is an immigrant to the U.S. Her parents and family lived in a German village within Romania. In 1944, Russians moving west toward Romania and so Romanian people headed west also. Her community packed up entire village in carts and wagons. They took months to travel on foot with elderly and children, and they ended in Austria. Her father was conscripted into the service and sent to the Russian front, where he was captured and sent to a concentration camp in Siberia. When he returned, he married her mother and they moved to the U.S. because a relative was here. The Ohlers were sponsored by a Lutheran Church in Grand Rapids, MI. Kathy's father became very ill from his treatment in concentration camp and died within a year, leaving her mother with 4 young children, not knowing English language, and no skills. They moved to Chicago and then Minnesota. The major thing that brought Kathy to Holy Trinity was the strong adult education program and the services being so special. Kathy was asked "What place gives you peace?" Holden Village, Cascade Mountains in Washington. She has been there a dozen times and drove there on her own. So inclusive, wonderful educational place.

Minutes:

A motion was made and seconded to approve the July Church Council minutes. Motion carried.

Reports/Updates

David reviewed some key points from the committee reports, which were provided to all Council members before the meeting

Committee Reports:

Are Adult Forum Zoom meetings recorded and available to watch? Check with Randy Nelson on that. Suggestion was made to record these in the future. Big Meetings Nights are going well and we are making it work.

Financial reports: Ingrid provided comments on the report. Regular offerings over for the year. Special gifts are mostly from non-members who are supporting our church and we are grateful for that support.

- *A motion was made and seconded to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion carried.*

Pastor Angela's reflections:

- Pastor Angela was sick last week.
- She attended the George Floyd Memorial Site protest today, and it was very intense. They did a die-in for 8 minutes and 46 seconds which felt like a very long time. Pastor Angela was deeply moved thinking about his experience and feeling very vulnerable. The city is threatening to open up the streets again and this was to protest that action.

New Business

Church Reentry Plan Discussion:

The document about reentry recommendations was sent out to the Church Council prior to the meeting for review. The plan was formed with inputs from Deb Sodt, Connie Adams, and Carol Berg serving as COVID public health leaders with the Pastors, Nicki Hines, and HTLC Staff. There was also input from other congregations in the area. There will be more detail coming by the end of this week; this is a basic framework. We do not know yet which groups we will be able to accommodate with this new plan.

A question was asked about doing any church activity outdoors for safety. Pastor Angela is doing a Baptism soon outdoors, as an example. Some committees are meeting outdoors. However, that won't be an option soon due to weather.

We will need a group of volunteers to enforce the safety rules once implemented, such as mask wearing. We will ask for volunteers from the congregation.

We will characterize these recommendations as "provisional" and that we are going to try this, but we may need to revise later if unable to manage all the logistics. It was suggested that building partners must have list of each person who has been in the building with contact info for tracing purposes.

Why did the COVID testing stop at HTLC? This was wholly a MN Department of Health activity and plan. They were targeting places with lot of demonstrators. They only did the testing for that period of time because they were targeting demonstrators.

Council members supported the church reentry plan as written.

Metro Works rent reduction request:

Ingrid talked to Interim Director of Metro Works. Their Board is asking for forgiveness for August - December 2020 of the rent of \$5700/ month. Metro Works wants to return to the building in October. Ingrid recommends we give them this rent reduction as a gift for total of \$28,500. Goal would be they can begin paying again in January 2021. HTLC will be in conversation with them in November about financial horizon for 2021.

Motion

Motion was made and seconded to forgive Metro Works rent for next five months: August through December 2020. Motion carried.

Lease Process question

Pastor Ingrid asked: How/who should manage leases for building partners? Bright Prospects is an example. We agreed that we want to have a template lease going forward that can be reused, which we have. We agreed that the Pastor would take lead on leases for partners with assistance from Finance & Stewardship Committee.

Food Distribution Update

Du Nord Distillery and Eat for Equity are planning to open their warehouse as a distribution site where people can be socially distanced. They will likely be moving toward an appointment model, collaborate with us, and hire two people. If they want to name us a partner, we can keep our contacts active. Plan is to open the distribution center when the space is ready – not sure when but could be a few weeks out. Our distribution at HTLC will end August 28, so there could be gap in service, depending on when warehouse can open. The Church Council agreed that we are proud to be members of this church that has been so helpful to the community.

Neighborhood Coalition for Rebuilding

Neighborhood businesses, leaders, residents, etc. want to honor roots of the uprising in the way neighborhood gets rebuilt. They would like a focus on affordable housing, racial equity, etc. This Neighborhood Coalition has a voice at the table due to ownership of land. There is a Minneapolis Foundation Grant “Minneapolis One” focused on rebuilding. The coalition, named Longfellow Rising, has applied for grant today, and the requirement was that money goes to a 501c3. The coalition group is in process of incorporating as 501c3, but until that is complete HTLC agreed to be the fiscal sponsor for the grant application (about \$200K). They expect to be notified about the grant by October. Per Scott Cole: There is a way to get expedited processing of 501c3 if needed.

Capital projects

In order to ready the building for the reentry of our rental partners, and in order to make the building COVID safe, two capital projects have come up with short timelines to act. When we ripped up carpeting on the 1st floor, we discovered asbestos which was addressed, however we did not replace the flooring. Now that Metro Works is planning to come back to the building, we need to get new flooring installed.

We also need a way to replace the doors on 31st Street entrance to make accessible for HTLC staff to enter as each building partner will have their own unique entrance. This entrance is also a general accessibility issue due to their heavy weight, poor lighting, and replacing them has been on the property committee’s agenda for a while. Plus, they stick. We will pursue new doors that are architecturally appropriate. Both projects will be significant and were not budgeted. The estimate is about \$20-25K each project. If over \$25K, we will call for a congregational vote. The Finance and Stewardship Committee will determine a funding source for these two projects.

Motion

Motion was made and seconded to approve up to \$25K for each of the two projects listed above for Property Committee to proceed. Motion carried.

Minnesota Sanctuary State coalition

Last meeting, there was a recommendation that we sign on to the Minnesota Sanctuary State coalition. Our questions were answered in writing via email from Daniel Romero.

Motion

Motion made and seconded to sign on to the position paper from the MN Sanctuary State Coalition.

Old Business

Financial Audit: Ingrid shared a few key learnings, but council members were encouraged to listen to the entire audit.

Good experience and very thorough. Thanks to Pam, Vicki, and Kaia. Learned three key things:

1. African Pastors Fund: we realized that the way we had been managing the fund was not a best practice. In the future, we will record all gifts to FUND A and take disbursement from FUND A.
2. The audit has highlighted that we should consider consolidating our funds i.e. Lilies and Poinsettias. Use bigger categories in the future.
3. We could change the way we handle revenue and expenses that are not budgeted. We have historically not put this on the revenue/expense report, but our auditor suggested tracking all revenue and expenses on the revenue/expense worksheet. This will offer more clarity and transparency. This is short term and long term goal for us.

We agreed to spend more time next month on learnings from the audit and how that should impact our actions and planning going forward.

Pastor Angela brought up that other churches are developing plans in case of another neighborhood uprising and it's something we should definitely do.

Conclusion

Next meeting is September 21, 2020.

Meeting adjourned 9:20 pm.