

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

December 21, 2020

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

Devotions: Steve Murray shared some reflections about change considering the impending change with a new President, but how we sometimes desire to want things to go back to “normal”.

Council Member of the Month: Katelyn Hollaway has been a member of HTLC since 2016. She grew up in Texas, went to Gustavus Adolphus College (her family went there), and now her life is in Minnesota. She loves to sing in the choir and has missed singing. She appreciates the way David Sims breaks down the meaning behind the music, and feels we are lucky to have him at Holy Trinity. She grew up as a Lutheran, with several pastors in her family, including her great-grandfather. She views her faith as a journey, learning at Holy Trinity, a place where she can feel like wherever you are in your journey, we are all welcome. We are so blessed to have you in our community, Katelyn.

Motions:

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

Reports/Updates

New candidates for Council are Gretchen Lund, Allison Johnson Heist, Erin Henry, and Mike Nevergall.

Financial Reports:

Steve Murray provided comments and explanations on the reports. There are new funds in donor restricted donations. The Roy Winkelman Estate has been spent and was used for the new flooring in the church.

- For the three special appeals for 2021: The Finance and Stewardship Committee recommends Seminary Support Fund, World Hunger, and Wilderness Canoe Base (same as 2020).

Motion

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

Motion

- *A motion was made and seconded to accept the recommendation to annual meeting of the three special appeals for 2021: Seminary Support Fund, World Hunger, and Wilderness Canoe Base. Motion carried.*

Pastor Angela

- Thank you for supporting my family leave. It has been a difficult time and we are glad to have had our family time together.
- Good Morning America: will be appearing again on Christmas Day.

Pastor Doug's reflections:

- BDC going well, and there is great passion and hope for the future.

Pastor Ingrid's reflections:

- We held a beautiful memorial service for Carolyn Schurr and June Prange on Zoom.
- Longfellow Rising work is ongoing.
- She is doing an interview with the American Institute of Architects and others.
- The wedding of Andrew Alness and Sarah Olson will be a small service Saturday, January 2.
- There was a baptism of a new member family with dancing!
- Avivo, who is working on Tiny Homes for people experiencing homelessness, is using our church for training. We were able to move them in quickly and arrange social distancing, separate entrance. Look forward to seeing where that initiative leads.
- Christmas Eve coming up. There is wonderful drone footage in the video.
- Received a very generous Estate Gift from Robert Peterson's estate, \$10,000 to HT. He asked for \$5000 for the adult choir, and the rest will be undesignated.
- Amazing community connection story: We received a Facebook message from a non-member last summer. Ingrid recently followed up with the person. One day later, she got a Facebook message from this non-member saying they were sending a \$25,000 gift to HTLC with a note to use it how we best see fit.

Old Business

None

New Business

It is time to update our worship plan for COVID-19. The proposal from the Executive Committee is to extend the existing approach until at least Easter, April 4th. We should have a better idea about vaccines by then, and we are assuring everyone's safety with this responsible choice. There have been wonderful efforts to create community with the HTLC community. Council members all agreed to this plan.

Annual Meeting will be Jan 31, 2021 at 12:00 Noon and will be a virtual meeting. We will send hard copies of the documents to the members who today receive hard copy of the newsletter. Otherwise, it will be sent out in email. We will plan to share documents on the screen. We will use the Prange/Schurr Memorial service as a good example of how to manage a Zoom with such a large group. We will identify primary speaking roles and others will be on mute, etc. It would be nice to have someone mediating the chat. Consider using "breakout" rooms and having people chat in small groups for participation. Some ideas from the council members were: dancing, music, trivia, meditation with hum tone, pictures of salads, other fun activities.

Statement of Urgent Concern for the Care of Creation

This statement is being proposed by the Care of Creation Committee and is focused on actions we can take immediately to alleviate climate change. This is similar to our statement of racial justice. Aric Sorenson shared some background on the formation of this statement. In this final version they incorporated a lot of feedback from council, members, and church staff.

Ingrid suggested we publish this in Community Church for congregation to read prior to annual meeting. Scott suggested we provide examples of work the church is already engaged with in this area. We will ask the Care of Creation group to write this article for Community Church. Expectation is that, if the statement is approved at Annual Meeting, accountability for this work rests with the council in addition to the Care of Creation team.

Motion

Motion was made and seconded to bring this statement to the congregation for vote at the Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

Stepping out in Faith Proposal

Presentation was given to the congregation on December 10. There were no major concerns and so there will only be minor tweaks to the proposal. The final proposal will be discussed at the January 17th Adult Forum. Feedback from council members was that the presentation was straightforward and clear, and the Council approved the proposal.

Offer of Sculpture

We received a generous offer of a sculpture to be placed outside the church from a church member who wanted to offer this gift to commemorate the distribution work of the summer in response to George Floyd's death. The Executive Committee proposes that we do not accept this sculpture gift for several reasons, including concerns about people feeling afraid/startled by this life-size sculpture in a very public walk-through area, that it promotes charity at the expense of transformational systems change and its portrayal of Jesus as a white man. Ingrid will go back to this church member, thank her for her generosity, and let her know we are not interested in this particular sculpture.

In the spirit of honoring black lives and the work of the summer, the executive committee proposed putting a **Black Lives Matter** flag on top of the church building, which is the tallest building in the neighborhood overlooking the 3rd Precinct. There was support for this idea and a lengthy discussion about this.

Timing is relevant. Recognition that there are larger conversations about what's broken but also frustration at the way these decisions get disconnected from George Floyd's murder. We need to make sure we make the strong statement about the murder of George Floyd.

Make sure if we do this, that we explain why and what it means to our church community. Be very up front with communications, motivation, intent.

Consideration: how do we address the indigenous community in this discussion? One act cannot attend to the multi-layers of injustice. We need to be very clear that the act that instigated all of our unforeseen response was police killing unarmed black man.

Flag feels tangible and immediate, but can we also consider something more permanent or lasting?

We need to be conscious of how our decision is being perceived by community. Perhaps we should ask them how that would feel to them? We could ask people outside of the congregation.

Through the Stepping Out in Faith work, we see that everyone has their own particular interest, etc. But we all need to make decisions that represent the entire congregation.

In January, the council will discuss further the BLM flag idea.

Motion

- *Motion was made and seconded that the council authorize Ingrid to explore the cost of BLM flag, and seek feedback from BIPOC members of HT and outside the HT congregation if needed, and she will report back. Motion carried.*

Proposal for the 2021 Budget

Ingrid shared a proposed 2021 budget with the scenario that the Stepping Out proposal is approved and that it is not approved. Approval of the Stepping Out proposal primarily impacts the investment and earnings revenue line, and the properties and pastor's discretionary expense lines. If not approved, we will need to adjust the budget.

Metroworks asked for reduction in rent for 2021 and we have agreed. This will allow us to be good ministry partners since their community has been devastated by the pandemic.

About \$464K has been pledged and we expect the last pledges to come in soon., so the estimated receipts are conservative.

Final budget will be reviewed at the January Council meeting and we will bring it to Annual Meeting.

Conclusion

Reflect on first two goals as a Council: how are we doing?

Racial justice: Council members agreed yes, we feel good we have progressed and acted in racial justice. Lesson learned was "just do it."

Gender and sexuality: Council offered a number of actions in this area, including Reconciling in Faith and other adult forums, working on expansive language liturgy, progressing on all-gender bathrooms, neighborhood engagement and managing guest safety, etc. but we could do more in this area.

Next month we will reflect on second two goals.

Next meeting is January 19, 2021 (to avoid meeting on Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday).

Meeting adjourned 9:11 p.m.