

# MINUTES FROM 117<sup>th</sup> HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL MEETING

JANUARY 31, 2021

(This meeting was held virtually over Zoom.)

Cameron Kinghorn and Joe Christianson provided beautiful music before the meeting. Many thanks!

President Nicki Hines convened the meeting and read a prayer.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT

Donna Scott presented the minutes of the 2020 annual meeting, previously approved by the Church Council.

**A motion was seconded to approve the minutes of our 2019 annual meeting. Motion carried.**

She recognized members and friends of the congregation that have died in the past year, and we took a moment to remember and honor them.

Members of the congregation:

- Donna Carlson
- Bud Dixen
- Robert Peterson
- June Prange
- Carolyn Schurr
- Margery Torgerson
- Neil Anderson

Friends of the congregation:

- LaRae Dombrovski
- Sharon West

Parish Statistics were shown. Two items in the parish statistics were noted: a baptized membership increase from 1253 to 1278 in the past year and that, although average attendance was difficult to track in 2020 due to the virtual services, there were some weeks where we had over 900 devices tune in! Thanks for being active participants in the worship life of this congregation.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Nicki talked about the difficult year we have had but focused on how much we have learned and grown closer in ways we never thought we would. She relayed that Pastor Ingrid recently said she believes the church prepares us to “meet the moment that we’re in.” There were a lot of moments for this congregation. She shared her thoughts on some of the pivotal moments of this past year in the life of this congregation. These included:

- Trinity Apartments sale and the formation of the Stepping Out in Faith task force
- Moving church online and learning how to worship at a physical distance while staying connected
- Racial Equity Audit and continued focus on being intentionally anti-racist
- Grief and anger at the murder of George Floyd and the resulting protests and uprising. Our church was turned inside out, and we brought church outside for three months afterwards serving our community and neighbors, helping those who were calling for justice.
- In the fall, we continued to call out racial injustice and white supremacy
- Stepping out in Faith task force work: grappling with the ethics of economic wealth and how to assure we are doing God’s will
- Rebuilding physical spaces to better reflect our vision of economic, racial, housing and environmental justice.

Our values as a church led us to make the decisions we did during 2020. She believes that our faith was tested - not in “do you believe” but instead in “what do we believe.” As a congregation, led by our bold and spirit-filled pastors and staff, we emerge from that test reaffirming and believing that:

Black Lives Matter,

that the voices of people of color matter,

that there is enough for all, our God is a God of abundance,

that we are stronger together and need each other, and that,

Holy Trinity and the church is not a building, but it’s a spirit and a people proclaiming and working for justice.

Guided by those beliefs, Nicki announced that the HTLC Church Council voted recently to install a flag saying Black Lives Matter on the roof of the church because we believe that we need to say that clearly and loudly. We expect installation in 4-6 weeks.

We’ve learned a lot this year. We’ve been called to serve in new and unpredictable ways. We’ve been able to celebrate God’s presence with us. Nicki stated it has been an honor to serve as the Church Council President during the past three years. She is eager to see what we learn this coming year, and to seeing how we continue to live out our faith in this moment.

## PASTOR DOUG'S REPORT

It has been a year of engaging our community online and a powerful thing to listen to the voice of our neighbors. Pastor Doug's work is split between BDC immigrant worker issues and the HTLC congregation. He has enjoyed finding the intersections and seeing how all of this work fits together well. These are all ways that we are living out our values. Feels strange that in this year of hardships he has had the privilege to have landed so well and be part of HTLC and the work we are doing together. He looks forward to seeing everyone face to face without masks in the future so he can get to know us better. He thanked the congregation for all the support and welcome here.

## PASTOR ANGELA'S REPORT

This past year brought us so many things we never thought we would see. At first, we thought we would be sheltering in place for two weeks. Now here we are a year later still distancing. This has been almost a year of isolation that we have lived through. Overall, the year was overshadowed by systemic racism and the pandemic. Here are a few high points:

- Ordination of Meagan McLachlan.
- Habitat House closing for Misty and Mike: full of joy.
- Reason to celebrate: hiring of Deacon David Rojas Martinez! What a wonderful presence that Deacon David has brought to our community. We are so grateful for him.

In Paul's words: we are afflicted in every way but not crushed. Persecuted by not forsaken. Struck down by not destroyed. This has been a very challenging for me personally. Yes we are surrounded by challenges AND we are not destroyed. Thanks be to God.

So proud of all of you for your commitment to racial justice and being a public voice in a public square. We have been able to speak internationally about our beliefs and values, and we have demonstrated that this church is about love.

Thank you for allowing me to take family leave. Thank you for your generosity.

We have hope and this hope does not disappoint.

## PASTOR INGRID'S REPORT

Pastor Ingrid stated that it has been her joy to serve alongside Pastor Angela over the past year. She thanked each rostered church leader and intern by name: Angela, Doug, Ann, David, Deacon David, Sue, Pam, Kaia, Nolan, Dennis, Kathy, Erik, Fiona, Talli, Hannah, Anna, Rachel, Mollie and Karleigh and the other 16-17 people we hired over the summer. She gave special thanks to Nicki and other council leaders.

“Paul reminded me of a conversation we had in Feb 2020 after Trinity Apartments was within reach of closing date. I announced that I would have a lot of free time on my hands and I might take up some new hobbies. Little did I know that a world-changing virus was making its way to our community.” We have all worked hard to be the church in our new circumstances- all while navigating our collective grief. George Floyd was murdered in broad daylight. We went from

doors locked to doors open in minutes, first serving as a medic station then as a food distribution center. Donations poured in. To be honest, those days and months were tough. Tear gas, sleepless nights, fires, evacuation, fear, sadness, hunger, sickness, and more. Every step was tenuous. Every step felt like an act of faith.

Jan Richardson says “loving is never just about opening our heart. It is about being willing to have our heart become larger as we make room for people and stories and experiences we never imagined holding. It is about being willing to have our heart become deeper as we move beyond the surface layers of our assumptions, prejudices, and habits in order to truly see and receive what—and who—is before us. It is about being willing to have our heart continually shattered and remade as we take in not only the brokenness of the world but also the beauty of it, the astounding wonder that will not allow us to remain the same.”

Here at Holy Trinity, we’ve learned a thing or two about love this year—we have learned about making our hearts larger. We have learned about making room, about holding the unexpected, about consciously challenging our assumptions, about seeing the neighbors standing before us, about being shattered, about celebrating beauty, about changing. This is the hard gospel work into which the Holy Spirit calls us.

She has been to serve as our pastor during such a challenging and beautiful time. She asked forgiveness for phone calls missed and thank you notes she failed to send during the chaos of the past year. She closed by “naming Paul, Solveig, and Lars [Baby BLM], whose flexibility, courage, delight, and unflinching love show me Jesus each day.”

### CONGREGATIONAL GOALS

Each congregational goal for last year was reviewed and discussed by members of the church council.

1. **Continue to grow in competency and commitment to racial justice, moving from awareness to action within our local community.** Scott Cole reviewed all the work that this congregation has embarked in so far with Racial Justice and thanked all who have engaged in this important work.
2. **Grow in competency and commitment to issues of gender and sexuality in our congregation.** David Broberg discussed this as an aspirational goal and talked about issues of gender identity and gender expression as well as sexual identity and sexual expression. There is certainly more work for us to do in this area.
3. **Nurture faith and attend to our spiritual lives through education and faith practices.** Amy Froiland-Parada discussed that 2020 was the year when our church was not a building. We moved everything online and shared videos, online services, faith in

practice through food distribution. We demonstrated that our God is a God of abundance. Through such ways as Godly Play and Choir groups, we found ways to engage with one another and be together.

4. **Enhance the congregation's communications strategy.** **Who covered this?** 2020 was a year when we had to become creative: online services, emails, videos, website being reviewed. We developed a Members-Only section on the website. We started Big Meeting nights. Deacon David and staff have done some amazing programming, including Advent Boxes. In terms of social media, HTLC greatly expanded our community to people from all over the world who engaged with us after the murder of George Floyd. We communicated our messages through Pastor Angela on Good Morning America, through Pastor Ingrid with the Longfellow Rising effort and media coverage worldwide.

#### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

We broke the attendees into small groups randomly and took some time for small group discussion regarding other ways we might move our community forward in the four objectives above. The information provided in Chat by each of these small groups will be gathered, consolidated, and shared later.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Steve Murray presented the balance sheet for December 31, 2020.

**A motion was made and seconded to adopt the December 31, 2020 balance sheet. Motion carried.**

Steve reviewed the statement of receipts and expenditures. This reflects a strong year of giving during 2020, and the outreach of our congregation has been extraordinary. Loose offerings were low but counter-balanced by special gifts. Building Dignity and Respect Standards Council was added in 2020 for Pastor Doug's position. The congregation gave a gift to the synod to support the racial justice organizer position. COVID-19 emergency expenses were all covered by the Justice Fund. There was a discussion about plans for how to use the remaining funds in Justice Fund. Answer: we will continue to respond as needed.

**A motion was made and seconded to accept the statement of receipts and expenditures. Motion carried.**

Steve presented the Special Funds information. \$800 to Wilderness Canoe Fund was noted, since it was not included in the report. There was a question about Seminarian Support Fund: were there any monies received into that one? **This question was noted and will be answered later.**

**A motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report. Motion carried.**

#### ELECTION OF CHURCH COUNCIL

Nominating Committee included: Karen Kunze, Joel Wiberg, Johannes Arifin, Katelyn Hollaway, Ben Martinez, Donna Scott, and Nicki Hines. This committee identified four people as the slate of candidates for the Church Council: Allison Johnson Heist, Erin Henry, Gretchen Lund, and Mike Nevergall.

Nicki asked three times if there were additional nominations from the floor and there were none. President declared nominations as closed.

Nicki Hines presented slate of candidates again for 2021: Allison Johnson Heist, Erin Henry, Gretchen Lund, and Mike Nevergall.

**A motion was made and seconded to accept the nominees by acclamation. Motion carried.**

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the four nominees for Church Council. Motion carried.**

Welcome to the new council members!

#### ELECTION OF 2021 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Slate of candidates for this: Teresa Butel, Zoe Martinez, Laura Bolstad, Tom Cahoy, Amy Froiland-Parada, Steve Murray, and Kathy Ohler.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the candidates for the 2021 Nominating Committee. Motion carried.**

#### OLD BUSINESS

We addressed a question that was raised in last year's annual meeting: the issue of accessible bathrooms and parking. This work is planned for this year. Parking was repaved this fall and we will be updating signage. For the bathrooms, the renovations were a part of the Stepping Out in Faith recommendations and can be partially funded by a grant from ELCA Disabilities Ministry.

#### STEPPING OUT IN FAITH PROPOSAL

**Motion was made and seconded to accept the Stepping Out in Faith proposal. Motion carried.**

Discussion and feedback were provided. Comments were that the recommendations reflected an excellent balance of HT, neighborhood, investment/spending. Many thanks from members of congregation to the Stepping Out in Faith Task Force for their inclusive and thorough work.

#### PROPOSED BUDGET

Steve Murray presented the 2021 budget on pages 25 - 27. He explained that the regular offerings estimate is based on the pledges of church members. There is an increase in regular offerings based on pledge cards and the faithful gifts of all of the congregation. Thank you.

Synod support is based on 10% of regular, seasonal, special, and loose offerings. The synod then provides investments to the wider church in America.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2021 budget. Motion carried.**

Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light: this was brought forward by Caring for Creation Committee. Very important work around environmental justice and we are pleased to partner with them. They called HTLC asking if we could become medic center during uprising.

Question: do we need to still have donations for Living Lutheran? We are still welcome to offer a reimbursement for these. We have budgeted that we will receive about \$500.

What is longstanding groundwater issue? We have a sub-basement. Our boilers are on a floor below our gym level and we regularly get groundwater in that space. We have installed “water bugs” that alert us to water, but we hope to rectify this ground water issue. Property committee will be addressing this.

Question about leases with our partners in building: Bright Prospects, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, BDC, Metro Work, Swahili Congregation.

**Motion was made and seconded to support the Proposed 2021 Budget. Motion carried.**

Steve Murray: Thank you to Pastor Ingrid who has a brilliant mind to handle Trinity Apartments and other complex and unique situations.

The Special Appeals for 2021 were proposed as:

1. ELCA World Hunger
2. Seminarian Support Fund
3. Wilderness Canoe Base

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2021 special appeals. Motion carried.**

## COMMITTEE GOALS AND TASKS FOR 2021

Nicki Hines directed the congregation to the committee goals as outlined in the packet. She introduced all members of the committees and thanked them for all of their ongoing work to lead HTLC activities.

We played a short teaser educational film about the Doctrine of Discovery.

## NEW BUSINESS

Caring for Creation Statement of Urgent Concern. Thank you to this group who has been working on this for many months and who did an excellent job getting inputs from various church members.

**Motion was made and seconded to approve the Caring for Creation Statement of Urgent Concern. Motion carried.**

A question was asked and answered about the indigenous community input into this document. There was a question about impact on the budget of acting on this statement. We do not anticipate any expenditures right now that would impact HTLC budget for 2021. Discussion about gaining youth input into this issue: Deacon David discussed that youth are getting overwhelmed with requests so there is a youth committee to represent the input and guide the topics. They are still in process of establishing this group.

WORD OF THANKS

Nicki Hines shared words of thanks to the outgoing council members: Katelyn Hollaway, Ben Martinez, Donna Scott. She also thanked the pastors. A special thank you to Pastor Doug for technical support.

The congregation thanked Nicki Hines, the Executive Committee, and the Council for their leadership.

Nicki declared the meeting adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 PM