

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MINUTES

October 3, 2017

CALL TO ORDER: Council President Brandie Saraceni called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

PRESENT: Brandie Saraceni, Bob Errett, Sue Ross, Megan Zobb, Merle Baker, Amy Schultz, Cindy Black, Pastor Kemp, Brandie Saraceni, Kim von Schlichten, Bobbie Laciak

ABSENT: Jeanne Kiss, Suzy Flory

JOY OF THE DAY – Several joys this month.

OPENING PRAYER

PITTSBURGH PASTORAL INSTITUTE PRESENTATION – Sean Burns – request to allow a therapist to continue to see people at First Lutheran

MINUTES: Amy Schultz made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Sue Ross. Motion approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Motion was made by Megan Zobb to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Bob Errett. Motion approved.

PASTOR'S REPORT:

1. Pastoral acts:
 - a. Funerals: Hannah Ott 9-29-17
 - b. Weddings & Baptisms: 0
2. Visitation
 - a. General/miscellaneous visits: 8
 - b. Hospital visits: 8
 - c. Bereavement visits: 2
 - d. Extraordinary communions (these are not extra visits): 5
 - e. Office Visits: 8
3. Worship leadership other than Sunday mornings, weddings and funerals: 0
4. Activity
 - a. Congregation Council: 9-5-17
 - b. Greensburg Pastors' Pericope study at Zion's: 9-5-17, 9-12-17, 9-19-17, 9-26-17
 - c. Food from the Heart Luncheon: 9-6-17, 9-13-17, 9-20-17, 9-27-17
 - d. Preschool Chapel Time: 9-5-17, 9-6-17, 9-13-17, 9-14-17, 9-20-17, 9-21-17, 9-27-17
 - e. Food Pantry: 9-21-17
 - f. Synod Conference Luncheon: 9-21-17. Pastors from Conferences 4 & 5 met with all 3 Assistants to the Bishop. An important point of information for First: because First is in an interim ministry and will be in the call process, we will be relating with Pastor Sarah Lee-Faulkner. I also think it would be beneficial for the Stewardship, Social and Evangelism teams (and possibly the whole council) to meet with Pastor Melissa Stoller, who is among Assistants to the Bishop and serves as the ELCA's Director of Evangelical Mission to our synod.
 - g. Finance Activation Team (AT) Mtg.: 9-19-17
 - h. Christian Education AT: 9-19-17
 - i. Stewardship AT: 9-14-17
 - j. Fellowship AT: 9-6-17
 - k. Listening Post on 9-7-17: I thought the conversation went well and was helpful to me. Two recurring themes that emerged were "transparency" and "mission." I am looking forward to having another one in November.
 - l. Rally Day Luncheon 9-10-17
 - m. Meeting with Confirmation parents: 9-17-17
 - n. Catechism (Confirmation) instruction for 7th and 8th graders began 9-24-17 and will be offered during the Sunday school hour through the 2017-2018 school year.
 - o. Continuing Education: "Bowen Family Systems Theory" at Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute 9-15-17
 - p. Introductions: I stopped at Choir, Ruth Circle and Bell Choir simply to offer an introduction.
 - q. Office Computer Network: I am now in the system and will be able to use the computer in my office; however, I am going to use my own devices and email address to communicate via email.
5. For Discussion or Action:

- a. Relationship with Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute: I spoke with Sean Burns from PPI about reviving its use of First for counseling in Greenburg, and he sent me an unsigned copy of the agreement between PPI and First. He will speak to the council during our learning time at the meeting.
 - b. Request for Donation: Pastor Don Green, a retired pastor in our synod and a member of the coordinating committee for the Lutheran-Catholic Reformation event at St. Vincent's, requested a donation toward the printing of the program. Unfortunately, that came to me after I met with the Executive AT, and hopefully, we can take this up as an item of new business.
 - c. Constitution Review: I sit on the synod Constitution & By-law Committee. Amendments were adopted to the model constitution for congregations at the last Churchwide Assembly, and we should review those. A current copy of the constitution is on First's website.
 - d. Council Training Possibility: I think that "Healthy Congregations" training would be helpful for the congregation council. It would cover 6 sessions and cost \$51 per course booklet purchased.
 - e. Jaison has returned to work, and I am thankful. I am also very thankful for everyone who helped during his absence.
6. Looking Ahead:
- a. Upcoming Vacation time: December 6-12 (week 1 of 4); this corrects what was in last month's report.
 - b. Continuing Education: Synod Theological Convocation, October 9-11
 - c. Animal Blessing in the Park, October 14 at 1 pm
 - d. Lutheran-Catholic Event at St. Vincent's, October 28
 - e. Reformation Hymn Festival at First, October 29
 - f. Electronic communication concerns: I am going to address this through the month with the affected teams and the office staff. This would involve the website, Facebook page and the Twitter account. In November or December, I am looking forward to having a weekly email sent out.

COUNCIL BUSINESS:

For Your Information:

- 1) Budgets are due October 6th - discussion on where the budget is headed next year as offerings are down
- 2) All changes to activation team goals and objectives are due at the November Council meeting
- 3) Nominating Activation Team 2017:
 - a. Council Reps: Kim von Schlichten, Bobbie Laciak
 - b. Congregation Reps: Sue Boggs, Al Danilko, Dan Lucas
 - c. Council member with terms expiring or resigning: Bobbie Laciak, Cindy Black
- 4) The church has received many thank yous from organizations who received a gift from the church last December through the Outreach Ministry from the Trust. Start thinking now about organizations which would benefit from our Outreach Ministry at the end of this year.
- 5) Pastor Kemp will be working with Evangelism, Stewardship, and Social Ministry to make more use of our Social Media – working with the office staff
- 6) Scheduling meeting with Pastor Stoller and Council in November
- 7) We are glad to have Jaison back to work.

For Action: Executive Committee recommends:

- 1) Approve congregational meetings November 5th and 19th for the purpose of nominating and electing the Congregation Council Members. Seconded by Bob Errett. Motion passed.
- 2) Approve the use of bathrooms for public use for the Holiday Parade on November 18th. Seconded by Bobbie Laciak. Motion passed.
- 3) Approve moving the December Council Meeting to WEDNESDAY, December 6th to accommodate Pastor Sarah Lee-Faulkner. Seconded by Bob Errett. Motion passed.

ACTIVATION TEAM REPORTS:

Christian Education Meeting held September 19, 2017

1. During the month of October SCS students will be focusing on Luther and the Reformation.
2. October 22 will be Bible distribution for preschool, grade 3 and grade 7 during the worship service.
3. October 29 will be the Reformation Celebration. During the SCS hour there will be cake and punch in the Fellowship Hall for all students and adults. SCS students will also work on a Reformation craft during that time as well.
4. November 17th may be a game night at the Church sponsored by Christian Ed/Youth.

5. December 3 we are working to take families to a nativity themed movie (“The Star”) at AMC in Greensburg at 1:30. Lunch would be provided after the 10:45 worship service. This is possibly being done in conjunction with Harold Zion and Zion’s.

Action needed by Council: Suggestions for the Reformation Celebration

PROPERTY Meeting held September 27, 2017

1. We are pleased that Jaison Smith has made a great recovery and returned to work. Thanks to all who filled in.
2. Two weeks ago it is possible we had a power surge at 10:45 AM service. This power surge may have caused the security control panel to fail. Replacement cost is \$1335.00.
3. Phase Four LED Light Fixture is almost completed. Fourteen fixtures installed and 7 remain (Date pending).
4. Discussion on sealing the parking garage is scheduled for October 5th and 6th at 1:00 PM.
5. Looking for a volunteer to be liaison to Personnel Committee.
6. Property Committee Punch List is still ongoing.

Evangelism Did not meet

Finance Meeting held September 19, 2017 @ 6:30 PM

1. Opened with a prayer by Pastor Larry
2. Those in attendance: Pastor Larry, Bob Errett, Malcolm Sias, Dan Lucas, Tom Flory, Daniel Schaar, Dave Mickley and Tony Ferry
3. Mid-town Plaza project
 - a. Tony Ferry said all lessees are on-board with us, when the time comes for their lease renewals. Tony said he is working with Wes Long on the wording of the leases for the tenants
 - b. There are currently no vacancies, though the bottom floor is part of the rental contract with Scott Electric. That space is used for in/out inventory control
 - c. Wes Long and Kristen (our appraiser) have everything they need to do the appraisal. It is being processed. They have much of the information we need to develop a P&L to show to Council. That may be ready this year.
 - d. The Tax Appeal is set for 10:15 to 10:30 on October 3, 2017. Let Bob Errett know if you are interested in coming
 - e. A decision was made by our Finance team in March, 2017 to approach this project as a long-term investment project. This decision was made for several reasons
 - i. If we sell this property now, we would need to put between \$250,000 and \$500,000 into it before we could sell it, just to meet code. It is currently worth between \$1.2 M and \$1.5M.
 - ii. This will give us only \$720,000 to \$1.25M to place into the Trust accounts. At our current rate, that increase would last only 10 years, considering we would no longer have any rental income
 - iii. If we sell this property, there will be no rental income in the budget. Considering it currently pays the church \$5,488.00/month toward the budget, which means that the B&R and Trust funds would have to cover everything that the rentals are currently paying.
 - iv. We will realize \$10,000 per month in rental income from a single property manager perspective versus \$5,488 per month from the current ground lease perspective, nearly doubling our revenue to the church budget
 - v. If we change management styles on the property to a single property manager perspective the church will have more control over how business is done on that property
 1. Upkeep, maintenance, etc. We can use 40% of the revenues to rebuild and repair the property and improve the rental values going into the future and still have \$10,000/month left over, after the manager is paid his 10%. That process will be managed by the manager. We will just cut a check at the end of each month.
 2. The above process will return a minimum of 10% on the present real value of the property to the church’s coffers. In ten years, we will realize 100% of the value of the property in income to the church’s budget. We do not, currently, have any investments returning anything close to that to our bottom line

- f. A meeting is to be set up between us, our lawyer and Mr. Robert Boyle and his attorney to determine Mr. Boyle's liability for damages for failure to upkeep and maintain the property. Any funds received from these legal actions should be used to pay for repairs on The Mid-town Plaza property
- g. Discussed need for this extra income to relieve the pressure on the B&R and Trust accounts
- 4. The budget process is moving along. Budgets are in from Personnel, IT, Pre-school and property teams. These budgets are all in order and all within the limits of the scrutiny of the finance team. The budget meeting will be held at the end of October. Those who must attend are Bob Errett, Pastor Larry, Patti Sias and Patricia Pluck. After the budget has been developed, The Finance Team and Church Council will have 2 months to finalize it before it goes before the entire congregation for a vote at the Congregational meeting in January
- 5. Discussed the B&R Account, which is in sore straights. The Finance Team's portion of the budget, the income portions, need to be changed-up regarding which funds pay for which line-items in the budget
 - a. All income from rents will be passed directly to the operating budget. This amount will increase drastically, in the next year, due to the increase in rent from the Mid-town Plaza. The excess income will be used to pay those line-items on the budget that are covered by the B&R Account first, then to covering the remainder of the budget. No money should be used from the B&R Fund until it is stable
- 6. Discussed the investment portfolios we currently have in place.

Action needed by Council:

- 1. If we gain any damages from Robert Boyle, that money needs to go back into the property at Mid-town Plaza
- 2. FYI that funds from rent will be placed directly into the operating budget.

Social Ministry Meeting held September 17, 2017

- 1. Amy Schultz will be taking over the Angel Tree project from the Cobbs.
- 2. Also, discussed continuing the same budget amount as last year for the committee.

Stewardship Meeting held September 14, 2017

- 1. Met with Pastor Kemp to review activities to date and plans currently on hold.
- 2. Discussed ways to create synergy with other activation teams that also focus on stewardship since Stewardship is a fundamental tenet of our life as Christians. Discussed a "league" approach.
- 3. Decision to postpone team training and formal Stewardship campaign for 2017 because of other more pressing priorities, but may consider using the "time and talent" inventory sheets at the end of the year.
- 4. Considering a member survey on interest in electronic giving.
- 5. Contacting the Synod for resources and information on other Stewardship events planned and will encourage other members to attend.

Worship and Music Meeting held September 21, 2017

- 1. Discussed times for the Services on December 24th, Christmas Eve.
- 2. Developed a survey for members to give their input on the Service times they would like.
- 3. The survey will be in the October and November newsletters and the weekly bulletin.

Personnel No Report

Fellowship Meeting held September 6, 2017

- 1. The Fellowship Activation Team 2018 Calendar was discussed and planned
- 2. Fellowship 2018 Budget was reviewed
- 3. Final food items and purchases were decided for the Rally Sunday Luncheon on 9/10
- 4. Pastor Kemp attended

Information Technology Did not meet

Youth Did not meet

OLD BUSINESS:

1) Nativity in the Park – The committee putting this in place is getting back to Bob Errett. Discussion that Property Team may like to meet with a representative from their committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Bobbie Laciak made a motion to continue our relationship with Pittsburgh Pastoral Institute. Rebecca Brunetta seconded. Motion passed.
2. Bob Errett made a motion that any money gained from Robert Boyle go back into the property at Mid-town Plaza. Rebecca Brunetta seconded. Motion passed.
3. Rebecca Brunetta made a motion to change the term *Activation Teams* to *Teams*. Merle Baker seconded. Motion passed.
4. Pastor Don Green has requested \$500 to go towards the printing of the bulletins on Oct. 28th at St. Vincent's 500th Commemoration of the Reformation – other churches taking part have already contributed. Bob Errett made a motion to meet the request using money from Evangelism. Cindy Black seconded. Motion passed.
5. Concern that Acolyte training is needed – trainings will be scheduled
6. Thrivent Clothing Drive – dates needed – Social Ministry can look at it
7. “Annual Endowed Scholarship Recognition Luncheon” is on Saturday, November 11, 2017 at Thiel – Asking for church members to attend – will be posted in the bulletin
8. Do we want to sponsor the Union Mission as the only men's emergency shelter program in Westmoreland County? Union Mission's Festa de Ottobre is at Rizzo's October 27th. Bronze Sponsorship is \$500.
 - a. Kim von Schlichten made a motion to donate the \$500 now in lieu of our Outreach Ministry at the end of the year. Bob Errett seconded. Discussion. Motion unanimously opposed.
9. An activation team needs to look at Constitution and By-Laws and make revisions. These documents can be found on the website. Tabled to the next meeting.
10. Healthy Congregations Training at \$51 per person, 6 sessions, each session 2 hours long – Does Council want to do this? More discussion at next month's meeting.
11. Application for Boy Scout Troop 211 to use Fellowship Hall for Drew Erdman's Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Congratulations Drew!
12. Bob Errett moved that the Buergey fund payout gets moved to the Christian Ed department. Rebecca Brunetta seconded. Motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Megan Zobb and seconded by Kim von Schlichten to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved.

CLOSING PRAYER

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Zobb, Council Secretary