

Faith Lutheran Church
Board of Directors Minutes
January 18, 2021

Present: (Zoom) Pastor Biermann, Bruce Trevithick, Sam Siegel, Ken Duetsch, Matt Guinn, Chris Vanlandeghem, Heather Vance, Sarah Palmer, Krissa Zander, Marcy Montez, Jenny Mervyn, Phillip Whitmer

Absent: Laurie Crawford

Guests: Don & Pat McFarlane

Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm with devotion and prayer led by Pastor Biermann. Reading was from Genesis Chapter 32, Verses 24 -28 – *And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed."* As with Jacob, we struggle in life with the Lord, and we feel like we are in a battle with Him and his desire for us and His will for us. Yet if we do not give up and cling to Him and say, "I am not going to let go until you show me what is good for me, Lord, and until You bless me," then He will bless us.. The point being that as we are going through our own trials in life, don't give up. Don't give in and say it is hopeless. Cling to the Lord and say I don't quite understand what you are doing God or why You are doing it, but it feels like You are putting me through the wringer and I don't know why but I am not going to give up on You Lord, so please don't give up on me. And the Lord says, He will never leave us or forsake us. He promises that, just doesn't say that it will be easy. Pastor says that we as a board will be facing challenges with the budget, worship and how do we get people back into the building, and how do we handle the different perspectives of the congregation. It is hard and at times we may feel like we are struggling with God and with man. Don't give up, don't let go of the Lord, and say Lord bless us, guide us. And He will say to us that you will prevail in the end, you may walk with a limp but you will still make it through.

Bruce then invited Don and Pat to speak to the board. They stated that in 2018, in conjunction with and approval of the board, they started a scholarship fund with an initial donation of \$20,000. That was followed by a \$10,000 donation in 2019. Their concern is what the current status is and maybe the funds could be used elsewhere. They suggested moving the money to the building fund and paying down on the mortgage could be an option. There was discussion that followed. Ken will meet with Don and Pat to discuss at greater length. It was noted that those monies are currently being held in restricted funds.

Secretary's Report: Phillip Whitmer

- Minutes from the December 21st meeting were presented and reviewed. Sam made the motion to accept. Supported by Sarah and the motion was passed.

Pastoral Report/Notes: Pastor Biermann

- Parochial report had been distributed in advance. Noted that a small steady climb in attendance continues. Had good attendance for Christmas Eve and it went very smoothly. Attendance and new membership is growing – two new families were in attendance that the Pastor has made contact with and has had good conversations with.
- Even though the conventions may be postponed for a year the district is still requesting that nominations for district positions be made by the congregation. Pastor proposed the following:
 - President – Reverend David Davis
 - Vice President, North & East Region: Reverend Erik Cloeter
 - Secretary: Reverend Craig Bickel
 - District Board of Directors, North & East Region: Reverend Brad Hubbard
 - Nominating Committee for North & East Region: Reverend Mark Pretznaw

Clarification of process and why nominations are being made at this time were reviewed.

Motion to approve these proposed nominees and present them to the congregation for their approval was made by Chris and supported by Matt. Motion was passed

- Motion to recommend to the congregation for their vote that the district and Synod conventions be pushed back/postponed for one year was made by Marcy, supported by Sarah and passed
 - Pastor very briefly reviewed the process that would be followed if approved by the congregation
- Pastor reviewed where we are at currently regarding property usage. Updated the board concerning the favorable results with the preschool leading up to the current thought of the preschool starting class gym nights where the students, with their parents, would come together one night a month and would be able to play together in the gym. This would be their class of 10. Safe protocols would be followed. Would like to start in March. Pastor also mentioned some activities that are being planned for Lutheran Schools Week in March which would include the students singing on video (which would be shown to the congregation during service) and chapel led by pastor for the preschoolers during that week. Related to the gym use, Pastor also introduced the idea of using the gym for walkers, which has been brought to his attention by Christie Hansard. Pastor indicated that both possibilities are in alignment with the current guidelines coming out of the Genesee County Health Department. Matt raised the concern of how other groups would see this, and those wanting to get back to in person Sunday school for example. Pastor responded that smaller groups, with tight controls, where we know the group and how many will be participating is necessary to start with. There was other discussion concerning opening the Church up to non-worship functions and comments made regarding outside entities that are operating safely under controlled conditions. In the end the question was – where do we draw the line at this time? Discussion presenting both sides of the argument were heard. Subject to be included in the agenda with the upcoming

Forum to get more thoughts and input. Bruce also requested that we think about this and be prepared to discuss and come up with a policy related to this discussion at the next board meeting.

- Pastor made the motion that at this time we allow the preschool to host gym night as outlined and that walkers under the supervision of Christie will be allowed with no more than 10 participating at any given time. Further development of a policy to be point of action by the board at the next meeting. Motion was supported by Marcy and passed.

President's Report: Bruce Trevithick

- Reported that the executive committee had met and had decided to go with an all zoom forum and that for the annual voters meeting to go with both a zoom and live format.
- Housing Allowance was presented by Bruce. A formality required by the internal revenue service regulations that the board approves the amount. Following are the figures presented for those church staff impacted:
 - Pastor Todd Biermann \$60,000
 - D.C.E. Cindy LaFontaine 100% of salary
 - Sue Hooper 100% of salary
 - Pastor Robert Scott \$30,000
 - Joel Zander 70% of salary

Motion to approve as presented was made by Phil, supported by Marcy. Motion passed. Copy of resolution with signatures will be on file in the church office.

- Bruce brought up the fact that Sam is again bumping up against his term limits and that the board needs to request an exemption at the voters meeting in order for Sam to continue in his role as Vice President of Property and Maintenance
 - Motion made by Phil to extend Sam's eligibility for another two years and to present this to the voters at the annual meeting for their approval. Motion was supported by Matt and was passed.

V.P. Property & Maintenance: Sam Siegel

- Sam stated that he had nothing new to report and asked for questions. No questions were submitted.

V.P. Salary & Personnel: Chris Vanlandeghem

- Chris had nothing to report – stated that he is still very much in the state of learning

V.P. Finance & Stewardship: Ken Duetsch

- Financial documents were provided to the board ahead of the meeting. Ken reviewed current finances comparing actual to budget. Income is up and expenses weren't crazy such that overall we are ahead when compared to the budget, and income has actually been larger than expenses. About \$482,000 of unrestricted cash available.
- Ken then led a review of the proposed budget for 2021-22. Charity offset was reviewed as it currently doesn't show an increase. Pastor explained that this is what the church says it will give to the District/Synod. It represents approximately 10% of income when you also include what the church does as it pertains to donations to other missions, scholarships and so on. Updated numbers were reviewed by Ken and discussed by the board for clarification.
 - Motion was made by Pastor Biermann to present this budget proposal to the congregation at the annual voters meeting for their vote. Motion was supported by Marcy and was approved.

Board Reports & Requests:

Youth Board: Jenny Mervyn

- Youth check-ins once a month
- Youth trivia nights once a month starting in conjunction with the Bible reading challenge
- Zoom meeting scheduled for February/March for a parent forum
- Would like to start getting the kids back together again

Elders: Matt Guinn

- Pastor Scott was in attendance, covering for Pastor Biermann
- Still need to find a couple of elders to fill in a couple of vacancies
- Continue to assist with the Bible reading journey
- Hope to re-launch the acolyte program in 2021

Outreach & Evangelism: Sarah Palmer

- Not much to report. Wants for things to get back to some level of normalcy.
- Brad Garrison and his wife are no longer affiliated with the Luke 52 Project, which will soon be serving in conjunction with our work at Franklin Ave. Mission.

Worship: Laurie Crawford (Pastor Biermann reported on behalf of Laurie)

- Things are going well overall
- Drive-through Communion is going along smoothly.
- Pastor talked to Linda Robinson and she has indicated that the Advent wreath needs some attention, possibly replaced
- Linda also requests that Matt communicate any changes to her directly rather than her having to hear it from random elders

Communication & Publicity: Krissa Zander

- Ran an ad on Facebook related to the Bible reading journey
- Plans for another postcard to go out to the congregation by the end of March
- Her budget includes funds to provide a sponsorship to the Grand Blanc Easter egg hunt (if it happens)

Congregational Ministry: Heather Vance

- Planned event for a sledding party for Faith families. To be held last Saturday of January at Bi-Centennial park from 1pm to 3pm.
- East egg hunt is also being discussed

Social Ministry: Marcy Montez

- Had nothing to report. Did share the calendar for participation at Franklin Avenue Mission. Our dates are:
 - 2/9/21 and 2/11/21
 - 3/30/21 and 4/1/21
 - Every 7th week

Roundtable & Announcements:

No other issues were presented

Closed with prayer led by Bruce

Meeting adjourned at 8:43pm

Next meeting is February 15, 2021 @ 7:00pm via ZOOM

Respectfully submitted,

Phillip W Whitmer