

Faith Lutheran Church
Board of Directors Minutes
April 20th, 2020

Present: Pastor Biermann, Bruce Trevithick, Marcia Gauthier, Matt Guinn, John Crawford, Jennifer Hocken, Sam Siegel, Laura Mulligan, Scott Hans, Andy Priestap, Suzanne Perreault

Absent: Stephany Hall

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. with devotion and prayer from Pastor Biermann. Psalm 90 verses 1 and 2 remind us that we have comfort in the fact that God has always been there and will always be there for us. Jesus proved that when he rose from the dead. He is a constant. The Lord's supper will come again and we can rejoice because we are baptized children of God!

Secretary's Report: Marcia Gauthier

- Minutes from the March 2020 meeting were presented and reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by John, seconded by Pastor Biermann. Motion was passed.

Pastoral Report/Notes: Pastor Biermann

- Reviewed the March Parochial Report. Due to COVID-19, numbers were already declining during the second week of March, even before the Governor Whitmer's executive stay-at-home order was announced. However, there were three (3) new members, one adult confirmation and one baptism.
- Members of our Faith family have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Some choose not to divulge their diagnosis while others are asking for prayer. Pastor requested that we let him know if we are aware of any members who need prayer even if they don't want their name on the published prayer list.
- Matt asked if we can count the views on YouTube for attendance purposes. The LCMS is not allowing member churches to count electronic attendance. These numbers are for Faith's own personal assessment and are not to be included on parochial reports. There are too many issues with identifying who is a member and who isn't and who watches the service in its entirety versus those who just happened to click on the site. A suggested formula to estimate how many viewed the service on YouTube is to multiply the number of views by 2.5 (average household members). Livestreaming would be different. Easter service had 545 views x 2.5 = 1363 engaged for an average of 30 minutes of viewing time for a 50-minute service.
- Attendance in ZOOM opportunities - Bible study on Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. has averaged between 40-60 people in attendance, Chat and Pray on Sunday mornings at 11:00 a.m. has averaged 35-55 and Daily Devotions Monday-Saturday mornings at 9:00 a.m. has averaged 25-45.
- Technology update - Simoni Systems has installed the new projectors and screens in the sanctuary.
- Due to the pandemic, services are now being recorded because of the lack of technology to livestream.

President's Report: Bruce Trevithick

- The Executive Committee met last week about expenditures. Sam feels as though he can patch and maintain the parking lot. Faith's custodian, Dave, has agreed to maintain the carpet and it appears to be in satisfactory condition for now.
- Nomination update – There will be no formal election due to the fact that all nominees are running unopposed. There are still two (2) Elder position openings and Pastor Biermann mentioned that we could appoint them at a later date if needed.
- The application for the small business loan (Paycheck Protection Program) offered from the government through the CARES Act was completed by Alicen and Marge. The application has been accepted, however, there are concerns about strings attached. John is very concerned about accepting the loan and thinks we should seek input from a labor attorney regarding church vs. state concerns. Pastor Biermann shared his thoughts about many small businesses in dire need right now, including some from our own Faith family. The loan amount of \$76,000 would be forgiven if Faith maintains all staff at current status. The preschool teachers could be brought back this spring or summer to work to prepare for next year. A motion to continue with the process and comply with guidelines of the loan as outlined by the government was made by Scott. Andy seconded the motion and made an amendment to the motion to seek an opinion from a labor attorney before accepting the loan. Motion was denied.
- Pastor described the Alliance Defending Freedom organization and its membership benefits. The Michigan District of the LCMS works with this organization a lot and the ADF's purpose is to keep the doors open for the Gospel by advocating for religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, freedom of speech, and marriage and family. The yearly membership fee is approximately \$200 and would become part of the FLC office budget. A motion to have Faith Lutheran Church join the ADF was made by Laurie and seconded by Jenny. Motion was approved.

V.P. Property & Maintenance: Sam Siegel

- The building is unoccupied so Dave is cleaning carpets and the kitchens and will do some touch-up painting.
- Dave's work has been cut back to three days a week because of the limited presence in the building.

V. P. Salary & Personnel: Scott Hans

- Working on tuition reimbursement plan for preschool families.
- Preschool teachers are individually dealing with the State of Michigan for unemployment benefits, but they do not qualify for unemployment as Faith employees. They may qualify if they worked previously for another organization that has unemployment benefits. If the "stay at home" is lifted they could be offered less than full-time hours to come in and work. This would result in expenditures going out without revenue coming in. Marcia asked if the preschool staff is currently working from home at all. Laura described what they are all doing to stay in touch with their students and the parents. It was advised that staff should be paid for any approved work from home.

V. P. Finance & Stewardship: John Crawford

- Reviewed the March financial report and stated that there is approximately five (5) months operating cash on hand. This does not include restricted funds. In March there was a total of \$74,000 in giving. The monthly budget needed for 2020 budget is \$87,000. April's giving totaled \$56,000 as of 4/19/2020. A check for \$10,000 was received yesterday from a member family to help Faith during the COVID-19 crisis.
- A system is being created to establish reimbursement amounts and processes for preschool families.
- John inquired of Scott an explanation of staff unemployment rules and regulations.
- Scott noted that two (2) months into the fiscal year we have already spent \$60,000 from cash on hand, \$24,000 of which was for AV equipment.
- John asked everyone to look very closely at expenditures.
- Scott asked if we would financially be at a loss at year-end from a lack of Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) naming Faith as a designated beneficiary, since the law has changed due to COVID-19. At this time there is no way to determine this.
- Suzanne inquired about financial stability. What should we do now to save money? While we have decided not to pursue the small business loan there may be other ways to obtain relief funds.
- John confirmed that we are financially in good condition.
- John received and read out loud a letter from Church Extension Fund offering FLC the opportunity to renew its line of credit with CEF. The rate is 3.875%. A motion to renew the line of credit with CEF was made by John, seconded by Matt. Motion was approved.
- Pastor Biermann mentioned that CEF is currently offering new low-interest loans as well related to COVID-19 which we could take advantage of if necessary.

BOARD REPORTS/REQUESTS:

Elders: Matt Guinn

- The Elders met on April 13th via ZOOM.
- A document template for well-check calls was created by our Parish Nurse and is available to anyone who would like to check on Faith members during this crisis. (see attached)

Outreach & Evangelism: Suzanne Perreault

- No report

Worship: Laurie Crawford

- Linda Robinson has requested that she be notified well in advance when the altar guild should start preparing for Communion again.

Communication & Publicity: Laura Mulligan

- No report

Congregational Ministry: Jennifer Hocken

- No report

Social Ministry: Stephany Hall, absent (reported by Pastor Biermann)

- The COVID-19 Relief Program is still available and Pastor has had a few requests for this assistance.
- Four gift cards for Aldi's to be used for Easter dinner (instead of food baskets) were distributed.

Youth Board: Andy Priestap

- The Junior High Youth Gathering in Frankenmuth has been cancelled for this June.
- The Senior High Youth Gathering at Mackinaw Island is still scheduled for July.
- Trivia Night scheduled for March 20th may be rescheduled for the fall.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Pastor Biermann described the need for new technology to livestream events, which will greatly improve the current situation and enhance all future recordings and events with more professional technology. The recording process has been experimental and technology has been pulled together in a variety of ways. The pastors are putting a lot of time and effort into these recordings and when the "stay at home" order is lifted not everyone is going to be able to return to worship at Faith all at once. Livestream would allow more people to engage. When small groups are eventually allowed to attend services others can watch if they are livestreamed. Events can be posted on Facebook as "premiere events" when live and chatting is also available on the screen.
 - Stationary cameras that won't be in the way of worshippers and a soundboard mixer would be ideal to livestream services. Hardwiring would stream without lag time and there would be fewer glitches as opposed to using wi-fi. Simoni provided a proposal for two different levels of technology improvements for livestreaming and these improvements would be user friendly for all volunteers. The first proposal is for \$17,540 which includes one camera and a soundboard mixer and the second proposal would be for an additional camera at a cost of \$4,400 more. Both proposals include installation. Sam would still need to pull the wiring and has agreed to do so. The payoff would be immediate as Brian Richards is already exceeding his hours. Money from "memorial funds miscellaneous" is unrestricted and could be used for this along with money from the Longroy Memorial fund.
- -Faith will need to secure streaming credentials, and music used needs to have a copyright license (renewed yearly for approximately \$1,000) for both hymnal and contemporary arrangements. Faith currently has a copyright license for the Lutheran Service Book hymnal. A member has offered to cover the cost of the additional licensure for this year
- -Matt asked if this expenditure would include updating and upgrading the Faith website. Alicen is currently in the process of rebuilding and moving the website to a new host and Spud Software has offered to do this at no cost. In addition, Krissa Zander is already learning how to work with the website and Facebook page in her new role of Communication and Publicity Chairperson.
- -Sam asked if this technology is something we really need and will use. Andy reminded the board of the capital campaign for new carpet and parking lot repairs that we were going to do this fall. Bruce mentioned that this is not the best time to engage in a capital campaign during the pandemic.
- -A motion to expend memorial funds for new technology to purchase two (2) new cameras and a mixer board (not to exceed \$22,000) was made by Sam, seconded by Laurie. Motion was approved.

ROUNDTABLE:

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- John noted that Alicen and Marge worked diligently on the PPP loan process and how we should commend their efforts. Scott suggested we send a letter to them in appreciation.
- Sam will work with Emily to move forward with the technology process and Simoni Systems.
- Pastor Biermann has signed up to attend a meeting tomorrow, 4/21/2020 at 12:30 p.m., with the Michigan Speaker of the House regarding assistance for small businesses in Michigan.
- Pastor Biermann asked all of us to read through and pray about the article titled *24 Questions Your Church Should Answer Before People Return*, by Ken Braddy, Jr. (see attached)

Closed with prayer from Pastor Biermann. Meeting adjourned at 10:04 p.m.
Next meeting is 5/18/2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the library/or via ZOOM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Gauthier, Secretary