

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH of STILLWATER, MINNESOTA
Congregational Council Meeting Minutes
Held October 23, 2023

Voting Council members present: Lead Pastor Chris Bellefeuille, Jeff Anderson, Krista Gossai, John Hodler, Jill Longnecker, and Andrew Thelander.

Voting Council member absent: Thomas Haugrud

Non-voting Council members present: Pastor of Lifelong Faith Formation Peter Winston Miller and Parish Administrator Sarah Kinsman.

Guests: Rachel Schmeltzer and Gary Cross, Trinity Lutheran Church Racial Justice Team

Location: Room 108B, Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by President Andrew Thelander.

1. Pastor Chris led Christ Care prayers.
2. Devotions-Dwelling in the Word.
Krista Gossai led a discussion of the parable of the Wedding Banquet from Matthew 22:1-14 and what does the recently released movie 'Barbie' reveal about women's equity struggle.
3. TLC Ministry team update – Racial Justice. Rachel and Gary reminded the Council of the Team's endeavors in the last year, i.e., receipt of the \$15,000 Harvest Grant that enabled the fall 2022 Native American education series led by Vance Black Fox, presentation of the traveling display 'Why Treaties Matter', etc. The Team is currently evaluating "where to go next" while focusing on Truth and Reconciliation and Native Americans.
4. **M/S/P** approve the September 18, 2023, Council meeting minutes.
M/S/P approve the October 9, 2023, Special combined Council and Finance Team meeting minutes as amended by replacing the words '\$78,000 Line of Credit Balance' with '\$7,076 operating deficit'.
M/S/P approve the October 23, 2023, Council meeting agenda.
5. Pastor Peter's report was electronically distributed to the Council for review prior to the meeting. Pastor Chris did not submit a report for the October meeting. Instead, she briefed the council on the items that are normally included in the Pastor's report.
6. Administrator and Treasurer reports.
 - a. The Parish Administrator's report was distributed electronically to the council for review prior to the meeting.
 - b. Audit vs. Review of Trinity's Financials: Foley Kalseim and Co. LTD, Trinity's CPA Firm, will complete the Audit by November 1, 2023. Based on their initial observations Sarah recommended that,

- i. The council review the ELCA's '*Congregational Treasurers Financial and Accounting Guide*' to prepare the council to evaluate and approve revised standards of operation to ensure secure and accurate management of Trinity's financial activities. The Finance team will work with Sarah to complete updated management standards that will be submitted to the council at a future date, and
- ii. The Opening Doors Campaign's '*Master Design Plans*' currently held as an asset on Trinity's balance sheet be written off. This is an intangible asset. Therefore, when written off it does not affect the mortgage.

M/S/P approval to write off the '*Master Design Plans*' balance sheet value of \$336,000.

- c. The preliminary September 2023 Trinity Financial Update and Comprehensive Campaign reports were distributed electronically to the council for review prior to the meeting. The September 2023 Income is \$7,000 below the September 2022 Income. Total expenses are approximately \$16,000 below September 2022 expenses.
- d. As of October 18, 2023, Endowment earnings of \$46,523.68 were used to reduce the Line of Credit to \$99,500.
- e. Capital Campaign: As of September 30, 2023, \$1,925,859 has been pledged to the campaign. Received pledged amounts have enabled the mortgage principal to be reduced by \$430,406, the completion of \$62,899 in deferred Drive-In maintenance, and the donation of \$15,372 to the St Paul Area Synod/ELCA Planting Hope mission.
- f. FY 2023-2024 Budget. Parish administrator Sarah Kinsman and Treasurer Jeff Anderson worked with Trinity's Finance Team to develop the budget for the September 2023 – August 2024 Fiscal year. After Council review of various budget drafts, the Finance Team recommended a revised budget for approval by the Council. Jeff and Sarah presented this budget version to the council which was approved after a thorough discussion. The use of Church Designated Funds, which come from an Employee Retention Credit (ERC) of \$154,000, is a key component of this budget. The budget incorporates a plan to use these funds over three years to gradually eliminate the outstanding Line of Credit. (Note: \$71,000 was received in late August 2023. The remaining ERC payout will take several months to receive.)

M/S/P approve the FY 2023-2024 budget as presented and recommend to the Congregation that they approve the budget at the November 2023 Annual meeting.

- 7. Trinity's Constitutional and Bylaws' language change.
 - a. Draft the language that amends the Constitution's C12.01 and C12.02 and the Nov. 20, 2017, updated By-Laws C.12.01.01, C.12.01.02 as approved by the Council at the August 21, 2023, meeting. This approval reads, "The Trinity Congregational Church Council recommends the constitution be amended to add a second called rostered leader, in addition to the Lead Pastor, as a voting member of the Congregational Council." And the "Trinity Congregational Council recommends the Bylaws are amended to be consistent with the revised constitution."
 - b. Adopt the amendments to the *Model Constitution for Congregations* that were approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly.

- i. Trinity's Constitution's Chapter 12 describes the process that must be followed when amending the Constitution and By-Laws. Proposals must be filed with the Congregation Council 60 days before formal consideration by the congregation at a regular or special Congregation Meeting called for this purpose. The Congregational Council shall notify the congregation's members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting. A majority vote is required at this first meeting to advance the amendment to the next annual meeting. It requires a two-thirds vote to ratify the amendment at the next annual meeting.
- ii. The approval process for Model Constitution for Congregations amendments only requires a majority vote at a congregational meeting as long as the amendments have been presented to the congregation at least 30 days prior to the meeting.
- c. Pastor Chris will work with a Synod contact to prepare the language that will *add a second called rostered leader, in addition to the Lead Pastor, as a voting member of the Congregational Council*. This language will then be presented to the Council for initiation of the ratification process.

8. Adjournment.

The council meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 PM.

Meetings:

Annual Congregational meeting – Sunday, November 19, 2023

Next Council meetings.

Council meeting immediately after Annual Congregation meeting – Nov. 19, 2023.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/ John W. Hodler

John W. Hodler

Congregational Council Secretary

Electronically signed