

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH of STILLWATER, MINNESOTA
Congregational Council Meeting Minutes
Held January 15, 2024

Voting Council members present: Lead Pastor Chris Bellefeuille, Jeff Anderson, Bill Bjorum, John Hodler, Jill Longnecker, Tina Swanson, and Andrew Thelander.

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

Guests: Karen Gieseke and Sandy Wendt, Trinity Lutheran Church Reconciling in Christ 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.
Sarah Kinsman led a discussion of the twelve apostles with an emphasis on which apostle did we identify with.
3. TLC Ministry team update – Reconciling in Christ (RIC).
Karen Gieseke presented a power point entitled, *RIC – What does it mean for Trinity Lutheran Church?* Karen reminded the Council of the history of Trinity’s RIC journey from 2018 to 2023. She introduced the Four RIC Partner Public Commitments that need to thoughtfully be considered and implemented to enable Trinity to move forward to the next stage of a Reconciling in Christ church. The RIC Ministry team is working with the nonprofit ‘Reconciling Works’ to lay out the actions necessary to implement these four commitments. The team’s first objective is to redraft Trinity’s Welcome Statement by August 2024 and present it to the Congregation for approval at the November 2024 Annual meeting. Karen concluded using a Martin Luther King quote that reflects in a different way on the Good Samaritan’s actions, “If we do not stop what will happen to him?” She asked the Council to keep this question in mind as the Council thoughtfully examines how to proceed on this RIC path with its many considerations and ramifications,
4. **M/S/P** approve the October 23, 2023, Council meeting minutes.
M/S/P approve the November 19, 2023, Council meeting minutes.
M/S/P approve the January 15, 2024, Council meeting agenda as amended with the addition item; ‘the Council submit the 2022 Church Wide Model Constitution to the Trinity Congregation for approval’.
5. Pastor Chris’ and Pastor Peter’s reports were electronically distributed to the Council for review prior to the meeting. Pastor Chris reminded council members that she was setting up one-on-one meetings with each member to discuss council objectives, mission, communications, etc.

Pastor Peter was asked how a person should seek Pastoral Care. After Pastor Peter reviewed the process, it was suggested that a short Trinity Today article reminding folks how the process was designed to work would be beneficial for the congregation.

6. Administrator and Treasurer reports.

- a. The Parish Administrator's report was distributed electronically to the council for review prior to the meeting. Sarah pointed out that the church's Line of Credit (LOC) was zero for the first time in numerous years. The administration team is completing annual giving statements for mailing to TLC members.
- b. Audit vs. Review of Trinity's Financials: Foley Kalseim and Co. LTD, Trinity's CPA Firm, has completed the Audit and will present their findings in late January or early February.
- c. The Finance Team will review and study an updated Finance Policy and Procedure Manual utilizing the ELCA Guidebook. Sara is recommending Trinity implement the procedures presented in the Guidebook.
- d. The preliminary December 2023 Trinity Financial Update and Comprehensive Campaign reports were distributed electronically to the council for review prior to the meeting. After one-third of the fiscal year has passed, the December YTD total income is 33% of budget and total expenses are 33% of budget.
- e. Capital Campaign: As of December 31, 2023, \$1,925,859 has been pledged to the campaign and contributions received to date total \$843,000. Received pledged amounts have enabled the mortgage principal to be reduced by \$488,000.
- f. Parish administrator Sarah Kinsman and Treasurer Jeff Anderson invited Noah Schumacher to the next Finance Team meeting to discuss actions that will ensure continued contributions that enable the 2023/2024 Fiscal budget to be realized.

7. Other Business

- a. **M/S/P** Authorize Sarah Kinsman to act on behalf of Trinity Lutheran Church for the management of the Trinity Lutheran Scholarship Fund deposited at First State Bank.
- b. Business conducted via email in December 2023:
The Racial Justice Ministry Team found a grant for which Trinity is eligible, that will help pay for another Indigenous Peoples learning event in the fall of 2024. The organization is the Huelsmann Foundation. Given the grant application deadline it was necessary for the Council to approve a Council resolution empowering the Racial Justice Ministry team to apply for this grant via email on Dec. 20, 2023.

M/S/P Racial Justice Ministry Team (RJMT) shall apply for the Huelsmann Foundation Grant on behalf of Trinity Lutheran Church. The money shall be held in the RJMT account, and all expenses will pass through the Trinity Lutheran Church office.

- c. President Thelander briefed the new council members, Tina Swanson and Bill Bjorum on the August 21, 2023, decision to amend Trinity's Constitution and update the bylaws as follows: "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.”

- i. 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.
- ii. Additionally, the Model Constitution amendments for Congregations that were approved by the 2022 Churchwide Assembly will be submitted to the Congregation simultaneously for approval.

d. After discussion the Council agreed that staff salaries shall remain confidential.

e. Council Meetings start time will be 6:00 PM beginning Feb. 19th.

8. The Council approved Trinity hosting the Minnesota State Attorney General Community Forum to be held 5:30 – 7:00 PM, Thursday, May 23, 2024.

Shout outs were given to Anne’s work cleaning up after the MLK event in Trinity’s Garden room and Carol Carver’s explanation of the genesis of the choir music during Sunday, Jan. 14th worship service.

The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

The President adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.

2024 Schedule of Council Meetings: 3rd Monday of each month (unless otherwise noted)

Next council meeting, **Start time: 6:00 PM**, Monday, February 19, 2024 (Room 108b – Trinity)
Council retreat: Date and location TBD.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/ John W. Hodler

John W. Hodler

Congregational Council Secretary

Electronically signed.