

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH of STILLWATER, MINNESOTA
Congregational Council Meeting Minutes
Location: Room 108B, Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN
Held February 19, 2024

Voting Council members present: Jeff Anderson, John Hodler, Jill Longnecker, Tina Swanson, and Andrew Thelander. Pastor Chris Bellefeuille attended via Zoom.

Voting Council member absent: Bill Bjorum

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

Guest: Mark Gieske, Facilities Maintenance Team

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM by President Andrew Thelander.

1. Pastor Peter led **Christ Care** prayers.

2. **Devotions-Dwelling in the Word.**

Jill Longnecker led the Council's devotional discussion that dealt with the interconnectivity of Spirituality, Religion, and Theology and why people separate these three areas. The discussion led to suggesting that Trinity's role is to bring Spirituality, Religion and Theology together.

3. **Ministry team update:** Mark Gieske, Facilities Maintenance Team Lead.

- a. The Facilities Team was formed in 2015 and it folded Tom Hosek and the 'Helping Hands' people onto the team in 2023. Mark recapped Trinity's facility history from its founding in 1871. Mark shared an update of the completed items from the 2015 list of 'deferred maintenance' projects.
- b. Mark indicated that one commercial building maintenance rule of thumb is that 2-4% of the asset's value should be spent on annual maintenance. Trinity's current annual budget is approximately \$50,000 in addition to maintenance projects funded through designated donations. (Trinity's total asset value is \$4,500,000 including land.)
- c. The Comprehensive Capital Campaign will provide roughly \$360,000; \$62,000 was used to complete the Drive-in screen and outbuilding project. The next two priority projects include the East side of the original church building, estimated cost is \$150,000 to \$250,000 and upgrading the Church's lower-level bathrooms, estimated cost is \$150,000. (The Helping Hands team is converting the lower-level men's bathroom to an 'all-gender' bathroom.)
- d. The Facilities Maintenance Team needs the Council to create a Vision for Trinity's future ministry. This will enable the correct reconfiguration and usage of the facility. This will help answer questions regarding the facility, for example: is the current physical facility right; if not, what must be done; what happens if the facility is not adapted to the future ministry; what happens if the facility is adapted to the future ministry, etc.

4. **M/S/P** approve the January 15, 2024, Council meeting's minutes.
M/S/P approve the February 19, 2024, Council meeting's agenda.
5. **Pastor Chris' and Pastor Peter's reports** were electronically distributed to the Council for review prior to the meeting. Pastor Peter elaborated on his work with the St. Paul Area Synod Vitality Team and Two Loops from the Berkana Institute. Also, Pastor Peter explained the benefits of using Trinity's Mobile App. The user-friendly accessibility to extensive information and access to different sites on this App provides benefits to members, and adaptation by Trinity members is strongly encouraged.
6. **Congregational Council Financial Business transacted via email Jan. 25, 2024**
M/S/P Trinity Lutheran's line of credit at First State Bank and Trust, Bayport, Minnesota, shall be renewed, and Jeff Anderson, the Congregational Treasurer, and Sarah Kinsman, Parish Administrator, are authorized and directed to execute on behalf of Trinity Lutheran Church of Stillwater all documents necessary to renew the line of credit.
7. The **Parish Administrator's report** was electronically distributed to the council for review prior to the meeting.
 - a. Sarah emphasized she deposits donations received as close to the date received as possible. Sunday contributions are deposited weekly.
 - b. Sarah reminded the Council that the Line of Credit balance is zero, and the budgeted \$60,000 from the Council Designated funds has been moved to the operating budget. (This is year 'one' of the 'three-year process' to eliminate the need to fund the operating budget deficit with Council Designated funds.)
 - c. Trinity's current mortgage holder, Thrivent, and the ELCA Mission Investment Fund are presenting mortgage financing options. The current mortgage must be either amortized with a higher interest rate or placed with another lender on May 1, 2024. In March, the Finance Team will recommend a mortgage financing option to the council for approval.
8. The **Treasurer** presented a verbal report to the council.
 - a. Foley Kalseim and Co. LTD, Trinity's CPA firm presented their audit findings to the Finance team on February 13, 2024. They recommended:
 - Change Trinity staff's current responsibilities to create a separation of duties to ensure good financial control.
 - The financial staff, Finance team and Congregational Treasurer's job descriptions should be revised.
 - Trinity's accounting procedures manual needs updated.
 - b. Jeff Anderson announced his resignation as Treasurer. He nominated Jill Longnecker as his replacement. Jeff will continue to serve as the Comprehensive Capital Campaign Resource Coordinator.

M/S/P accept Jeff Anderson's resignation as treasurer effective Feb. 19, 2024.
M/S/P appoint Jill Longnecker as Trinity's treasurer effective Feb. 20, 2024.

 - c. Jill will no longer serve as a congregational elected member of the Council. Her replacement will be appointed later.

9. Comprehensive Capital Campaign.

- a. The Resource Coordinator reported \$881,657 (46%) of the pledged \$1,928,409 has been received even though we are only one-third of the way through the three-year campaign.
- b. Pastor Chris added that the Comprehensive Capital Campaign Cabinet will meet in late February to develop additional ways to inform the Congregation regarding contributions to enable the Campaign's vision to be realized, these ways will address:
 - Donors that have fulfilled their pledge and wish to contribute addition funds will have the opportunity to give a directed gift to mortgage reduction.
 - Develop communication to those that pledged to the campaign but have not actually contributed or are behind in their contributions.
 - Ask those that did not pledge to the campaign or are new members for a two commitment to the Capital Campaign 70-20-10 vision or to make a directed gift for mortgage reduction.

10. Other Business:

- a. The Trinity Outreach Mission team is seeking 7.5% of the total funds received to-date from the Comprehensive Campaign. The Outreach Mission Team was requested to develop the Team's vision, priorities, and budget prior to receiving these funds. This is a consistent approach, as the other Campaign components, mortgage reduction, deferred maintenance, St. Paul Synod all had specific priorities established prior to receiving funds.
- b. John Hodler provided an update on the process to change the Constitutional language and Bylaws utilizing a Special Congregational meeting this spring for the first congregation's approval followed by the second congregational approval at the November 2024 Annual meeting.

Gratitude – Jeff Anderson was thanked for his service as treasurer.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

The President adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM.

Next council meeting, Start time: 6:00 PM, March 2024 (Room 108b – Trinity)
Council retreat: Scheduled for April 19-20. The location TBD.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/ John W. Hodler
John W. Hodler
Congregational Council Secretary
Electronically signed.