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trinity
Lutheran Church

CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Monday, May 18, 2015

4:00-6:30 p.m.

Present: Gail Olson, Doug Johnson, Sara Godfrey, Eric Olsen, Dana Miller, Tom Olsen, Bob Eiselt

Guests: The Rev. Lamont Koerner, Assistant to the Bishop; Julie Jolivette and Kelsey Mann (4:10-4:40); Renae Oswald-Anderson (5:30-5:55)

1. Devotions (Lamont Koerner)
2. Approved minutes from May 27 meeting. M/S/P.
3. Update on interim senior pastor, next steps (Gail, Lamont, Doug). The synod office already has been contacted by several candidates interested in our permanent senior pastor position even though that process has not started yet. The office is working to identify a new interim senior pastor with the necessary skills and experience to lead a large congregation and staff effectively. While all are anxious to fill the interim spot, we need to make sure the new interim is a good fit for Trinity. The senior pastor call process will continue as planned. Applications are being solicited for the senior pastor call committee, which will be led by Arba-Della Beck.
4. Children, Youth and Family (CYF) presentation, discussion (Kelsey Mann, Julie Jolivette). Julie and Kelsey have developed recommendations to strengthen our children, youth and family education program, based on the Faith and Family report and all that they have heard from the families. In order to meet CYF needs, they have requested some additional staff hours for CYF, Council support for their proposal, and assistance with communicating key messages related to their proposed changes to the CYF structure. The additional staffing is needed starting Sept. 1. (They currently have Kelsey at FT, Julie at 30 hours/week, and two ½-time employees in CYF.) Julie is working to foster more parent volunteer involvement. One of the proposed changes would be to move 3rd and 4th grade education to only Sunday morning; current enrollment in some classes is as few as seven kids. This would also free up some space in the building at Trinity on Wednesday nights for parent learning or other uses. May need to offer nursery on Wednesday nights to accommodate such a change. The plan focuses on scope and sequence of learning the Bible and key Lutheran precepts, to be sure nothing gets missed as each child goes through the program– this is the biggest thing we heard in the listening sessions and the parents are passionate about. Parents are very vocal that they do not want to have Sunday school after/before Sunday church – want it at the same time so they can go to church while kids are in Sunday school. Council will consider the CYF staff's proposal and budgetary needs. We thank Julie and Kelsey for their hard work and thorough consideration for a strong CYF future.
5. Finance update (Tom O, Bob) – Our budget shortfall for 2015 was projected at approximately \$144K as of last month, based on budget cuts and revenue received. Now, with weak revenues in April, the projected deficit has grown to \$165K. April revenue did not come in as well as the previous April. The Stewardship Committee is meeting tonight and will be discussing a summer appeal to address current year revenue needs, as well as ongoing stewardship needs.

6. Financing options discussion – Tom and Bob will meet with Trinity’s two lending institutions to determine our options for refinancing and consolidating our debt to reduce monthly payments. We will consider a debt reduction appeal in the coming months. (Tom, Bob)
7. Missions Board discussion.
 - i. Greetings from Renae Oswald-Anderson, the newly appointed Missions Board chair. Renae has 30 years of non-profit leadership experience in our local area, as well as participation in our Tanzania and Mexico missions.
 - ii. Priorities for the Missions Board will include coordination and oversight of all Trinity mission activities.
 - iii. Peter Harrits from the Saint Paul Area Synod office is willing to come and talk to the Missions Board to discuss different approaches for mission efforts.
 - iv. Past practice for committees included a covenant for committee members, created by new group/team and renew annually. We will ask our new committees to develop covenants for their members.
8. HolyCow! CAT survey follow-up. Tom Jolivette provided a presentation to the congregation on the recently completed church assessment tool on May 17, including an overview of the survey results and results of his follow-up interviews with a selected sample of 55 Trinity members. He will provide another presentation on June 2. The written summary will be posted online.
 - a. Council discussed possible next steps based on the survey results. One item that needs to be addressed is feedback from survey respondents about council size and the nomination process. Changes will be made immediately to ensure that there is a more open election process for council vacancies and that all interested persons have an opportunity to be candidates for council positions.
 1. Next council nominating committee is Julie Schmidt, Eric Jackson and Jeff Anderson. We will have two council positions opening in November (Sara Godfrey and Dana Miller).
 2. Discussed process for assuring that these openings are well published to offer maximum opportunity for all interested to apply for the future open council positions.
 - ii. It was agreed by council that a full assessment of the optimal council size should involve our new senior pastor.
 - b. The council will have additional survey follow-up discussions at future meetings.
9. Pastor Mark Bents will be leaving Trinity in June. While we look for a new interim pastor who can meet the needs of Trinity, Lamont will help provide leadership and consultation to our senior staff and will preach this coming Sunday (and additional Sundays through the summer) at both services. The synod office is assessing best options for us and will work with Gail and Doug.
10. Closing prayer, adjournment.

Next Regular Council Meeting - Monday, June 22, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Resolution: We will govern with an emphasis on vision rather than internal preoccupation, strategic leadership more than administrative detail, clear distinction of council, staff and senior pastor roles, collective rather than individual decisions, future rather than past or present, and pro-activity rather than reactivity.