

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING Minutes

January 17, 2021

(conference call)

Call-in #: 1-774-220-4000

Pin ID: 104-1258

Church Council: (X = present): X Joel Arndt, X Justin Arndt, X Larry Ballwahn, X Steve Brandau ? X Lori Brueggen, X Tim Deichler; Angie Gruen, X Bud Osteboe, X John Ornes, Also, X Nalani Bever and X Pastor Morris

The Meeting was called to order by President Justin Arndt at 11:00 am.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Morris

Council meeting minutes of November 29, 2020: Motion to approve as written, John Ornes; Second, Joel Arndt. MC

Financial

- December Financial Report
- 2020 Financial Report
- January Bills

Motion to approve Nalani Bever's oral report (additional written explanation forthcoming), and to pay January Bills made by Larry Ballwahn, Second, John Ornes. MC

Pastor's Report:

Council Meeting--January 17, 2021

* This past Tuesday (January 12), the Wisconsin Council of Churches sponsored a webinar, "Returning to Church 2.0." I have forwarded to Justin the information that was sent to me, but I want to share some important take-aways from the session.

As of January 14, 2021, vaccinations completed in WI = 0.45%, Cases/100K population = 59 (7-day average), Positive COVID tests = 28%. "These are far above the threshold for safe gathering. In light of these statistics, and the new, more highly transmissible COVID variant, which is now circulating in the US, we recommend that churches abstain from gathering in physical space, indoors OR outdoors, at this time."

Other take-aways for me were-- our priority is "life and health of neighbor." Return should not occur "until vaccination rates are well over 50%" (Safest is when vaccination rates are 70-85%+) and "viral transmission in [the]community is very low." It is suggested that we "track COVID cases per 100,000 and the rates of positive tests. Our safer threshold for gathering is when cases are less than 5 per 100,000 population and positive tests less than 10%."

* **Ash Wednesday is one month from today (Wednesday, February 17). Palm Sunday is March 28, and Easter is April 4. I would like to use the ELCA's "Lent 2021 Study," from the "40 Days of Giving" (a free resource), in place of our Wednesday Lenten gatherings (as in year's past). It is 5-weeks long. Each week's study is 2-pages in length and includes questions for reflection. We can send the study via email or regular mail. Participants can work with a partner(s) at home or select a partner(s) to call each week to discuss the study and share their answers to the reflection questions.**

This particular study addresses the topics of hunger, injustice and peace. It includes references to programs in Milwaukee, and Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington, D.C. (which was mentioned in the Jan. 6, 2021, letter of Bishop Leila Ortiz that was sent to the St. Paul email list this morning).

* The "Walk through the Bible," book that I mentioned at our last council meeting, will most likely be the adult study of *Manna and Mercy* by Daniel Ehrlander. I will ask Nalani to order some copies for the church, that the Education Committee and Council members are welcome to peruse. The book is easy to understand. It highlights the importance of many Biblical events from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The study would begin once we are able to return to in-person worship.

Nalani added to the Pastor's Report:

Ron Koebernick's cemetery committal

Dale Graunke's funeral in the sanctuary

Nola Geary gravesite committal which will be held this Tuesday at 11:00 AM

Committee Assignments

- Education Committee (Angie)
- Financial Committee (Tim)
- Property Committee (Steve)
- Social Ministry Committee (Bud)
- Worship Committee (Joel)

No committee Reports.

Old Business

- Every Member Visits: Bud Osteboe resigned the Committee due to his current physical health. Justin Arndt will assume the leadership needed to complete necessary reporting.
- Organ Repair: Nalani reported that the Organ Repair was more involved than originally expected but it was progressing; donations continue. The Council will be kept informed and they are also invited to stop in and review the process.
- Annual Meeting: As stated earlier, it will be held soon after Services are able to be held. Proper notice will be given as per the Constitution.

New Business

- Chicken Dinner (April 11th?) Lori Brueggen moved to schedule a chicken dinner fundraiser for April 11; second, John Ornes. MC
- Permanent Tree; Tabled; Nalani will bring a specific proposal to the next Council meeting.
- Stairs: The cement stairs in front of the Church continue to deteriorate. It will become a safety hazard. Joel Arndt will pursue remedies.
- Financial Implications of having a Pastor without Services: Discussed; no action taken.

Other Business

- Nalani will continue to open the Church for interested congregants on Wednesdays. It will be publicized more. It can be opened at other times if desired/requested.

Adjourned following the Lord's Prayer @ 12 PM

Next Meeting – February 14th, 2021 @ 11 AM

Respectively submitted,

Larry Ballwahn, Council Secretary