

CONGREGATION MEETING NOTES: Sunday, January 21, 2018

CALL TO ORDER: Meeting was called to order with prayer at approximately 10:50 a.m.

WHO IS CHRIST LUTHERAN – Part 1: Pastor Amy Becker-Perez opened our discussion by encouraging us to think bigger picture. Who are we? What are we? Responses included: A place where we teach, preach and share the Gospel; A space for ministry; Fellowship; Care for others and for each other; Reach out; Community.

FINANCIAL UPDATE: Attendees received a summary snapshot of income, regular operating expenses and outstanding invoices as of January 4, 2018. Progress has been made since that report. We have reached our first \$12,000 goal, as outlined in January communications, which was designed to help us make up the approximately \$1000 per month shortfall we have been experiencing. To recap, we had deferred December 31 payroll, which was then paid on January 12. January 15 payroll was paid on time. The original “outstanding bills due” list totaled \$27,340. Through courageous, generous support, that amount dropped to \$8140 by meeting time. (December payroll was paid, a sponsor paid the remaining \$2000 remaining on the AC replacement, \$5000 bank overdraft was covered. Still remaining is parking lot light bill at \$4700, water bill at \$240, reimbursements for purchases at \$1500, credit card Anniversary Dinner deposit at \$500, and snow plowing. Regarding snow plowing – the pending invoices as of 1/21/18 bill break out at \$952 for outstanding invoices from last spring (which were provided to us this fall, and which are deemed lower priority than current invoices), and \$1708 in services from December 8 through January 21. Further information: It costs \$187 per trip to clear and salt the lots and sidewalks (some days require more than one trip). It costs \$75 for a salt-only trip (this may be where we can save some future expense). Further note on expenses: Loan payment/mortgage payment of \$4825 plus approximately \$300 for line-of-credit is due January 25; Next payroll (approximately \$12,000 including taxes) is due January 31. Payroll is our first priority, and the congregation’s first responsibility.

SIDE NOTE RE: BANK MEETING: On January 11, members of Christ Lutheran leadership met with banker Maria Warden at Mundelein Community Bank. She noted that our 5-year note is due in August. She suggested refinancing earlier to lock in rates, which appear to be creeping up. No matter when we refinance, we will need a full appraisal (approximately \$2000). There is option to extend our loan and reduce monthly payments to alleviate some cash-flow pressure. We would also roll in our line of credit (approximately \$50,000), and open a new line. This becomes an option to consider after we have determined our path forward as a congregation. We also discussed processes, account titles, access, etc.

WHO IS CHRIST LUTHERAN – Part 2: Uncomfortable truth is that over the past several months we have not been a self-sustaining ministry. It is a testament to our commitment that we were able to raise \$12000 in over-and-above giving in such a short time. However, we must look at what is actually viable and sustainable for this ministry. While the PreSchool is successful and provides a solid base of resources, in its current state it cannot sustain itself without support from the congregation. Conversely, the congregation in its current state also cannot sustain itself without the PreSchool. To survive – if we decide to continue – we must change. Pastor Amy outlined a **continuum of possibilities**: 1) Just stop now; 2) End well and stop after this PreSchool Year to maintain our commitment to families/community/teachers; 3) Work on Mission/Vision/Strategies/Changes and then re-evaluate/determine our course in near term (next several weeks/months); 4) Win lottery (though even with that, we must know where we are going and what we are doing).

OUR DECISION: (Relating to the continuum outlined above,) Congregation discussion did not support stopping today. We commit to supporting the PreSchool through this school year, doing whatever it takes to maintain programs and pay staff through May end of year. We support the Visioning Team and that process, during which time we will attempt to develop vision, craft viability strategies, gather data, track progress. Throughout the Vision Team work, we will continue to communicate and re-evaluate our current go-forward decision, particularly with regard to specific ministry programs.

KEY POINTS AND NEXT STEPS

- **Commitment to Successful Completion of 2017-18 PreSchool Year:** The Congregation takes responsibility to ensure that payrolls are covered and staff is paid on time.
- **Commitment to May 5 PreSchool Anniversary:** Congregation pledges to support this activity through attendance and preparation support. (Requesting that PreSchool organizers let us know what they need – items for auction, etc.)
- **Potential Commitment to Summer Kids Kamp – final decision January 28:** Council to assess data related to program (staffing levels, payroll, utilities, supplies vs. number of campers required, income) in order to determine go/no go, identify adjustments, and determine metrics/guidelines to use for forecasting purposes. Given the past income/expense levels, the program appeared to be self-sufficient and has contributed to the resources of the ministry, though

analysis has not accounted for variable costs such as additional AC, water, electricity, cleaning. While the initial thought by the congregation is to go forward, Council will further examine the data during the January 28 meeting. (Registration usually opens in late January, but announcements/forms will be held until after meeting.)

- **Future Programming:** Determination depends on our financial progress over the next one to two months.
- **Visioning Team:** This group will look at the big picture of what our mission is and should be – as well as more specific strategies and suggestions for fulfilling that mission. Pastor Amy will check with volunteers to help set up a process and goal list. Meeting time TBD. Thank you to June Moore, Donna Barry, Lois Menis, Ken Pawlak, Natalie Hilberg, Theresa Calabrese, Holly Jones, Allie Menis (nominated in absentia), and Alyssa Dahlke for embracing this task. Others are welcome to join. Meeting schedules will be publicized to facilitate involvement.
- **Council Meetings:** Council will meet January 28 and probably February 4 after worship. Other meetings TBD. All are welcome to sit in. Minutes are posted on the church website and filed in the red binder in the church office.
- **Possible February Congregation Update Meeting (Feb. 11 or 18?):** Anticipate brief after-worship check in, as needed, supported with emailed communication regarding February Payrolls and progress on outstanding invoices.
- **Communication to Congregation:** Suggested made to include some level of financial information in Sunday bulletin so people know the amount required to sustain this ministry. Updates will be provided regarding status of twice-per-month payroll and progress on other outstanding obligations. We will continue efforts to reach out to those who haven't been attending, with several contacts already having been made prior to Christmas. We will continue to keep our non-congregation partners informed – please note that in response to our communications, we have received generous donations and support from all of the groups who use our building.
- **Giving Tree:** We have a history of direct giving through giving trees where people pluck off a bill and pay it. Suggestion to select light pole replacement (total cost \$7700 of which \$4700 remains) with envelopes in smaller amounts – \$10, \$20, etc. Visible and accessible to all who visit our building. Thank you to Penni Sauer for making a Giving Light Pole.
- **Constitution/Bylaws:** After further examination of the previously provided draft, and given our current situation, leadership suggests that the Constitution/Bylaws be tabled until we have a more clear direction for our ministry, as well as a more concrete vision for what our processes will be.
- **Pastoral Time-Away:** As part of our hiring process for the Interim Part-Time Pastor position, Council supports a schedule that allows for prescheduled Sundays away for Pastor Amy Becker-Perez. Note that has become more common practice for part-time pastors, and is particularly helpful with the tasks expected to be completed within a 20 hour week. Rev. Carol Wasemiller will work to provide us with consistent Pulpit Supply.

WORSHIP/CONGREGATION LIFE SCHEDULE:

- Council Meetings – Be prepared to meet Jan. 28 and Feb. 4; additional TBD
- Congregation Meeting – Feb. 11 or 18, TBD as needed
- Ash Wednesday – February 14, 7p worship
- Confirmation – Feb. 25 and TBD
- **Lenten Wednesdays – Feb. 21 & 28, March 7, 14 & 21 – 6p Soup Supper with Presentation from Ministry Partner**
- Palm Sunday – March 25
- Maundy Thursday – March 29, 7p Worship
- Good Friday – March 30, 7p Worship
- Easter Sunday – April 1, 9:30a Worship followed by Potluck Brunch and Children's Activities

ADJOURN: *Motion made by Lois Menis; Seconded by Donna Barry. Adjourned at 12:30 p.m. with The Lord's Prayer*

Thank you for your faithful commitment.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Brandl