



MINUTES (draft 4/18/16)

Christ Lutheran Church and PreSchool Congregational Meeting

Sunday, April 17, 2016

1. Call to Order/Opening Prayer

The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:50 a.m. in the fellowship area with 48 people attending, which was deemed to be a quorum. The group opened with the “Prayer of Thanksgiving for Continued Mission,” found at the beginning of Pastor McGuire’s report (attached).

2. Overview

Lynn Brandl offered an overview of the meeting and our ministry. In general, we want to continue to be a joyful ministry – no guilt! We have been blessed by the ministry of Pastor Padraig McGuire. (Amen!) Our PreSchool ministry is thriving both in terms of programs (expanded spiritual component and expanded programming/students) and support (the ministry has been a tremendous support to the broader efforts of the church). To that end, the PreSchool has also supported the good of the order with the addition of Christine Nitz as part-time office aide (see attachment). From a financial standpoint, we continue to work to be good stewards with what we have been given.

3. Pastor’s Report – “State of the Congregation”

Interim Pastor Padraig McGuire provided a written report (attached) which outlined efforts and reflections. He reports that worship attendance is consistent and slightly up, averaging about 2 people more over the course of the year. He continues to support the children, staff and parents of the PreSchool, including greeting, teaching and leading monthly Chapel Service, which serves students and their care givers. Regarding the Interim Process, Pastor’s role has included determining options for our congregation in terms of our financial capability and a pastor’s responsibility. At this point, Pastor McGuire sees that a part-time role is appropriate for this congregation. Pastor has also worked to learn about our “story” as we begin to clarify our vision. Pastor will continue that dialogue with Cottage Meetings for all interested members. At some point, we will form a Call Committee and develop a Parish Profile document. That said, at this point neither Pastor McGuire nor the Church Council are rushing this process. Rather, we are enjoying the blessings that God has given us through Pastor Padraig’s ministry. Finally, Pastor is looking to provide a three-week catechism course that is open for everyone – for those preparing for confirmation up through those who were confirmed decades ago. He is also planning Lay Reader Training to help prepare our own lay leaders to lead an entire worship without pastoral support. More information, including the prescribed action plan steps for congregations involved in an interim pastoral situation, is in his report.

4. Financial Review

The group reviewed the general budget outline (attached) provided by congregation Vice President Tom Pfenning. We have been running at a break-even pace, thanks to the support of PreSchool and Kids Kamp programs, part-time pastor position (vs. full time), and reduced expenses. The congregation does not quite cover our building’s mortgage payments, with the school ministries covering the balance of the mortgage and all other expenses. The budget plan continues this realistic scenario, including congregational giving at approximately \$50,000 per year (which is markedly different and more realistic than other year’s which would hope for upwards of \$120,000 in giving). While this budget is break even, it does not include possible expenses such as parking lot repairs, sanctuary sliding door replacement, HVAC issues, sound system repairs, sprinkler system upgrades, etc. Items such as these will be communicated to the congregation as issues arise.

MOTION: *Motion made to accept the provided budget by Barb Williams; Second by Lois Menis. Approved*

FURTHER DISCUSSION included options for patching parking lot (Barb Williams will check with her contacts; Kathy Bilodeau also has a contact, Morin Brothers); options for replacing the sliders (our own labor combined with purchased doors and possibly windows instead of doors); and the idea of holding specific fundraisers as needed to accomplish specific goals as needs arise. At this time we also discussed the Organ Project, with that discussion appearing under item 6 below.

5. Church Constitution/Bylaws Project

Group was informed/reminded that we haven’t amended our Constitution and Bylaws for a long time. There is an ELCA model available to use as a starting point. Once a draft is prepared, we should have two congregation meetings in order to fully approve a new constitution and put this bit of housekeeping to bed. It is hoped that some congregation members might be able to provide some help on this process. Barb Williams noted that she would help if someone else would also be on the team with her. Natalie Hilberg’s name was mentioned as a great possibility – both due to her skill set as well as her absence at the meeting due to work obligations. (In good church meeting fashion, the person who misses gets volunteered for a job.)

6. Organ Update

As part of the budget discussion, the status of the digital organ commissioned by the congregation several years ago was revisited. That project had been put on hold during a 2015 meeting of the congregation as we sorted out financial issues and regained our footing. Pastor McGuire has been in contact with the organ company. They have not sold our organ, which was one of our options for the company. That said, Pastor McGuire requested that they complete the organ itself (which we have already paid \$20,000 toward construction). This will probably take several more months, due to their work queue. Once we have an organ, we can decide what to do next. It is expected that installation in our church would still cost somewhere around \$10,000 or less, as we have asked for changes to the contract in order to leave the existing organ pipes (rather than pay to have the installation company remove them), etc. We are also interested in learning more about the sound system required by the organ, since our current sound system may need repairs and upgrades – it would be good if all can be done efficiently and effectively, if we choose to go in that direction. As of now, the congregation has allotted no additional funds toward this project; rather we will get to the next step to complete work already funded and then decide if we try to sell the organ or move ahead to finish the project.

7. Opportunities for Ministries and Each of Us as Ministers

It was reported that we have been approached by other churches to use our facilities. One such permanent request was turned down due to perceived difficulty in creating a solid collaborative partnership. We are currently in discussion with a congregation who will be needing temporary space (summer/fall 2016). This group has been worshipping from approximately 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., so that timing does offer possibilities for easier collaboration. This also may give us an opportunity to reach out into the wider community in ministry and support. We will keep the congregation informed if that partnership looks to be doable for the short term. Also, St. Andrews Lutheran has reached out to us regarding youth efforts. New youth leader Harrison Menis expressed interest in connecting with this or other groups. He is looking at scheduling a laser tag outing for anyone who is interested, with an exact time to be announced soon.

8. Sharing Time

Penni Sauer pointed out that **Lois Menis** was left off of the Volunteer Leaders list. Sincere apologies for this oversight – she is truly a leader for not only Team Menis but for our entire congregation. **Barb Williams** noted an error in her email address, as provided on the agenda. Both mistakes are corrected on the revised Agenda page (attached).

Mir Pawlak noted that Thrivent has informed Caring Hands that they will indeed stop funding projects like this (or at least funding in the current manner). This will ultimately mean a loss of about \$1000 that has gone toward materials. Mir assures us that Caring Hands will go on regardless, and requests that all who can make it please attend the **June 18th Caring Hands Thrivent Event** (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) as this will be the last Thrivent Event. Thrivent members, especially, can earn funds for the group.

Penni Sauer noted that the Bears schedule is out, and based on that the **2nd Annual Empty Bowls Supper will be Sunday, November 6**. Penni is looking for help planning, reaching out to sponsors and groups, and making this event even more powerful. Last year, more than \$1000 was raised for the COOL Food Pantry.

Suggestions were fielded for other fundraisers, including entertainment book sales. It was noted that this group is very generous with time, talent and resources – especially when there is a specific need.

9. Adjourn and Prayer

MOTION: Jodi Jost motioned to adjourn the meeting; Donna Barry seconded and meeting was adjourned with the closing prayer found on Pastor's report followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Thank you to all who were able to attend this meeting and offer your input. Thank you to all who give so generously of your time, talent and resources. Thank you to Pastor Padraig for leading us with a strong-yet-gentle style. Thank you to Tom and Richard for keeping our bills paid. Thank you to Kathy and the staff for an amazing PreSchool ministry. Thank you to all who take on roles for council. Thank you to all who take on tasks of all kinds out of love and commitment to Christ and His church here in Vernon Hills. It is a blessing and a joy to be part of this congregation. Thank you for your compassionate support.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Brandl

