

First Lutheran Church

Church Council Meeting Agenda

March 9, 2021 -7:00 PM

- A. Opening Prayer – Pastor Bill
- B. Bible Study – Pastor Bill
- C. Approve Agenda
- D. Approve Annual Meeting Minutes – January 31, 2021
- E. Approve Church Council Minutes – February 9, 2021
- F. New Business
  - a. Election of Officers
  - b. Property Committee Motion - Rain Gutter and Leaf Guard
  - c. Mortgage Loan Modification Motion
  - d. Carol Reed Bequest Motion
  - e. Motion to appoint Tera Beerman to the Audit Committee
  - f. Appoint Compensation Committee
  - g. Discussion – Is Lead Pastor expected to reside in Lincoln?
- G. Old Business
  - a. Council Retreat March 21
- H. Financial Report
- I. Staff Reports
- J. Open Comments
- K. Closing Prayer

MINUTES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING  
FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
Lincoln, NE  
January 31, 2021  
12:30 p.m.

- I. CALL TO ORDER AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM:  
The 151st Annual Meeting of First Evangelical Lutheran Church was called to order at 1:21 p.m. by President, Mike McDannel. Due to the pandemic, church members were required to register ahead of time for the virtual meeting. It was determined that a quorum (5% of members) was established as 109 members were in the virtual meeting when it was called to order. There were 950 confirmed members as of December 31, 2020. (5% x 950 members = 48 members is a quorum).
- II. OPENING DEVOTIONS: Pastor Stephen Griffith led the opening prayer.
- III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved. It was approved by consensus. Dara Troutman will serve as Parliamentarian for the meeting and Ann Carlson will serve as Recorder.
- IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES AND RATIFICATION OF THE ACTIONS OF THE 150<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING ON JANUARY 20,2020:  
It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved. They were accepted by consensus.
- V. NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS:
  - a. ENDOWMENT FUND BOARD: Kim Cordonier, Council Liaison to the Nominating Committee, read the names of the Endowment Fund Board Nominees. (Vote for 2): Tyler Mainquist, Karen Peppmuller, Tera Beermann and Ann Johnson. No nominations were made from the floor. Mike declared nominations to be closed by unanimous consent.
  - b. NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Kim Cordonier, Council Liaison to the Nominating Committee, read the names of the Nominating Committee Nominees. (Vote for 3): Laura Gaulty, Barb Johnson Frank, Eunice Fischer, Jim Sandman, Kimberle Hall and Andrew Kuhn. No nominations were made from the floor. Mike declared nominations to be closed by unanimous consent.
  - c. SYNOD ASSEMBLY: Kim Cordonier, Council Liaison to the Nominating Committee, read the names of the Synod Assembly Nominees. (Vote for 5 – at least 2 men and 2 women): Linda Rasmussen, Gordon Youngquist, Sharon Seagren, Jeff King, Susan Myren, Bob Michl, Todd Hall, Patrick Hayden-Roy, and Michelle Michl. No nominations were made from the floor. Mike declared nominations to be closed by unanimous consent.

d. CHURCH COUNCIL: Kim Cordonier, Council Liaison to the Nominating Committee, read the names of the Church Council Nominees. (Vote for 5): Lyle Petersen, Amy Tipton, Zachary Schafer, Fred Ohles, Judy Bailey, Rod Johnson, Alexis Sandman, Jennifer Wemhoff, Rebecca Pfabe and Linda Bogenrief. No nominations were made from the floor. Mike declared nominations to be closed by unanimous consent.

VI. 2020 MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Pastor Griffith stated that there were 1,152 baptized members as of December 31, 2020, 950 of whom have been confirmed.

During 2020, there were 7 Baptisms, 7 Confirmations, 1 Wedding and 13 Funerals.

The names of those who entered everlasting peace in 2020 were read: Carol Chappelle, Helen Lyles, Rex Cook, Carol Reed, Lawrence Glaser, Gerald Stamm, Andrew Morrow, Ann Holm, Elva Mares, Howard Johnson, Helen Bartholomew, Ethel Fairchild, and Paul Thoren.

COVID-19 UPDATE: Since the Risk Dial is in the High Orange, the church building will be open to First Lutheran meetings and groups with twelve or fewer people.

At the time determined by the Covid-19 Task Force, worship services will be both live-stream and in-person. A tentative date range to start the in-person worship would be mid to late February. The maximum number of people who can attend services in the sanctuary is 60 people, which is 25% of capacity. If more than 60 people want to attend in person services, the overflow could be seated in the Commons and/or the Activity Center.

There will be a pre-registration to attend services in-person for planning purposes.

Masks and social distancing for in-person services will be required.

Sanitation will occur between and after all worship services. We have received instruction from the manufacturer as to how to sanitize the new pews.

Everyone was encouraged to get their vaccination when it becomes available.

Dr. Bob Rauner emphasized the need for plans to be loosely held such that we can be ready for any changes.

Ash Wednesday Services (February 17) will be held at noon and 6:30 p.m. with Communion and Imposition of Ashes available 45 minutes following each service.

Holden Evening Prayer Lenten Worship will be on Wednesdays at noon and 6:30 p.m.

VII. STAFF AND LEADERSHIP RECOGNITION: Mike stated that there was a lot going on in 2020 with the departure of Pastor Dan Warnes, Pastor Justin Eller, Deacon Sunni Richardson, and Greg Fisher, as well as building construction, the pandemic, and embarking on livestreaming church services.

Mike gave special thanks to the current staff: Pastor Stephen Griffith, Pastor Bill Peterson, Pastor Marsha Anderson, Sharon Hardel, Boyd Bacon, Masako Bacon, Lindsey Boyle, Kathleen Simley, Travis Ferris, Bryan Hanson, and Cyndi Crouse.

Mike introduced Pastor Bill Peterson and Travis Ferris to the congregation.

Pastor Steve highlighted all the duties performed by Cyndi and gave thanks to Kathleen for her work on the 2020 Annual Report Book and Zoom. The Annual Report documents all the work done by members of the Congregation.

Mike thanked the following outgoing leaders:

- Endowment Board: Nick Cordonier and Jon Peppmuller
- Nominating Committee: Terry Kruse, Jan Wigodsky, and Linda Hinkle
- Synod Assembly: Gordon Youngquist, Gordon Wolfe, Amy Tipton, Patrick Hayden-Roy, and Marianne Warnes
- Church Council: Judy Bailey, Dawn Brock, Rebecca Pfabe, Natalie Peters, and Mike McDannel.

Mike thanked those who will continue to serve on Church Council: Denise Mainquist, Dave Pfister, Lisa Rauner, Scott Seebohm, Kim Cordonier, Bill Watts, Judy Batterman, Byron Fischer, Brian Niebuhr, and Tony Anderson.

Mike thanked those who served on the 2020 Nominating Committee: Terry Kruse, Jan Wigodsky, Linda Hinkle, Kristy Williams, Rebecca Simley, and Angie Ripa.

#### VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

##### a. Motion to approve the Ministry Budget for 2021

It was moved by the Congregational Church Council and seconded that the Congregation approve the proposed 2021 budget.

The budget is based on total receipts and expenditures of \$948,100.

Projected offering receipts of \$920,100 represents an increase of 0.7% over 2020 offering receipts of \$913,865.

Total Benevolence/Serving giving of \$147,216 represents 16% of projected offering receipts; with 11.2% to the ELCA and Nebraska Synod (\$103,051) and 4.8% to local benevolences (\$44,165).

Program expenses (Worship, Learning and Hospitality/Care) total \$33,775; represents an increase of 21.0% over 2020 program expenses of \$27,918. Program expenses in 2018 totaled \$37,400.

Support expenses total \$767,109; an increase of 12.6% over 2020 support expenses of \$681,162. Support expenses in 2018 totaled \$763,020. The majority of the 2020 budgeted increase is for compensation and benefits as we work towards full staffing. In addition, our strategy of transferring funds to the Mortgage Transition Fund will continue for the third year.

The motion passed.

##### b. Update on Call Process for Lead Pastor (Steve Eicher, Call Committee Chair)

The Call Committee has been meeting since late October. Their meetings have focused on interview preparations. The Committee did two practice interviews with two volunteer rostered pastors. The Committee got great feedback from both pastors. Phase I of the call process has been wrapped up.

Last week, the Committee received a slate of candidates from the Synod. The Committee met today to come up with some dates and times for the initial interviews. The interviews will be conducted via Zoom and must be completed by the end of February.

At the end of February, the Committee will begin its discernment process. During this process, they will consider if there will be second interviews, either in-person or via Zoom.

This Call Process is for our Lead Pastor. A second search for an associate pastor will begin after the Lead Pastor is selected as the Lead Pastor will want input into the selection.

The Call Process is totally confidential, so no details can be shared outside of the Call Committee.

IX. OLD BUSINESS: None.

X. Q & A: REPORTS OF PRESIDENT, STAFF, COMMITTEES AND BOARDS:

Q: Can we get a better rate on our mortgage on the church building?

A: In November 2018, a 5-year term mortgage was placed at 4.625% with the ELCA Mission Investment Fund. Bryan made some calls this week. Bryan noted that commercial rates (our church building is financed under commercial rates) are different from residential rates. We may be able to get a rate of 4% or 4.1% currently. Fees would be approximately \$10,000 if we moved to a local bank. The ELCA Mission Investment Fund will want to keep our mortgage. Bryan will call them to see if we can get a rate adjustment. Bryan mentioned that we already paid off \$200,000 on our mortgage. Our current outstanding mortgage balance approximates \$1,850,000.

XI. OPEN COMMENT PERIOD:

The Synod Assembly will be held on June 5, 2021 and will be online. Resolutions and Nominations are due March 1. The forms are available online. Pastor Steve can be contacted for the details.

ELECTION RESULTS:

Endowment Fund Board: Tyler Mainquist and Karen Peppmuller.

Nominating Committee: Barb Johnson Frank, Eunice Fischer, and Jim Sandman.

Synod Assembly: Gordon Youngquist, Susan Myren, Bob Michl, Patrick Hayden-Roy, and Michelle Michl.

Church Council: Amy Tipton, Zachary Schafer, Fred Ohles, Rebecca Pfabe and Lyle Petersen.

Pastor Steve said that we are doing “strategic experimentation” as we deal with matters relating to Covid-19. He is grateful that Pastor Bill is on staff.

Dara Troutman thanked everybody for their continual support of Synod Assembly.

Mike thanked everyone who ran for election today.

Mike thanked Kathleen for all the work on Zoom and the Annual Report.

XII. CLOSING PRAYER: Pastor Bill Peterson led the closing prayer.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 2:46.

## Information Items

	Baptized	Confirmed
1. MEMBERSHIP as of February 1, 2021	1148	947
Members received:		
A. by baptism (15 years and under)		
B. by baptism (adult)		
C. transfer from ELCA congregation	2	2
D. other Lutheran		
E. affirmation of faith		
F. transfer from non-Lutheran congregation		
G. other and statistical adjustment		
2. Members Removed		
Members removed:		
A. death	1	1
B. transfer to ELCA congregation		
C. transfer to non-Lutheran congregation		
D. other and statistical adjustment		
MEMBERSHIP as of February 28, 2021	1149	948

### Average Attendance

February	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
	435	481	483	420	446	547	393	485	237	391	103 (C)

### Added:

Baptism:  
 Affirmation:  
 Transfer: Michele Johnson-Clouse, Mackenzie Clouse  
 Other:

### Removed:

Death: Jan Norris  
 Transfer:  
 Dropped Due to Inactivity:  
 Other:

Notes: See the following Communications Report from Kathleen Simley for online Worship participation due to (C)OVID-19. Ash Wednesday 2021 was the beginning of onsite worship with online registration seating.

# First Lutheran Church

## Reach and Impact

February 1-28, 2021

### FACEBOOK

Page Followers	736 (+20*)
Page Likes	634 (+10*)
Post With Highest Reach this Month	"Cartoon" Post - February 15, 2021 (see photo to right) 1,001 people reached / 26 shares

### INSTAGRAM

Followers	176
Posts this Month	26

### EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

Active Subscribers	580 (+2*)
First Things First	54% Average Open Rate (-2%*) 32% Average Click Rate (+2%*)
Sunday Worship	44% Average Open Rate (-2%*) 39% Average Click Rate (+1%*)

### WEBSITE

Homepage	1,073 Total Page Views (-336*) 517 Total New Visitors (+102*)
Entire Website	4,243 Total Page Views (+2,494*) 2,149 Total New Visitors (+1,238*)

\*Compared to previous month

### WORSHIP

Sunday Facebook Livestream	385 Average People Reached (+31*) 165 Average People Engaged (+23)
Ash Wednesday Facebook Stream	284 People Reached and 127 Engaged
Wednesday Lenten Facebook Stream (2/24)	263 People Reached and 115 Engaged
Livestream Web Page	688 Total Page Views (-33*) 318 Actively Engaged (-49*) 118 New Visitors (-5*)



Congregational Council Meeting

First Lutheran Church

February 9, 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dave Pfister, Rebecca Pfabe, Brian Niebuhr, Lisa Rauner, Denise Mainquist, Bill Watts, Judy Batterman, Scott Seebohm, Pastor Steve Griffith, Tony Anderson, Kim Cordonier, Pastor Bill Peterson, Amy Tipton, Lyle Petersen, Fred Ohles, Zach Schafer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Byron Fischer

STAFF PRESENT: Sharon Hardel

MEETING RECORDER: Ann Carlson

- A. OPENING PRAYER: The meeting was called to order at 7:04 with an opening prayer.
- B. INTRODUCTIONS – SPIRITUAL GIFTS: Denise led the discussion among the group.
- C. BIBLE STUDY: Pastor Steve led the discussion of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel, Chapter 3, verses 1-10.
- D. APPROVE CURRENT AGENDA: Pastor Steve stated that item F. b. under New Business, Information Sharing, will be deferred to a future meeting. It was moved and seconded to approve the current agenda with this change. The motion passed.
- E. APPROVE CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES – JANUARY 5, 2021: It was moved and seconded to approve the Church Council Minutes for the meeting on January 5, 2021. Rebecca noticed a typographical error in the spelling of Brian’s name in the last paragraph under New Business, Budget Motions, item E. 1. b. The minutes were approved as corrected.
- F. NEW BUSINESS:
  - a. Property Committee Motion – Rain Gutter and Leaf Guard  
It was moved and seconded that the Lutheran Church Council will authorize the signing of a contract with White Castle Roofing for the installation of gutter the extension (Base Bid A). The Property Committee recommends that Alternate 1B also be approved to install Leaf Guard screen on all gutter on the east, south, and west sides of the church. Scott led the discussion that followed. After a discussion as to the source of the funds for the motion, it was determined that the motion be tabled until the source of the funds can be determined.
  - b. Information Sharing – Pastor Steve – see above – this item was deferred to a future meeting
    1. Results of survey of attitudes in the congregation  
*Per Pastor Steve, there was no survey of the congregation and thus no results to share.*

2. Denominational report about ministries the congregation is involved in and issues that concern the congregation.

*Per Pastor Steve, this would have been an educational time focused on discussion about several questions that are asked on the Congregational Report to ELCA about attitudes of the congregation, ministries we are involved in, and issues that concern us.*

c. Meeting in person – March for elections? Zoom thereafter?

- At the meeting of the Congregational Council in March 2020, voting for the Council's Executive Committee was held in an ecclesiastical manner. Blank papers were distributed to voting members who wrote the names of those who might best serve as President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary. If the current Council members want to vote in the same manner, how can this be done via Zoom? Should there be one in-person meeting for voting with an alternative for those who are not comfortable with meeting in-person? Kathleen Simley may have some ideas as to how this might be accomplished via Zoom as not all Council members are comfortable meeting in-person at this time.
- There were no strong objections for future Council meetings to be held via Zoom.

d. Council/Staff Retreat?

- In the past, Council members met for a retreat to understand more about Council and meet their colleagues. Bill would advocate for a retreat. After discussion, it was determined that Saturdays or Sunday afternoons generally would work for a retreat. Potentially, Kathleen could assist with an orientation and getting acquainted Zoom session. March 21 is a tentative date for the retreat.
- Pastor Steve would like to have the installation of Council members on a Sunday morning. This would be a short recording via Zoom that could be used in the worship service. An e-mail will be sent from Pastor Steve to Council members with tentative dates for the recording.

G. OLD BUSINESS:

a. COVID Task Force – Reopening

- The Ash Wednesday in-person services will be February 17 at noon and 6:30 pm. The noon service will be livestreamed. Communion and the Imposition of Ashes will also be available in-person following the noon service until 1:30 pm and after the evening service until 8:00 pm.
- Holden Evening Prayer services will be held in-person in the Sanctuary during Lent on Wednesdays, February 24-March 24, at noon and 6:30 pm. The services at noon will be livestreamed.
- All in-person services will be limited to 25% capacity in the Sanctuary with overflow seating in the Commons or Activity Center. Registration will be highly

encouraged for planning purposes. Mask wearing and social distancing will be required.

- A determination will be made for in-person Sunday services once an evaluation has been made on the Ash Wednesday and Holden Evening Prayer in-person services.

H. FINANCIAL REPORT: YTD receipts through January 31 were \$5,843 under budget. YTD expenses through January 31 were 13,055 under budget. YTD surplus through January 31 was \$7,212.

Denise noted that the financial report did not show a receipt from Dimensions during the month of January. Kim reported back to the Council via e-mail that the \$2,000 deposit for January was received on February 1.

Kim also reported via e-mail that we would have had a deficit in January without some members making full year contributions. This is not unusual in the first few months of the year with several of our members getting their IRA required minimum distributions.

I. STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor Steve reported that First Lutheran Church received \$250,000 from the Estate of Carol Reed. If the funds are not designated, what does our Constitution say about where the funds go?

We are looking at options for a second camera that could be used in more than one area of the church such as the chapel and the sanctuary.

Pastor Steve and Pastor Bill have met to discuss their designated duties.

Souper Bowl of Caring Drive Through will be Wednesday and Thursday of this week at 4 pm each day.

Valentine's Weekend Events:

- February 13 at 6:30 – Talent Show
- February 14 at 4:00 – Game Night
- February 14 at 7:30 pm – Jazz Online Concert

Travis is off to a great start and is easy to work with. The job was set up as 20 hours/week. He will be working 15 hours/week for 90 days. At that time, there will be an evaluation to ensure that he can get everything done during the fifteen hours.

The commercial cleaning service continues to clean the church.

We have received instructions as to how to clean and sanitize the new pews.

J. OPEN COMMENTS: None

K. CLOSING PRAYER: Pastor Steve led the closing prayer.

L. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 8:38.

## Congregation Council 2021

### First Lutheran Church

Tony Anderson	anthony.anderson@windstream.net
Judy Batterman	judybatterman@gmail.com
Byron Fischer	b_efischer@yahoo.com
Kim Harper	kimharper91@gmail.com
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Zachary Shafer	zschafer3@gmail.com
Amy Tipton	amyeileen36@gmail.com
Bill Watts	wattswmh@gmail.com

#### Recording secretary:

Ann Carlson, lcarlson5@neb.rr.com

#### Staff:

Pastor Steve Griffith	pastorsteve@flclincoln.org
Pastor Bill Peterson	pastorbill@flclincoln.org
Sharon Hardel	sharon@flclincoln.org

MEETING DATE: January 26, 2021 – revised February 23, 2021

SUBJECT: Extend roof gutter on south and west side of Education wing and install leaf guard on selected gutters.

PROPOSED ACTION: The Lutheran Church Council will authorize the signing of a contract with White Castel Roofing for the installation of gutter the extension (Base bid A). The property committee recommends that Alternate 1B also be approved to install leaf guard screen on all gutter on the east, south and west sides of church.

#### BACKGROUND:

The primary reason for acquiring the bids above was to capture the water coming off the roof on the south side of the church and to direct the water to existing area drains for the purpose minimizing the water that could potentially run off our property and onto the property owners located on the south side of the church.

The second thing we wanted to consider was to have gutter guards installed on our gutters to prevent them from becoming clogged up with leaves and pine needles making them ineffective and creating an ongoing maintenance issue for our building superintendent.

**Base Bid A Scope: Extend the guttering on the south side of the education wing** from the existing guttering that stops at the west side of the lower-level entrance to the southwest corner of the building and north approximately 20' on the west side. Bid includes a triangular filler piece to be attached to the sloping fascia to provide a vertical surface to support the new guttering similar to the existing guttering

**Alternate #1B:** Install new **ArmourGuard** gutter guarding on all of the new and existing guttering located on the east, south & west sides of the education wing.

1. The **GutterLock Diamond** guards though it was the least expensive option the product was deemed to be ineffective because it had 1/8" diameter holes that would allow the water to into the gutter that could easily get clogged up with the pine needles that are present on our south property line. The material was also constructed of 1/32" aluminum that seemed to lack structural integrity and could be easily damaged by hail.
2. The **ArmourGuard** guards were more expensive but were made of 1/8" extruded aluminum which was substantially stronger and had a very fine stainless-steel screen that covered the holes that allows the water into the gutter but would also be less prone to getting clogged up with pine needles.
3. The **LeafGuard** system was also a good option, but it required that the existing guttering be removed and replaced with the LeafGuard guttering system with its built-in guarding. We felt this option was too expensive for our application.
4. At the time we were taking bids for this work we also asked for gutter guarding for the existing guttering on the north side of the church and interior courtyard. It was determined that at this time that there wasn't a big enough exposure to leaves and pine needles for the north guttering. Though the interior courtyard does have an exposure to leaves for the trees in the courtyard and

would be a good candidate for gutter guarding, this gutter is more easily accessed do the low height above the ground and could more easily be cleaned periodically unlike the south side of the church.

**First Lutheran Property Committee met on January 26, 2021 and approved a motion** to accept **White Castle Roofing's** bid for **Base Bid A** (extending the guttering on the south side of the church = \$3,420.00) and **Alternate 1B** (installing ArmourGuard guttering on the new and existing guttering on the south side of the church = \$2,588.00) for a total cost of **\$6,0008.00**

**Funding recommendation from property committee and Byron Hanson February 23, 2021:**

**Fund II Maintenance Reserve: \$3420.00**

**Fund I budget repair and maintenance: \$2588.00**

**Total: \$6008.00**

SPONSOR: Property Committee

Norman Kempf, Chairman



MEETING DATE: March 9, 2021

SUBJECT: Mortgage buy-down

PROPOSED ACTION: Pursue mortgage rate modification with ELCA Mission Investment Fund to reduce the interest rate to 3.95% for a buy down fee of \$2,000.

BACKGROUND: Our mortgage with the ELCA Mission Investment Fund was placed in November 2018 at a rate of 4.625%. The interest rate is adjusted every five years based on current market conditions (November 2023). 'Interest only' payments were made during the construction period when loan draws were necessary to pay for construction.

When construction was completed in June 2020 the mortgage totaled \$2,068,000 at which time principal/interest payments began in August 2020 at \$11,726/month.

Commercial loan rates have dropped anywhere from 0.5% to 0.75% since late-2018.

Another option was to move the mortgage to a local bank. A mortgage in the range of 3.8% - 4.1%. with expenses of approximately \$9,000 for an appraisal, title insurance, and loan document filing fees was proposed. These fees were already incurred in 2018 when we went thru the mortgage application process with the ELCA Mission Investment Fund.

- Mortgage loan 'buy-downs' are common practice in periods of declining interest rates. If negotiated well the buy-down fee is considerably less than re-incurring the initial application fees when moving the mortgage to a different lender. In a competitive rate world mortgage companies are incentivized to do this rather than 'losing' their mortgage investment to a competitor.
- The interest reduction of 0.675% (4.625% - 3.95%) on our current mortgage balance of \$1,870,000 will save us \$1,051 interest per month. Thus our \$2,000 'buy-down' fee would be paid back in two months, and the interest savings over the next five years before the rate is re-adjusted will be in excess of \$100,000.
- With this reduced interest rate (in addition to the \$165,000 mortgage pre-payments we have already made) our monthly mortgage payment will be reduced from \$11,726 to \$10,091.

COST: \$2,000.00 from the Capital Campaign fund

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

MEETING DATE: March 9, 2021

SUBJECT: Allocation of funds from Carol Reed Bequest

PROPOSED ACTION: Allocate funds as follows:  
10% to Endowment Fund = \$25,008.85  
Maintenance Reserve Fund = \$75,079.62  
Mortgage Prepayment - \$150,000

BACKGROUND: We received \$250,088.47 in undesignated funds from the Carol Reed Bequest. The Constitution requires that at least 10% of undesignated funds goes into the Endowment Fund. These amounts are suggestions from Bryan Hanson.

Paying down the mortgage will save significant interest dollars. Some additional funds in the Maintenance Reserve Fund helps to ensure we can cover repairs and property maintenance, including insurance deductibles.

COST: No cost to the congregation. This helps us to reduce interest costs.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

**First Lutheran Church  
Council Report for February 2020  
March 9, 2021  
Rev. Stephen Griffith**

**Call Process**

The Call Committee is in the process of interviewing candidates for Senior Pastor.

**Building and Property**

This year we are contracting with J-Tech Construction for snow removal in the parking lot, sidewalks, steps and ramps. During the past month we have had one extraordinarily large snowfall and several other significant storms. As with any new contract, we have had to clarify our needs and expectations, and the company has responded promptly and satisfactorily. In addition, our Building Superintendent, Travis Ferris, helps with some finishing details and clears the walks when we have smaller amounts of snow. As a result of the heavy snowfalls, snow removal expense has been very high.

Steve Lenzen has led a crew painting the metal railings on the staircases to the Lower Level under the skylight and near the Library. The work is nearly complete. They are also painting the east stairway to the Upper Room and the Lower Level classrooms used by Dimensions. Many special thanks to Steve for organizing this!

In December we began contracting with SmithCare for custodial services. Under this contract they employ a custodian to work in the building full-time Monday through Friday. This contract covers cleaning, supplies, and all employment-related costs. We are very satisfied with this arrangement. In addition, Dimensions has decided to use the same company for their cleaning needs.

Travis Ferris, Building Superintendent, is getting acquainted with the building, and is developing a preventative maintenance plan.

**Worship.**

In consultation with our Crisis Management Task Force (a.k.a. COVID Task Force), we held Ash Wednesday services, with a total of 135 attending the two services. Attendees were asked to pre-register, wear face masks and maintain distance from others. Attendees were later sent a survey to gauge their experiences. These responses and an evaluation by staff were positive. On subsequent Wednesdays, attendance at the Holden Evening Prayer services at noon and 6:30 pm has ranged from 30 to 40 at each service.

Based on this experience, and after consulting with the COVID Task Force and Council, we have decided to resume in person worship services on Sundays, beginning March 14. This will be contingent on community rates of spread remaining where they are or declining. We are also allowing committees and small groups (including FaithTrek and Middle and Senior High Learning) to meet at the church if they choose.

On the first week of the Holden services, the Fellowship Committee gave out bagged cookies after each service, in lieu of serving the customary soup supper.

### **Worship Attendance**

Ash Wednesday	Noon – 55	6:30 – 80
February 24	Noon – 41	6:30 – 30
March 3	Noon – 35	6:30 – 41

### **Programming**

In summer 2020, several staff met with Lutheran Family Services to learn about their new TeleHealth service. We have continued that conversation and are developing a plan for First Lutheran to be a site where LFS will deliver services remotely. There will be no cost to the congregation, since LFS will provide the computer and handle all scheduling of appointments. I will report further as plans are completed.

In February we produced two pre-recorded events that premiered online on Valentine's Day weekend. A number of First Lutheran members and friends presented a talent show featuring music, juggling, and comedy. The First Friday Jazz team presented a Valentine's night concert by Camille Metoyer Moten.

### **Reflection**

When I first joined you all at First Lutheran, I had not imagined all that we might accomplish. Neither had I imagined how much I would enjoy working with this congregation. It is a delight to be part of your ministry, and I give thanks to God for having called me to this.

With much love,  
Pastor Steve

## February Council Report

March 3, 2021

It seems like just yesterday that I sat down to write my first Council Report to you. As all of you are aware, February was a very interesting month here in Lincoln and First Lutheran as far as the weather is concerned. Almost every Sunday as we headed to church, we were dealing with snow and cold! As I look out on this beautiful sunny day and watch the snow disappear, it puts me in the mood for spring. It was also great to be able to have in person worship beginning on Ash Wednesday following the COVID 19 guidelines. I could feel the emotions and see it in the eyes of the folks as they came forward for the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion.

This past month I have continued to get to know the staff better and am grateful to be serving with this team in ministry. Along with staff it has been great to meet so many of the volunteers who are always working for the folks of First Lutheran Church and outside the walls of the church.

I have had the opportunity to make a couple of home visits. I am looking forward to being able to make many more visits as people get their vaccinations and are more comfortable having people in their homes. Judy and I had our first vaccination March 3. I have also had the opportunity meet both Pr. Marsha and Harold Sutter in person and appreciate their help with Eucharistic Ministers and all the other things they do for visitation and other ministry in the church. I have been in touch with the Stephens Ministry team and will be meeting with Judy Baily tomorrow learning more about the "Paddler" ministry which is happening here at First. It has also been great to get to know Jim and Connie Kisling, who are checking in weekly with home bound members and are great to keep us updated on them and any pastoral needs they may have. Pastor Steve and I had the funeral of Jan Norris here at the church on February 8, 2021.

We have had three new members who wish to join the church. We are planning new member classes on March 21-28, 2021. If you are aware of any interested folks who would like to become part of our faith community, please let me know.

Lindsey, Sharon, and I are in communication as to what is happening with the Faith Trek and Confirmation. I really appreciate all the enthusiasm and creativity that both of them bring to the church during this pandemic time and as we begin to open up.

We are planning to have a meeting with the Dimensions Pre-school this month. This will be with Michelle and Sarah from Dimensions as well as Lindsey, Cyndi, and I from First. The meeting will be an opportunity to get to know each other better, to visit, and evaluate how the program is going here at First.

Serving by Gods Amazing Grace,

Pastor Bill

Director of Worship and Music  
Masako Bacon  
February, 2021

### Preparation for in-person Worship Services

The main focus of this month was preparing for resuming in-person worship services. Worship and Music Committee reviewed and revised safety protocols. I'm thankful for COVID Task Force and Worship and Music Committee for their leadership to set the guidelines. But most of all, this was an opportunity to appreciate people who serve in worship services as worship assistants. A long time ago, a professor from a Liturgy class taught us "Liturgy' (leitourgia) means 'work for people.' Not words or music themselves, but most importantly works of people seen and unseen forms worship services." I never thought about these words this deeply until today. Our heartfelt thanks go to Harold Sutter, who continuously encourages people to be a part of the liturgy, to Al Williams and Don Westerhold for Usher Team, and to Molly Goninan for Altar Guild.

Musicians: Thanks to these people who enriched our worship experiences.

Sundays:

February 7 Kari & Cora Hoeft, Cherub Choir

February 14 David Pitts, Brass

February 21 Dawn Brock, Gina Seebom, Spirit Ringers

February 28 Claire Ehlers, Grace, Will & Xander Niebuhr, Chorister Choir

Wednesday:

February 24: Pastor Bill Peterson, Betsy Bjerke

### Ash Wednesday Worship Services & Lenten Midweek Service

It was so wonderful to have worship services with people. Many thanks to Brian Neibuhr for expanding the technical capability to view and participate in worship in the Activity Center in real time even when it is not live streamed. We were able to set up for the overflow seating in the Activity Center as the online registration for the evening service came close to capacity. It is good to learn that the registration number and the attendance were amazingly close. The attendees of Lenten Midweek Services are much smaller (like any other years) and more relaxed with distancing and protocol.

### Planning for Spring

\*8:15 & 10:45 am Sunday worship services with a cantor (congregation may hum or very softly sing under proper fitting mask).

\*Activity Center will be ready for potential overflow seating.

\*Small instrumental group will lead the service occasionally (strings/bells/percussion/brass with bell covers).

\*Carefully recorded group music (Adult Choir, Chorister Choir, Cherub Choir, Spirit Ringers) to include remote members and to avoid using the majority of available seating)

HOLY WEEK SERVICES & EASTER (All in the Sanctuary- registration highly recommended)

Palm Sunday (March 28) - Reader's theatre style reading of the Passion of Christ According to St. Mark, palms but no procession.

Maundy Thursday Worship Services (April 1 Noon & 6:30pm) Holy Communion

Good Friday Worship Services (April 2 Noon & 6:30pm) Last Seven Words of Christ, Adoration of Cross

Holy Saturday /Easter Worship Service (April 3, 5:30pm)

Easter Vigil (April 4, 6:00am)

Easter Worship Service (April 1, 8:00, 9:30, 11:00am)

Respectfully submitted,

Soli Deo Gloria

Masako Bacon

## **Sharon Hardel's Report to Council Feb. 10, 2021 – March 9, 2021**

### **Activities This Month:**

I continue to start zoom sessions and meet with the following groups: Coffee Talk (every Monday), Faith to Go (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday), and Gather and Gab (every Thursday).

We added 2 more families to Game Night on February 14 and had 3 breakout rooms. We will play Farkle on March 14. Please join us if you are available.

The High School and Middle School youth met in person on February 21 for some conversation on our Word of the Month: Community and to play some JackBox games. Brian Niebuhr and Alexis Sandman ran the game app with one group while I led the conversation on community with the other and then we switched. The youth also discussed a summer accompaniment trip and have decided to go to Savannah, GA with YouthWorks and we also hope to visit Pastor Justin during our travels. At this point I have 12 middle and high school youth committed to attend and I am seeking one male and one female advisor in addition to myself for the trip.

On February 28 the Synod invited High School Youth to meet and discuss for the next 5 weeks the Synod Lent materials via Zoom. This event was poorly attended...only 3 youth from the whole synod and 2 were from First. I am not sure if the group that put this together will continue the conversations, but our youth seemed to enjoy it so I will continue to invite them until I hear otherwise.

March 7 will be a Zentangle Workshop for adults and youth led by Denise Mainquist. We have 23 Middle School through Adult signed up. The middle and high school youth have the option to meet in person in the activity center and the adults will join us on Zoom. This is a new Spiritual practice that we will learn and I am looking forward to seeing the creativity.

Dinner + Learning students were invited to attend Ash Wednesday in person or via Zoom, most attended via Zoom. On March 3 we tried a hybrid gathering in which 3 youth attended in person and the remaining on Zoom. It was very difficult to get any good conversation going and the youth said they preferred to watch the recorded service via Zoom and then have conversation rather than do the hybrid method. I had hoped we could get together again in person, but at this point families say they are not feeling comfortable to do so. Maybe once it gets warmer and we can meet outside we can have some of our last sessions for this year in person.

Learning Lessons are still being sent out each Sunday for both Middle and High School students. The word of the month for March is Forgiveness. I am grateful that we can meet together now to have some in person conversations about the topic as well.

Staff meetings continue in person and we are discussing plans for Holy Week and Easter as well as reopening for in person worship. I presented a proposal for the ministry team to attend an intergenerational virtual conference in May and we are having conversation about the logistics of that.

I participated in the Book Group on February 22 reading “Behold the Dreamer”. I enjoyed the book and the group discussion. I finished the 4 week course offered by the Synod on “Ministering to Grieving People” and we are discussing how to present what we learned to the Stephen Ministry group and then members of the congregation. Several members from Frist Lutheran took this course.

I was asked to join the Adult Forum committee and will do so at their March 7 meeting.

The 2020 ELCA Youth Network Extravaganza held Feb. 5 – 6 virtually was a great event. The Speakers and workshop leaders adjusted wonderfully to the online format and most sessions were related to handling grief, loss, and change as well as self-care. It was nice to be able to spend the night at Camp Carol Joy Holing with several other youth workers and share our experiences together.

**Projects Working On:**

1. Summer accompaniment trip and VBS
2. Confirmation Dinner + Learning Program and sending out Middle and High School Learning lessons
3. Youth Group Activities for March and April
4. A Walk Through Holy Week for Faith Trek and Middle and High School Learning Families
5. Personal Easter Egg Hunts for Faith Trek Families

Keeping you all in prayer,

Sharon Hardel

# COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

February 1-28, 2021

by Kathleen Simley, Communications Director

February was a busy month with the addition of a mid-week livestream worship service, two online music events and other special projects, along with my normal weekly/monthly activities:

- Daily Facebook and Instagram posts ([www.facebook.com/flclincoln](http://www.facebook.com/flclincoln) and [www.instagram.com/flclincoln](http://www.instagram.com/flclincoln))
- Daily News posts on website ([www.flclincoln.org/news](http://www.flclincoln.org/news))
- Wednesday *First Things First* e-newsletter
- Sunday worship e-newsletter
- Set up and run Sunday livestream worship ([www.flclincoln.org/livestream](http://www.flclincoln.org/livestream))
- *The Voice* newsletter ([www.flclincoln.org/resources](http://www.flclincoln.org/resources))
- Website updates ([www.flclincoln.org](http://www.flclincoln.org))
- Digital sign updates

Additional activities during the month included:

- Livestreamed the memorial service of Jan Norris on February 8.
- Produced the online Valentine's Day Talent Show video which premiered on Facebook on Saturday, February 13. I
- Recorded and produced the online Valentine's Day Jazz Concert featuring Camille Metoyer Moten which premiered on Facebook on Sunday, February 14. The Facebook concert reached 685 people. The recording of the concert was archived on Vimeo and had 84 playbacks.
- Set up online registration through EventBrite for in-person worship, starting with Ash Wednesday worship on February 17.
- Livestreamed the Ash Wednesday worship service and mid-week Lenten service on February 24 (noon only).
- Recorded and produced a "Welcome to First Lutheran" video for the Call Committee to share with final candidates for the Lead Pastor position.
- Updated the Church Council webpage with photos of the 2021 Church Council (visit [www.flclincoln.org/churchcouncil](http://www.flclincoln.org/churchcouncil)).

I have created a special page to my report that gives you a snapshot of our impact and reach during the month of February. A few thoughts I might share with you about the data are:

- I included data about our Instagram page which I haven't done in the past. I will continue to update you monthly on our reach through this social media platform.
- We had a big increase of traffic to our website during the month of February. I can only contribute this to two things: 1) the addition of a second worship service during the week and 2) the Valentine's Day Jazz concert with Camille Metoyer Moten.
- Our Facebook following continues to grow quite a bit each month.
- I expect our livestream following or viewing numbers will decrease once we resume in-person worship on Sundays and as more members become comfortable returning to church.

As I look towards March, my "to do" list includes the following special projects, along with my regular duties:

- Set up registration for in-person worship services on Sunday (beginning March 14, 2021)
- Livestream special worship services during Holy Week, including Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (noon only).
- Continue working with Molly Goninan on the décor and furnishings throughout the church building.
- Work with Brian Niebuhr and Paul Scheel on placement of a TV in the Gathering Area that would feature a welcoming message, information about upcoming events and a daily schedule of activities in the building.
- Work with Brian Niebuhr, Pastor Steve Griffith and Bryan Hanson on securing the funding to purchase additional camera equipment that would allow us to livestream from the Chapel and other areas within the church.
- Work with Pastor Steve Griffith and Council member, Denise Mainquist, in planning the Council Retreat (scheduled for March 20) and assist with technology needs.

## Council Report

February 2021

Lindsey Boyle

- Our February word of the month was community, and weekly lessons and e-mails were sent out to families.
- Sharon and I had a drive thru to pass out Valentine crafts, Lent devotionals, and Mardi Gras supplies. The Fellowship Committee joined us and passed out Valentine treats.
- We hosted a zoom game night on Sunday, February 14 where we played Quixx. This has been a great way for members of different ages to interact.
- I also attended the virtual Youth Extravaganza February 5 & 6. It was a great opportunity to hear how other congregations are engaging kids during the pandemic.

## **Adult Forum Committee Meeting Notes from Tuesday, February 9, 2021**

Present: Gene Brass, Jim Kisling, Brian Niebuhr, Lyle Peterson, Kay Rockwell and Connie Kisling.  
Absent: Patrick Hayden-Roy (Meeting via Zoom)

### **Committee Member Inquiry**

Connie asked the Committee and received suggestions for possible new committee members to join in our monthly planning meetings. We will follow up on these suggestions.

### **Outstanding items and older topics**

- *Institutional or Systemic Racism* – Lyle thought he might have a contact for this topic. Also, after discussion, the Committee thought it would be a good idea to look at the Synod website, or to contact them. This topic would be good to have more than one presentation.
- Confirmation materials – “Doubt & Skepticism” – Gene asked to see this information to prepare for a forum.
- “*Among the Least of These*” – *Digital Humanities Project Offering Living History of Pandemic* – Gene offered to arrange for this topic.
- *The White Christian Nationalist Movement* – Lyle checked into this topic, but the presenter would only be available on a Sunday afternoon or evening. The Committee decided to send a survey to those who are on the Adult Forum mailing list to see their preference instead of the usual morning time only for this topic.

### **March 2021 Schedule**

**March 7** – *Nebraska Strong Recovery Project* – MaKayla Muthersbaugh with Region V Systems

**March 14** – *Family Communication within Interfaith Families* - Dr. Jordan Soliz, Department of Communication Studies, UNL-Lincoln

**March 21** – *Child Abuse* – Katie Edwards, Leon Leader Charge and Lee Paiva

**March 28** – *Video: The Arc of the Universe, as presented by author, Allen Hilton*. Gene Brass is our FLC host presenter

### **2021 Calendar and Scheduling**

- *Real-time stress reaction to racism* – Jim was waiting to hear back from UNL for a sure date.
- *Michael Forsberg, Photographer* – suggested by Tom Riley – Kay. Connie offered dates to Kay.
- *Seniors and Lonliness* – Lyle was going to check with this presenter again.

### **Ideas for Presentations/Other Topics/Comments**

- *Keeler Newsroom Diversity* – suggestion by Kay
- *Neighborhood Watch* – suggestion by Jim

### **Adjourn**

**First Lutheran Church  
Property Committee  
Meeting Minutes February 23, 2021**

Attending: Chair Norman Kempf, Pastor Steve Griffith, Bob Batterman, Steve Lenzen, Rod Johnson, Les Carlson, Richard Draper, Steve Dickey, Scott Seebohm, Steve Doolittle

Meeting time: 7:00 PM with **ZOOM OPTION**

Opening prayer: Norman

Minute taker: Les

January Property Committee (PC) Meeting minutes were approved.

Items added to agenda:

Norman noted a leak in the gym area of the church that began after the first major snowstorm of this year. The leak is not substantial but requires attention which Norman has initiated.

Norman cited an issue with a furnace control panel – The company has ordered the control panel and will replace it. It has not been determined if this panel will be covered under warranty.

There is a leak downstairs in the school, Steve Lenzen showed PC members where the leak is and the extent of the leak.

Norman mentioned a drainage issue on the new roof over the choir loft. There are areas on the roof that hold 1 or 2 inches of water. A determination needs to be made as to if this is a problem. This issue will be covered when a meeting is held with Dave McNeal and Paul Scheel.

Bob Batterman indicated that snow removal after a major snowstorm can result in the elimination of parking spaces. Pastor Steve will discuss this with Cyndi and the snow removal crew.

Agenda items/updates from prior meetings:

1. Norman circulated the list for PC members to volunteer for opening prayers.
2. A revised recommendation for funding of the previously discussed gutter work for council was passed. See attachment.
3. Nothing new regarding sidewalk replacement. This item has been tabled indefinitely.

4. Installing a handrail for the exit from the school's lower level was tabled until the PC receives a request from the school regarding the need for a handrail.
5. Steve Lenzen is moving forward with painting handrails and noted that multiple coats are required. He also provided guidance/advice for anyone desiring to paint handrails themselves.
6. Purchasing a small trailer for the church was discussed. Scott Seebohm owns such a trailer and is willing to loan it to the church. The property committee agreed that a trailer is not needed at this time.
7. Norman informed the group that during the renovation virtually all doors with numbers had been discarded and that the numbers on the doors had not been saved. Numbers are needed for safety issues, e.g., in case police or emergency people are called to the church they can determine which door is closest to the problem. The PC moved to obtain new numbers and install them where appropriate on the new doors.
8. Toby Duncan has reported that he has finally received an engineering report from the insurance company in which they have accepted the report of damage to flashings and valleys. He now needs to work on the damage to the tiles. In reality flashings and valleys can not be repaired with replacing the tiles on the roof.
9. Norman asked Pastor Steve to initiate a meeting with Dave McNeal and Paul Scheel regarding the punch list.
10. Norman and Les will continue to serve as chairman and secretary, respectively for 2021.

Prayer for March: Les  
Note taker: Les