

First Lutheran Church

Church Council Meeting Agenda

April 13, 2021 -7:00 PM

- A. Opening Prayer and Bible Study – Rebecca Pfabe
- B. Approve Agenda
- C. Approve Church Council Minutes – March 9, 2021
- D. New Business
 - a. Follow-up Capitol Campaign Pledge Drive Motion
- E. Old Business
 - a. Carol Reed Bequest Motion
 - b. Overview of Standing Rules
- F. Financial Report
- G. Staff Reports
- H. Open Comments
- I. Executive Session
- J. Closing Prayer – Rebecca Pfabe

Information Items

	Baptized	Confirmed	
1. MEMBERSHIP as of March 1, 2021	1149	948	Members received:
A. by baptism (15 years and under)			
B. by baptism (adult)			
C. transfer from ELCA congregation			
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 March 31, 2021	1148	947
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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>
	600	580	654	569	527	698	608	594	463	393	89(C)

Added:

Baptism:
 Affirmation:
 Transfer:
 Other:

Removed:

Death: Donna Aschwege
 Transfer:
 Dropped Due to Inactivity:
 Other:

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

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

March 2021

by Kathleen Simley, Communications Director

March did not disappoint with the magnitude of work to be accomplished. With in-person worship resuming on Sundays, the addition of mid-week Lenten services in-person and livestreamed and Holy Week worship services at the end of the month, along with my regular weekly responsibilities, it was a whirlwind of activities all month long.

My weekly responsibilities this month included:

- Daily Facebook and Instagram posts (www.facebook.com/flclincoln and www.instagram.com/flclincoln)
- Daily News posts on website (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)
- *The Voice* newsletter (www.flclincoln.org/resources)
- Website updates (www.flclincoln.org)
- Digital sign updates

Additional activities and special projects during the month included:

- Livestreamed Mid-Week Lenten Services on Wednesdays at Noon.
- Set up and monitor online registration for Mid-Week Lenten Services and weekly Sunday worship.
- Collaborated with Pastor Steve in creating the Council Retreat program and power point.
- Collaborated with Pastor Bill in creating materials for the New Member Orientation session, including the power point. I also facilitated the session with Pastor Bill and Pastor Steve on March 28.
- Premiered the [“Living Into Our Welcome Statement” video](#) with the Call Committee to share with final candidates for the Lead Pastor position and with Council members at their retreat on March 21.
- Commissioned Barb Johnson Frank to write an article, based on interviews I conducted with First members, Lee and Kay Rockwell, and Shadrack Matuku Musyoka, a native of Kenya and friend of the Rockwells. The story focused on how a simple invitation to

Shadrack to participate in our virtual Adult Forum sessions on Sunday mornings connected Shadrack, his family and work colleagues, to our ministries at First Lutheran. It was the lead story in the [April edition of *The Voice*](#) and an edited version of it was published in the April 3 edition of the Lincoln Journal Star. I am currently in contact with the Nebraska Synod and the ELCA Living Lutheran magazine for future publication of the story as well.

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

- As I expected, our livestream following and viewing dropped in March with in-person worship resuming. I expect to see a gradual drop in viewership over the next month or two as more people return to in-person worship.
- This month I included in my Impact and Reach report, the countries and states where individuals have engaged with our worship services. We have gone global in our outreach!
- Our Facebook following continues to grow each month.

As I look towards April, my “to do” list includes the following special projects, along with my regular duties:

- 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.
- Continue working 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.
- Continue working 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.
- Begin the process of building a Communications Support team to include photographers, videographers, writers, graphic designers, livestreamers and other tech gurus to support the increasing work demand of my position, but to also utilize the God-given talents of lay members in our communication efforts.
- Create a Communications “tutorial” video for Council members as part of your ongoing learning and development.

First Lutheran Church

Reach and Impact

March 1-31, 2021

FACEBOOK

Page Followers	744 (+8*)
Page Likes	637 (+3*)
Post With Highest Reach this Month	"Announcement of ELVA as Our New Printer Name" Post - March 3, 2021 828 people reached

INSTAGRAM

Followers	178 (+2*)
Posts this Month	19

EMAIL CAMPAIGNS

Active Subscribers	588 (+8*)
First Things First	53% Average Open Rate (-1%*) 32% Average Click Rate (0%*)
Sunday Worship	42% Average Open Rate (-2%*) 38% Average Click Rate (-1%*)

WEBSITE

Homepage	1,646 Total Page Views (+573*) 493 Total New Visitors (-24*)
Entire Website	5,224 Total Page Views (+981*) 961 Total New Visitors (-1,188*)

WORSHIP

Sunday Facebook Livestream	358 Average People Reached (-27*) 144 Average People Engaged (-21*)
Wednesday Lenten Facebook Stream (3/3, 3/10, 3/17 & 3/24)	227 Average People Reached and 67 Engaged
Countries & States Where Individuals Were Engaged With Our Worship Services	England, Bahia, Tokyo, WI, SD, IL, MO, MT, TX, MN, PA, IA, KS, CO, MA, ND, AZ, AL, NE
Livestream Web Page	568 Total Page Views (-120*) 274 Actively Engaged (-44*) 73 New Visitors (-45*)



*Compared to previous month

Congregational Council Meeting

First Lutheran Church

March 9, 2021

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Sharon Hardel, Kathleen Simley

MEETING RECORDER: Ann Carlson

- A. OPENING PRAYER: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 with an opening prayer given by Pastor Bill.
- B. BIBLE STUDY: Pastor Bill led the discussion of Colossians, Chapter 2. Group members also told stories of significant friends in their lives.
- C. APPROVE CURRENT AGENDA: It was moved and seconded to approve the current agenda. The motion passed.
- D. APPROVE ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 31, 2021: It was moved and seconded to approve the Annual Meeting Minutes. The motion passed.
- E. APPROVE CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES – FEBRUARY 9, 2021: It was moved and seconded to approve the Church Council Minutes from the meeting on February 9, 2021. The motion passed.
- F. NEW BUSINESS:
 - a. Election of Officers
Kathleen Simley joined the meeting to assist with the voting via Zoom. The voting was done in an Ecclesiastical manner whereby Council members nominated individuals for each office and voting was done on the list of Council members who consented to serve in that office. The results were as follows: President, Denise Mainquist; Vice President, Scott Seebom; Secretary, Rebecca Pfabe; Treasurer, Brian Niebuhr.
 - b. Property Committee Motion – Rain Gutter and Leaf Guard
It was moved by the Property Committee 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 gutters on the east, south and west sides of the church. Discussion followed.

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 Scope: Install new ArmourGuard gutter guarding on all the new and existing guttering located on the east, south and west sides of the education wing.

The First Lutheran Property Committee met on January 26, 2021 and approved a motion to accept White Castle Roofing's bid for Base Bid A in the amount of \$3,420.00 and Alternate 1B in the amount of \$2,588.00 for a total cost of \$6,008.00.

Funding recommendation from the Property Committee and Bryan Hanson on February 23, 2021 was to take \$3,420.00 from Fund II Maintenance Reserve and \$2,588.00 from Fund I Budget Repair and Maintenance.

This motion had been tabled last month as Council wanted to know the source of the funds before giving their approval. The motion passed.

c. Mortgage Loan Modification Motion

It was moved by the Executive Committee and seconded to 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. Discussion followed.

- Our mortgage with the ELCA Mission Investment Fund was placed in November 2018 at a rate of 4.625%.
- Commercial loan rates have dropped anywhere from .5% to .75% since late 2018.
- Moving the mortgage to a local bank was also considered, but the fees for an appraisal, title insurance and loan document filing fees would approximate \$9,000.
- The interest rate reduction of .675% 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.
- The \$2,000 will be paid from the Capital Campaign Fund.

The motion passed.

d. Carol Reed Bequest Motion

It was moved by the Executive Committee and seconded to allocate the bequest from Carol Reed's Estate as follows:

10% to Endowment Fund = \$25,008.85

Maintenance Reserve Fund = \$75,079.62

Mortgage Prepayment = \$150,000.00

Discussion followed.

- The constitution requires that at least 10% of undesignated funds goes into the Endowment Fund.
- Bryan Hanson suggested the allocation made in the motion.
- Can some of the funds be allocated to a special project?
- Can we leave the funds as undesignated?
- Carol was supportive of the Endowment Board as she was an educator. Should the amount to the Endowment Fund be increased?

It was moved and seconded to table the motion until the next meeting. The motion to table the motion passed.

- e. Motion to appoint Tera Beermann to the Audit Committee

It was moved and seconded to appoint Tera Beermann to the Audit Committee. The motion passed.

- f. Appoint Compensation Committee

Pastor Steve, Fred Ohles and Steve Eicher were appointed to the Compensation Committee.

- g. Discussion – is Lead Pastor expected to reside in Lincoln? Discussion followed.

- What is the definition of the area? Within 100 miles? In Lancaster County? 15-20 miles from Lincoln?
- A pastor should live in the community and be a part of the community.
- The pastor should be considered before defining miles or an area.
- This was a hypothetical question posed by the Call Committee. The Call Committee asked for guidance in case this question arises.

G. OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Council Retreat March 21

The Council Retreat will be March 21 from 1:00-3:00 via Zoom. During the retreat, the following will be discussed:

- Staff and their roles
- Call Committee
- Constitution
- Video created by the Call Committee
- Welcome Statement
- Leadership Role of Council

H. FINANCIAL REPORT:

- YTD receipts through February 28 were \$10,394 under budget; YTD expenditures through February 28 were \$18,279 under budget; YTD surplus through February 28 was \$7,885.
- A new money market account was opened at Frontier Bank to take advantage of a much better interest rates (US Bank .01% vs. Frontier Bank .55%)

- Pastor Justin sold his house in Lincoln and paid in full the remaining balance of his housing loan.
- Bryan Hanson completed the audit of the 2019 and 2020 Endowment Fund Financial records with no findings to report.

I. STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor Bill

- A new member class will begin on March 28.
- Three Lutherans are transferring to our congregation – one wants to worship with us before commitment.

Pastor Steve

- In-person worship will begin on March 14. Services will be at 8:15am and 10:45am. At noon, there will be a Nuer meeting in the Chapel.
- On March 21, Faith Trek families will meet in-person between services.
- There will be a full line up of services during Holy Week. At 25% capacity, there can be 75-80 folks in the sanctuary. If needed, seating can be added in the Activity Center. The Covid-19 Task Force thinks 25% capacity is right for now.
- Saturday evening services that have been held in the Chapel will be moved to the sanctuary due to constraints with Covid-19.
- Communion will be held at the end of every service (2 stations).
- Registration to attend Palm Sunday and Easter services opens on March 21.

J. OPEN COMMENTS:

- Tony asked if staff could opt out of attending in-person services. Pastor Steve wants every family to make the decision that is best for them. Staff can opt out of attending in-person services.
- Installation of Council and the Executive Committee will be in a clip that will be completed via Zoom. Pastor Steve will send out tentative dates for the Zoom clip. Potentially, the clip could be done at the March 21 Council Retreat.

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

L. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:03.

MEETING DATE: April 13, 2021

SUBJECT: Follow-up capital campaign pledge drive

PROPOSED ACTION: Conduct a follow-up, three-year capital campaign pledge drive led by Lee Rockwell and Judy Bailey. The pledge drive would take place during late spring and summer 2021.

BACKGROUND: Our initial capital campaign pledge drive began in 2nd quarter 2018 and for the most part will end in 3rd quarter 2021 (with the exception of a \$50,000 contribution scheduled for August 2022).

Status of initial pledge drive (as of March 31, 2021):

\$2,740,093	267 member pledges in 2 nd quarter 2018		
+ \$101,905	plus -- contributions from pledgers in excess of pledges		
+ \$45,808	plus -- contributions from members who did not pledge		
- (\$58,902)	less -- <u>projected defaults (pledgers that have passed away or transferred)</u>		
\$2,828,904	projected contributions from initial pledge drive		
\$2,600,461	received to-date	92% of projected contributions	
\$ 228,443	projected contributions remaining		2021 \$178,443
			2022 \$ 50,000

After completion of construction in June 2020 the mortgage balance was \$2,068,000 with a monthly payment of \$11,726 beginning August 2020. Eight mortgage payments have been made to-date in addition to \$165,000 pre-payments made with excess capital campaign funds reducing the mortgage balance to \$1,870,535. The mortgage interest rate was recently re-negotiated (from 4.625% to 3.95%) reducing the monthly payment to \$10,091.

From the beginning of the building project, we have openly discussed the need for a follow-up “soft” three-year capital campaign pledge drive, similar to what was done with the Activity Center building project twenty years ago. This pledge drive would be accomplished internally without using an outside fund-raising firm.

Contributions received from this follow-up pledge drive thru 2024 will be used to make the monthly mortgage payments, with excess funds used as mortgage pre-payments. This approach will allow us to continue driving the monthly mortgage payment down as low as possible before we begin to include the payments in our 2025 operating budget.

Also, during this six-year pledge period (2018-2024) we will accumulate a Mortgage Transition Fund thru a temporary reduction in the benevolence section of our operating budget to assist with making the mortgage payments in 2025 and beyond, only as needed by the operating budget.

Suggested timeline for follow-up pledge drive:

April 2021	discussion with Council to receive their input/feedback/approval to proceed
May	send letter to members along with information in the Voice newsletter
June	informational meetings (in-person and zoom), Voice newsletter, and pledge sign-up

Lee Rockwell, Judy Bailey and Bryan Hanson have expressed interest in leading a steering/advisory committee for this follow-up capital campaign pledge drive.

COST: No expenses will be incurred

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

MEETING DATE: April 13, 2021

SUBJECT: Allocation of funds from Carol Reed Bequest

PROPOSED ACTION: Allocate funds as follows:
Endowment Fund = \$50, 0000
Undesignated fund 2 = \$50,088.47
Mortgage Prepayment = \$150,0000

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. This proposal puts approximately 20% each into the endowment fund and fund 2 as undesignated.

Paying down the mortgage will save significant interest dollars. Some additional funds will remain undesignated to use for future projects.

COST: No cost to the congregation.

SPONSOR: Executive Committee

**First Lutheran Church
Council Report for March 2021
April 13, 2021
Rev. Stephen Griffith**

Worship and Prayer

On March 14 we resumed Sunday worship in the Sanctuary after a full year of online services because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although there was no restriction from the state or county Health Department, attendance is limited to 25% to maintain 6-foot distancing between persons or households. The capacity of the Sanctuary, including the new Choir area, is about 320, so we aim to hold the number of people in the Sanctuary to approximately 80. The virus is spread through the air and breathing, so face masks are required, and attendees are asked not to sing aloud. The new ventilation system provides excellent air-exchange rates, which is very beneficial.

The weekly Lenten services using “Holden Evening Prayer” drew modest-sized but appreciative crowds on Wednesdays.

I am very grateful to the staff for helping to plan for the health and safety of the congregation. Even more, I thank the many volunteers – worship assistants, musicians, greeters, and ushers – who give their time to help worship happen, and who take seriously their ministry of hospitality and service. Without them, Sunday worship and the Holy Week and Easter services would not be possible.

Learning

FaithTrek learners and families have begun to gather hesitantly at the church on Sundays once again. Many families have chosen not to return yet and continue to connect virtually through activities on the FaithTrek app and email contact. As families and children start to receive the vaccine through spring and summer, we anticipate that more will return to participating in classes and activities at the church.

Serving

In March we learned that *Living Lutheran* magazine would spotlight First’s very successful Gifts of Hope market, which was conducted entirely online in December. Despite the pandemic and having no opportunity for people to shop in person as in past years, the market raised a record amount to support nine different benevolences. The magazine lauded the congregation for this creative response the situation in this difficult year. Thanks again to Barb Johnson Frank for heading this effort.

We are preparing to host a TeleHealth site operated by Lutheran Family Services. In this arrangement clients will be able to access social services and mental health services online, using a computer provided by LFS. All screening, assessment and scheduling are handled by LFS, and services will be provided only during hours we designate. First Lutheran staff and volunteers will not be involved in providing services, and there is not cost to the church.

Call Process

The Call Committee, chaired by Steve Eicher, has been interviewing candidates for Senior Pastor. They have met by Zoom frequently, interviewing some candidates multiple times and spending time discerning together. Their working is progressing well.

Crisis Management/COVID Task Force

The task force meets by Zoom every two weeks to receive the most recent public health information and discuss our practices and procedures as we slowly resume congregational activities in the building. During March, the number of cases declined then plateaued. In the past two weeks there has been a slight increase in the number of new cases, and experts are concerned that variant strains of the disease may take hold before enough people are vaccinated to provide protection. We are monitoring the situation closely and will continue to seek their guidance. For the time being, they recommend that we continue to limit attendance in small groups to 12 or fewer, and limit worship to 25% of capacity in order to meet CDC guidelines and maintain social distancing.

Building and Property

In heavy rains early in the month we experienced leaks in the Sanctuary and in a Lower Level classroom. We also experienced overflowing toilets caused by a sewer back up not related to the rains.

The Property Committee is inspecting the Sanctuary roof and areas where the new construction joins the existing roof to determine the cause and possible solutions. In the south wing they discovered an area which had not been properly sealed during construction, allowing snow melt and rainwater to run down the foundation and seep through the wall. The project manager has agreed to correct the problem. There has been no structural damage, and Travis Ferris will repair the minor cosmetic damage in the affected room. The Committee arranged for a visual inspection of the sewer line. This identified damage on another owner's property caused by a landscaping contractor. This not First Lutheran's responsibility, and it is being repaired.

Staffing

Our present arrangements with SmithCare for cleaning services and Travis Ferris as part-time Building Superintendent are working well. We will continue this approach for the time being, and review again in June.

Reflection

It is spring! We have had a rich and reflective Lenten season, and Easter celebrations brought much joy as we gathered in the Sanctuary once again. Many members report their excitement at receiving their vaccinations. The congregation is thriving. Thanks be to God!

With much love,
Pastor Steve

March Council Report

April 7, 2021

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN Indeed! Alleluia!

What a wonderful and special Lenten Season with a meaningful Holy Week and so great to once again celebrate the Resurrection on Easter Sunday with four services. It was wonderful to have in person worship begin and for me to get to know more of the members of First Lutheran Church. I was amazed at how many people volunteered to make these service happen! The fellowship committee once again did a bang up job with the scavenger hunt and what fun our grandchildren had when the youth group provided an egg hunt in our yard for them. The music was joyous and beautiful! It was also very gratifying to work with such a wonderful staff who were busy doing their respective jobs but also helping each other out whenever necessary. We are surely blest!

I have had an opportunity to make more home visits. I have been in touch with the Stephens Ministry group and looking forward to some in person time with the "Paddlers" groups this month. Jim and Connie Kisling check in weekly with many of our members. We had a Celebration of life service for Donn Aschwege on March 25, 2021 at the church.

On March 19, 2021 we had an advisory board meeting with Michelle Zimmer and Sara Enevoldson from the Dimension . Barb Monson, Lindsey Boyle, and I represented First Luther. Steve Eicher and Donnice Kasper were unable to attend. We discussed various issues and concerns that had taken place during this past year since opening. I found it to be a very helpful and positive meeting. We are going to meet every two months at the present. Our next meeting will be on May 12 here at the church.

On Palm Sunday afternoon we had a new and prospective member orientation by Zoom with four people. We will be welcoming three new members on April 11, 2021, at the 10:45 worship. The other prospective member wants to worship in person for a while. This will give him an opportunity to discern and be a part of the worship experiences before making his decision.

Serving by God's Amazing Grace,

Pastor Bill

Director of Worship and Music
Masako Bacon
March, 2021

Sunday Musicians
Live-Stream only

March 7 Ann Nitzel, Jazz Team (Luke Anderson, Trevor Culbertson, Alex Hinton,
Hannah Monson, Chris Simley)

In-Person Worship Begins

March 14 8:15 - Anna Kruse, Kristi Fisher, Adult Choir (pre-recorded)
10:45 - Anna Kruse, Betsy Bjerke, Adult Choir (pre-recorded)

March 21 8:15- David Pitts, Spirit Ringers (pre-recorded)
10:45 - Martha Tanner, Spirit Ringers (pre-recorded)

March 28 (Palm Sunday)
8:15 - Dawn Brock, Gina Seebohm, Chorister Orff Ensemble (pre-recorded)
10:45 - Kari & Cora Hoeft, Chorister Orff Ensemble (pre-recorded)

Wednesday Musicians

March 3 Noon - Gordon Youngquist, Sharon Hardel
6:30pm- Erin Pfister, Megan Lyons

March 10 Pastor Steve Griffith, Carla Osberg

March 17 Noon - Gordon Youngquist, Carla Osberg
6:30pm - Ann Nitzel, Martha Tanner

March 24 Noon - Erin Niebuhr, Kari Hoeft
6:30pm - Rebecca Simley, Boyd Bacon

Overview

After a whole year, we were able to start gathering in-person. Taking a step of starting the mid-week worship services before the Sunday worship allowed us to evaluate and improve the preparations. This version of worship - faithfully following the COVID protocol - required many adjustments. The church families and some visitors are very patient for this restricted version of worship services. We are grateful for the people who keep serving as worship assistants. Especially Ushers have key roles to reinforce "safe distancing." We are so grateful for the people who step up to take extra measures to create a "safe environment" for worship. Deep appreciation goes to Al Williams and Don Westerhold for their leadership.

COVID Task Force encourages us to keep following the protocol until the number of cases reduces much less. As difficult as it is, we will continue to speak/respond softly and humming.

Respectfully submitted,
Soli Deo Gloria
Masako Bacon

Sharon Hardel's Report to Council March 10, 2021 – April 13, 2021

Activities This Month:

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

We are still holding a monthly game night. March 14th we played Farkel and on April 11 we will learn a new game Bloom. Families are enjoying getting to know each other and have some fun on a Sunday afternoon.

Lindsey and I participated in a webinar led by Vibrant Faith entitled "Religious Parenting" with Dr. Christian Smith. It was helpful and gave us a lot of things to consider as we develop programs.

The High School and Middle School youth met in person on March 21 for some conversation on our Word of the Month: Forgiveness. We looked at the Forgiveness Project and read several remarkable stories of forgiveness and talked about benefits to forgiving instead of letting anger and resentment build up inside us. After our conversation we filled Easter eggs to hide for our Faith Trek children at their homes. We ended up filling 26 dozen eggs with candy and trinkets. Youth signed up to hide eggs for the families on March 27, 28 and April 3. We had a lot of fun and the families really enjoyed the hunts as well. After the egg stuffing was finished those going on the summer trip to Savannah stayed for an introduction to the trip and we decided to fly. We will meet Pastor Justin in Atlanta and stay at his congregation on July 3 and worship with them on July 4 before heading to Savannah. On March 28 the middle and high school youth gathered to watch "The End of the Spear" which has a good message on forgiveness but we also looked at what it means to "spread the Gospel" to other tribes and nations and to not assume we know best and that the other doesn't know God.

Dinner + Learning is continuing on Zoom. We met March 31 and began our topic of Faith Struggles. I asked the parents and youth to let me know what things they struggle with and these were the top 3 – 4 items: Priorities, how many church activities do we have to participate in, LGBTQIA+ and Gender Equality issues and how our faith guides us in these social issues. These are tough topics and we are struggling together as there are no easy answers. On April 14 a friend of mine who is a 6th and 7th grade science teacher in Philadelphia, and identifies as trans/non-binary and uses they/them/theirs pronoun will be our guest speaker and will share their faith struggles and journey as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Our last gathering for this spring will be on May 12 and I plan to meet in person with the group.

Learning Lessons are still being sent out each Sunday for both Middle and High School students. The word of the month for April is Ministry.

I participated in the Book Group on March 22 reading "The Dutch House". And continue participating as a Stephen Minister so attend supervision group twice a month but do not yet have a care receiver.

Staff meetings and Covid task force meetings continue. I also attended the Mayor's Prayer Breakfast on April 7. Kent and I will also be part of the group representing First Lutheran at the Heart of Camp Gala Fundraiser for Camp Carol Joy Holling on April 10.

Kent and I are taking a vacation and will be out of town from Friday April 16 – Saturday April 24.

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 April and May
4. Baccalaureate Service for our graduating High School Seniors

Keeping you all in prayer,

Sharon Hardel

Lindsey Boyle

March 2021

Council Report

- It was wonderful to meet in-person for FaithTrek on March 21. Five families attended, and we split into two groups while we talked about forgiveness and completed a craft. We used the upper room and activity center and kept family groups together to keep the number of households mixed lower. The kids enjoyed being together, and one little girl said, "Why was it so short?"
- Sharon and I invited families to join us in the activity center on March 28 to walk through the Resurrection story using objects and scriptures. We had four families join.
- In March I also spoke with the Faith to Go group and enjoyed getting to know some of First Lutheran's members.
- Pastor Bill and I met with two staff members from Dimensions along with Barb Monson and discussed how we can best partner going forward.

Blessings,

Lindsey Boyle

First Lutheran Church
Executive Committee Meeting Agenda
March 2, 2021

Present: Pastor Steve, Kim Cordonier, Pastor Bill and Denise Mainquist. Bryan Hanson presented financial information for the first part of the meeting.

- A. Opening Prayer by Pastor Steve.
- B. Carol Reed bequests – 10% of undesignated funds from bequests are to go to the Endowment Fund, as noted in the Constitution. The amount to the Endowment Fund would be \$25,000. Recommendations for distribution of the remaining funds is suggested for the Maintenance Reserve Fund (\$75,000) and \$150,000 toward mortgage prepayment.
- C. Follow up capital campaign pledge drive – The council should discuss plans for another capital funds drive. A small committee of 2-3 individuals should be appointed. Timing of the pledge drive should be discussed. Is May still a good time to kick off the drive, or do we want to wait until we have a new lead pastor. We currently have 12-months of mortgage payments in reserve and some members continue to make payments for capital funds.
- D. Mortgage rate adjustment – A motion to pay a \$2,000 buy-down fee to reduce the mortgage loan rate to 3.95% (from 4.26%) will be presented to Council.
- E. New money market acct at Frontier bank opened – Bryan was able to find a better interest rate for money in a money market account. The Council will be informed of this change.
- F. Audit of 2019-2020 Endowment Board records completed – Bryan completed an audit covering two years of records. There were no findings. The Council will be informed of of this audit.
- G. Audit Committee appointment – Kim has a motion to appoint Tera Beerman to audit committee. This is ready to go to Council.
- H. Offer AFLAC policies to staff – Some on staff have supplemental policies through AFLAC and these policies may be offered to other staff. The policies would be paid for via payroll deduction and there is no cost to the church. This would not be offered until after Easter. Pastor Steve will inform the Council if this occurs.
- I. Property Committee motion for gutter projects - This motion will be forwarded to Council. Funds for the project will come out of the Maintenance Reserve fund.
- J. Report on Ash Wednesday services – Services on Ash Wednesday were well attended and processes for keeping COVID transmission risk low work well. The Lenten services on February 24 had approximately 35 at the noon service and 25 at the evening service.

- K. Reopening worship – March 14 was determined as the best date to begin offering in-person services so there is time to recruit worship volunteers and musicians for the second service and to ensure sign up processes for attendees are in place.
- L. Council Retreat will be March 21 in the afternoon. Pastor Bill, Pastor Steve, Kathleen and Denise met to plan the retreat which will cover roles, expectations, guiding documents and the website.
- M. Council Installation & photo – Council installation will be planned after Officers are elected. Kathleen has requested photos of each Council member for the website.
- N. Election of Officers – This will be done via online Ecclesiastical voting at the March 9 Council meeting. Kathleen is setting up ballots.
- O. Compensation Committee – The Compensation Committee was not appointed in 2020 and did not meet. We have some personnel situations where a Compensation Committee should weigh in. The Council will be asked to appoint a compensation committee at the March 9 meeting.
- P. Personnel matters were discussed.

First Lutheran Church
Executive Committee Minutes

6 April 2021

Present: Denise Mainquist, Brian Niebuhr, Pastor Steve Griffith, Rebecca Pfabe

Absent: Scott Seebohm

- A. Opening Prayer given by Pastor Steve Griffith
- B. Carol Reed bequests—updated motion: Discussed the Allocation of Funds, Steve noted that the seminary scholarship fund has gotten pretty low so this could help this. Brian said to put it into Fund 2 as an undesignated gift so that they can be held for something more meaningful in the future. Brian suggests: 20% to Endowment (\$50,000), 20% Fund 2 undesignated gift (\$50,000), 60% mortgage (the rest, or \$150,000). Denise updated the proposal.
- C. Corporate Resolution of Officers: This states who the officers of the congregation and is a general statement of who in the congregation is authorized to sign. Bryan Hanson is authorized. A question was posed as to what authority is given the senior pastor? P. Steve will look through the constitution and will check with the business administrator of a different church. A copy of the minutes in which officers were elected should be included. This does not have to go to the general council.
- D. Pastor Steve's contract extended until 30 June 2021. We're hoping that is a good amount of time to get the new pastor in place.
- E. Capital Campaign pledge drive proposal: Lee Rockwell and Judy Bailey will be appointed to head this up and will run from Spring to Summer 2021. Denise revised the proposal.
- F. Property committee motion for lock box as recommended by Lincoln Fire and Rescue: This arose from a series of false alarms in the fall 2020. The fastest Steve could get to church at 2am was 20 minutes. If there would ever be an issue this would pay for itself. LFR said that half the businesses in Lincoln have this. It allows LFR to enter the church if no one is present. The property committee approves of this. This does not need a council resolution due to the minimal expense. This committee agrees to this proposal. Brian Hanson needs to be aware of this (Steve says he is), due to an ongoing expense
- G. Offer AFLAC policies to staff: There is an opportunity to offer this to staff to buy a supplemental policy. There is no cost to the church. The expense is taken out pretax. Employees are not required to participate. There was going to be an informational meeting today but not enough staff able to attend so the presentation was postponed. This does not need to be on the agenda for the council
- H. Compensation Committee: discussed matters pertaining to this. Members of the committee are Pastor Steve, Steve Eicher, Fred Ohles
- I. Call Process: discussed matter pertaining to this

Respectfully submitted, Rebecca Pfabe

Fellowship Committee Meeting via Zoom

Tuesday, March 9, 2021

Attending: Judy Batterman (new coordinator), LuAnn Snyder (outgoing chair), Cindy Schuster, Gordon Wolfe, Phyllis Frickel, Pat Dewald, Carol Tesar, Carlene Falos, Ann Allen, Linda Carlson

Devotions: Pat Dewald

Next Month: Phyllis Frickel

Member Updates:

1. LuAnn has studied the list of potential committee members or those who would assist in events. Most wanted to help with specific events. She noted that Scott Williams indicated that he is interested, and LuAnn will contact him to invite him to join the committee or to help with events, as he chooses.
2. Last month LuAnn announced that she needs to retire from the committee chair position and to “step back” from her involvement in the committee. Judy Batterman had considered becoming the chair, but said that she will be instead the “coordinator” of the committee if members would accept responsibility for events that we sponsor. The committee agreed to that. LuAnn said that she would like to continue as the coordinator for our Facebook presence for the “First Lutheran Fellowship” group. We praised and thanked LuAnn for all of her hard work through the years as our chair, and all applauded in gratitude.
3. Gordon suggested that we make a master list of upcoming events/projects and that we ask members to manage each of them. Judy said that she would compile a list of our customary activities (e.g. Easter Egg Hunt, annual picnic, Lenten meals, Advent meals, etc.)

Review of Events: We packaged cookies and notes to deliver to persons who attended the first Lenten services on Wednesday, March 24. Our members who distributed the cookies after the noon and 6:00 services said that they were well received, and that people were appreciative.

Facebook “First Lutheran Fellowship” Group: LuAnn suggested two categories for posting, “Signs of Spring” and “Easter Traditions.” The group liked those topics, so LuAnn will proceed with them.

Upcoming Events:

1. In place of our annual Easter Egg Hunt, we will have an **Easter Scavenger Hunt**. Children and adults are invited to participate by selecting at least six items from the twelve listed, take pictures of them, or bring the items with them to the church on Saturday, April 3rd, between 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. We will take their pictures with their items and post them on our Facebook “First Lutheran Fellowship” group. We will give each participant a bag of Easter treats. The items to find include: Easter lily, cross, lamb, sign of spring, Easter egg, sidewalk chalk art, stone, 30 coins, crown of thorns, Easter basket, nail, one item for the Lutheran Food Pantry. Judy Batterman will ask Kathleen Simley to announce the scavenger hunt in “First Things First” on Wednesday, March 24. Items for the treat bags will be (for ages 4 and up) a small wooden cross, Star Bursts, Tootsie Rolls, chocolate Kisses, and (for ages 3 and under) Teddy Bears, Goldfish, little pretzels, and bubble soap. In all bags we will add green Easter grass and we will decorate them with a ribbon bow. Judy Batterman has ordered and received 144 wooden crosses that are about 2 inches in length. **Our committee will assemble the treat bags on Wednesday, March 31, at 3:00 at the church.** We estimate a need for 20 – 25 bags for children aged 3 and under. Judy Batterman will ask Kathleen Simley to make a request from congregation members for donations of specific candies (see above for ages 4 and up) or money to cover expenses for ages 3 and under. Carlene will check for remaining beach/sand buckets at the church.
2. **Easter Pictures on church Welcome Center windows:** The members would like to have children color or paint pictures that we can post on the large windows of the Welcome Center outside the sanctuary. Judy Batterman will find pictures for coloring a butterfly, an Easter egg, and a cross. She will post links to these three options in “First Things First,” and ask the children to bring them to the church by Palm Sunday, March 28. Our committee will use invisible two-sided tape to place them in the windows, pictures facing the street.

Our next meeting: Tuesday, April 13 at 5:30.

Devotions will be given by Phyllis Frickel.

Submitted by Linda Carlson, Secretary

Hunger & Clothing Team
04-06-2021 Meeting
(Action items in red)

Present: Karen Lenzen, Cindy Lilleoien, Donice Kaspar, Kathy Dickey, Linda Bogenreif

Diaper & Baby Wipes Drive - The team set up our display for the Center for People in Need drive for diapers and baby wipes. FLC does not support this agency financially, but we hope this will showcase an agency members may not be aware of. The drive continues until the end of April. **Karen will deliver the items collected.**

Food Bank - Backpack Prgm/Financial Classes – Kathy reported that the status of the backpack program is still up in the air for Fall 2021. If they do resume in our schools there is still the question of whether volunteers will be allowed to assist. There is new leadership at the Food Bank with the retirement of Scott Young, but it appears the basic structure will not change much. **Kathy continues to monitor this situation.** If the backpack program is not reinstated, we will need to address how to handle the money we have set aside in Fund II.

FLC also supports their financial literacy classes called “Gettin’ Ahead In A Just Gettin’ By World”. We have sent the first half of our 2021 financial contribution for this advocacy program to help fight the root causes of hunger. The remainder is scheduled to be sent in July.

CROP Walk– The city-wide CROP Walk will be hosted by Bethany Christian for the next three years. **Sandy continues on the city-wide team and will keep us informed of their plans.** She did not have additional information to share for this meeting.

Meals On Wheels – FLC members continue to deliver the Sunday morning routes faithfully as well as others done during the week. **Sandy continues to monitor this ministry.** We may look at trying to expand our Sunday morning routes later this year.

Kicks For Kids - We have a considerable sum of money in Fund II. Donice has filled several requests from our school partners since the Fall 2020 shoes & socks drive. **She will continue to fulfill additional requests.**

The original Kicks For Kids program is being converted to a stand alone nonprofit organization. Donice was in contact with the new board of directors to find out more details. They are strongly in support of us continuing as we are. They will not work with the schools we already support. We may need to slightly modify the name we use for our campaign, but other than that it should not impact our ministry.

Lutheran Food Pantry – An FLC team of four continues to pack orders every other Wednesday morning, that are distributed by the People’s City Mission. Our members continue to generously fill

the food cart every week. The pantry coordinators have expressed their thanks to First Lutheran for our amazing food drive last summer which kept them afloat.

Matt Talbot Kitchen - MTK continues to use a takeout meal format due to Covid19. We serve on the 3rd Tuesday each month. We are still limited to three volunteers at a time, but this has worked fine. First Lutheran members do meal prep on the prior Monday morning (at the church) and others contribute fruit and cookies for the meal. Numbers of diners has declined as the federal Covid19 relief monies have included increases in the amount of SNAP (food stamps) benefits many families are receiving. This reduces their need for meals from MTK. Once those increased benefits expire, we will likely see the numbers go up again.

2021 Special Activities – Our diapers & baby wipes drive is being conducted this month for The Center for People in Need. We will do another in-gathering for a local agency in July. Choosing agencies/programs that FLC does not support financially provides an opportunity to highlight them to our members. Perhaps this will spark an interest that they can further act upon.

**Respectfully submitted,
Karen Lenzen**

**Next Meeting: June 1, 2021
5:30 pm**

**First Lutheran Church
Property Committee
Meeting Minutes March 24, 2021**

Attending: Chair Norman Kempf, Pastor Steve Griffith, Bob Batterman, Rod Johnson, Les Carlson, Steve Dickey

Meeting Time: 7:00 PM

Opening Prayer: Les

Minute taker: Les

February Property Committee (PC) minutes were approved.

Items added to the agenda:

Pastor Steve gave an update of the building superintendent position. To date, the arrangement with Travis is working, though there is still a need for someone to be available during the weekends and to complete other work such as lawn care. Travis would like to continue in the position but prefers a schedule of about 10 hours per week. Pastor Steve is satisfied with the custodial service work that is being provided. Lincoln Fire and Rescue (LFR) has recommended a lockbox be made available at the church so that LFR personnel can obtain access into the church without having to first contact church personnel. This might help with false alarms. Rod Johnson volunteered to review lockbox providers and is in contact with Pastor Steve about this.

Norman informed that Toby has indicated that there is nothing new to report on the roof. Norman has also been in discussion with Dave McNeil about the punch list and repair of holes in the parking lot. Further discussion with Dave will follow on how to proceed with the parking lot issues.

Pastor Steve and Norman both noted continuing/new leaks. A new leak was found in front of the office, there are issues with the copper flashing around the ribbon windows which may be cracked, and there is still a leak in the gym area.

Agenda items/updates from prior meetings:

1. A motion was made and passed to approve council's recommendation regarding the gutter bid from White Castle which now includes the superior version of the two gutter guard options and larger downspouts. Steve Dickey reworked the contract with White Castle to incorporate these changes.
2. Leaks in the Church were discussed (also see above). Travis discovered the source of the leak in the East classroom downstairs. During construction, some sealing was

not completed. Travis' temporary fix appears to be working at present but more work is required. Dave McNeil has been contacted.

3. Discussion ensued on the inspection of upper roof led by Bob. Work is required such as patching and repair of copper flashing. Water is leaking on East wall of the sanctuary behind the cross/alter and may also be due to the copper flashing around the ribbon windows.
4. Norman and Bob noted the need for a more permanent solution regarding the drainage issues on the South side of the church. Water from the roof is being dumped into drains that are too close to Dimensions access. There was agreement among PC members that this area and its drainage needs to be redesigned/fixed. Norman recommended that Steve Lenzen be asked to lead a PC subcommittee to review the problems in this area and develop possible solutions.
5. Norman reported that White Castle has caulked metal corner on west side of church.
6. Trash/materials on the church roof have been removed.
7. The need for spring cleanup of around the outside church was discussed but the PC will wait until next month to decide on what needs to be accomplished during the cleanup.

Prayer for April Bob Batterman
Note taker: Les