

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: 10/22/24

The October Congregation Council Meeting was held on 10/16/24

Council Members Present: Pastor Bannister, Ashdon Bobbie, Melanie Boyer, Alan Divver, CJ Hamilton, Bob Muller, Shannon O'Neill, Barbara Quinn, Bruce Roper, Carol Schlegel, Jenn Shaw, Tom Smith, Maryanne Sweeney, and Ken Woods

Absent: Kiran Bodamer, Anna Sweeney, and Louise Woods

The meeting was called to order by Alan Divver at 7:00 p.m. The scripture was read by Shannon O'Neill and the prayer was offered by Alan Divver

PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL:

Alison Hudson spoke to Council representing the Community Outreach Committee –

Alison explained that the Community Outreach Committee is now in charge of St John's involvement in the Hatboro Thanksgiving Parade. To that end, she is looking for items she can use for those that come into St John's, who are mostly kids that are participating in the parade. She is looking for food items such as hot dogs, buns, snacks, hot chocolate, water, and associated things such as cups or napkins. She pointed out that items tend to be weather related (more cocoa on cold days, water if it's warmer, etc). Several people said that there are a lot of things already here. Alan also advised her to speak to his mother, Marcie, as she is head of coffee hour. And Carol said the food pantry has an abundance of bread and rolls, but maybe not hot dogs. The food pantry also have plenty of cookies that are available for the guests. There will be no coffee hour the day of the parade.

Alison also brought up the topic of Grace Lutheran Church in Philadelphia – Alison explained they're asking for Giant, Acme, and BJ's cards. She briefly explained that our relationship with Grace Lutheran started from the Synod asking us to find another church that could use our help back when Pastor Cox was here. Alison would like to see a stronger connection with them because it is felt that neither they nor St John's really know each other very well. Shannon said that she works about a block away from Grace Lutheran and volunteered to help Alison if needed. Carol asked if gift cards are going to their food pantry, and Alison said they are going to the church and they give them out as they feel they are best needed. Pastor Bo agreed that our relationship with each other should be stronger and he would like to think of new things we can do together to strengthen the relationship. Bruce suggested someone from there come to our service sometime and speak to our congregation about who they are. Carol suggested we need to better figure out what their needs are to help with our relationship. Pastor Bo and Alison will check with Linda Morrison to contact them to see if they'd be willing to reach out to us.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

*It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes from September 2024 as presented without changes. The motion was made and seconded by Jenn Shaw / Tom Smith. **MOTION CARRIED**

REPORTS:

President, Bob Muller – No report

Pastor Bannister – Attached

Attendance – Attached

Finance Committee – Attached – Carol explained September was a good month, financially, that we broke even. October is typically the lowest month for donations but so is attendance. We will have a few larger bills in October so it may not be as good as August and September were. Carol is hoping to end year with around a \$50,000 deficit, which includes the cost of the new roof. This is mostly due to cutting expenses as much as possible and having donations higher.

*It was moved and seconded to accept the Finance Committee's report as presented. The motion was made and seconded by Ken Woods / CJ Hamilton. **MOTION CARRIED**

OLD BUSINESS:

- 75th Anniversary Update – The event went off very well and Shannon thanked the committee. She is now turning the committee into the Fellowship Committee moving forward.
- Continuing Resolutions – Was addressed in the Constitution and Bylaws discussion
- Staff Job Descriptions – Ashdon has them but they are not all in the correct format. This will be reviewed when the Executive Committee meets next month so we can talk about it in the November Council meeting.
- Basement – the Christmas Tree bags will be shifted around for the Haunted House.
- Offering Envelopes – Carol said that there will be a meeting October 28th at which the final design will be decided so that the supplier can move forward.
- Benevolence Budget – Carol explained that according to our Bylaws, we were supposed to be sending a monthly check to the synod, which we have not been doing. People give to benevolence with the intention of giving to the synod. It was discussed to allow the congregation to give to benevolence every month and in December, Council will then decide what to give to the synod. Benevolence will also be part of the envelope discussion at the October 28th meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Budget – Carol distributed a rough draft of the 2025 budget. She gathered target budgets from all the committees for next year. It is Carol’s goal to be completely transparent regarding our financial status. The current draft of the 2025 budget predicts a deficit in the range of \$22,000-\$23,000. The rough draft has been presented to the Finance Committee and they have approved it. Carol asked council members to take their time and carefully review it. She explained that the Finance Committee has worked extremely hard in getting the deficit down as much as possible. The budget is based on no significant capital expenditures this year and they are hoping to grow the Capital Improvement fund. She would like to have the final budget approved at the next Finance Committee meeting in November and then have it be presented to council for November’s Council meeting and then presented to the congregation on 12/15 for final approval. One major difference between this year and last year is that giving has increased. Building use has come down but accurate records of who uses it and how much and who donates for their use is lacking but it will be kept track of more diligently moving forward. Improvements on the expenses were for the audit, which was extremely valuable information. Also, Property renegotiated contracts such as cleaning and trash services. The office supplies budget has been reduced significantly and the copier will also be renegotiated. We also removed the monthly HSA donations.
- A motion was made to go into Executive Session. It was moved and seconded by Shannon O’Neill / Bruce Roper.
- A motion was made to go out of executive session. It was moved and seconded by Ken Woods / Bruce Roper.
- Constitution & By-Laws – Joe Kircher attended the Council meeting as a representative of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. Bob Muller explained that this committee put many hours into this project. Joe Kircher explained that the Constitution is primarily controlled by the ELCA. Therefore, the Constitution has very few changes. They took out a few things, but it is mostly intact. The committee had to reorganize the Bylaws and connect them to the Constitution so that they refer to each other. They also found a lot of repetitive statements which they removed. The committee felt that if it was already in the constitution that it did not need to be in the bylaws also so they removed duplicate verbiage to streamline the Bylaws as much as possible. Bob organized the draft that was distributed to Council so that they could see new statements, as well as the bylaws that were kept or removed. The Committee and the President are in full agreement with what was done. Moving forward, the Committee needs Council approval, then the new Constitution and Bylaws will be sent to the Synod. Next, Bob will schedule a special meeting for the congregation on the

same day as the special budget meeting already scheduled. Bob pointed out that things marked as Remove are removed from the final version, it was left in the draft that was distributed to Council so that council members could see what was being removed. Additions are underlined in the Draft, removed context has been stricken through.

A motion was made to accept the Bylaws as gone through with Council Members It was moved and seconded by Shannon O'Neill / Ashdon Bobbie. MOTION CARRIED

- Holiday Flower Dedications – Ashdon explained that the Holiday dedication form is Council's decision on who to support. Council suggested the Lutheran Disaster Relief

A Motion was made to support the Lutheran Disaster Relief with this year's Holiday Flowers Dedications. It was moved and seconded by Jenn Shaw / Melanie Boyer. MOTION CARRIED

- New Council Members – Bob Muller will be stepping down as President at the end of his term this year and CJ Hamilton will also be leaving Council at the end of his term. Two other current Council members will potentially leave at the end of their terms this year as well. Several possible candidates were suggested.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Community Outreach Ministry – See report
- Constitution and Bylaws – See report and New Business above
- Fellowship – No report
- Hatboro Community Cupboard – See report – Carol said the cash donations are down significantly but with our grant and food donations, it has been sufficient. The number of patrons has been increasing every month. Church of the Advent gives \$500 a month. \$250 plus food comes from Hatboro Baptist.
- Kids & Family Ministry – See report – MaryAnne said that they are focused on getting VBS started earlier this year. A Haunted House will be this Sunday after the service. The group was also talking about safety concerns and the connecting door between classrooms. Tom explained ushers do lock outer doors during service. Ken said both classrooms do have lockable hallway doors. MaryAnne would like the door that give access between the two classrooms to be lockable as well. It was briefly discussed and decided that the best lock to use would be a slider dead bolt on both sides of the door. The kids retreat went very well. 25 kids and 12 adults attended at the Cross Roads Camping Retreat Center in NJ. St John's had four kids attend. Pastor said that it was good for the adults as well as the kids.

- Memorials – No report
- Mutual Ministry – No report
- Property – See report – Ken Woods said he also finished painting down stairs. Tom Smith commented that the front windows in narthex need cleaning by a professional. CJ said he has done that in the past and will do it. After All Saints would be the best timing because of tape residue.
- Social Media – No report
- Stewardship – No report
- Women’s Ministry – No report
- Worship & Music – See report – Tom Smith said that there will be a meeting on 10/28/24 to discuss envelopes and the processes involved. The decision to discontinue mailing the envelopes was made in the last Council meeting. At the upcoming meeting, participants will be deciding what the new envelopes will look like (the design regarding categories for giving) and how holiday envelopes will be handled. 11/15/24 is the deadline for the new design to be submitted.

Regarding financial statements, Tom said that it is important to let people know where they are in their giving, and that these will now be mailed quarterly. We are encouraging everyone to give us an email address and statements will be distributed that way.

- Tom brought up a concern regarding the operation of our audio/visual system which didn’t have anything this past Sunday. Bob will stop by tomorrow afternoon and will be checking things out.
- Carol Schlegel brought up that musicians are to be paid out of the endowment. Birdy found a document that says we cannot spend more than 25% of the endowment in any given year. But it’s been depleted at this point. Carol will be building it back up again as we move forward and not using it for the time being.
- End of October is due for directory pictures.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

CARES AND CONCERNS:

Pastor Bo and council members shared their cares and concerns.

NEXT MEETING: Date: November 20, 2024

Meeting Leader: Bob Muller

Scripture: Pastor Bo

Prayer: Bruce Roper

Refreshments: Anna & Maryanne Sweeney

*It was moved and seconded by CJ Hamilton / Tom Smith to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Roper