

Tree of Life Church Council Minutes
Monday, August 17, 2020 6:30PM ZOOM Meeting

Members Present: President Jack Zimmer, Vice-President Kevin Solberg, Financial Secretary Heidi Beckham, Secretary Susie Rust, Tom Gros, Larry Klotz, Jim Lemaux, Richard Schaper, Julie Timmins, Pastor Chris Lake

Visitors: Youth and Families Director Bunny Stoutes, Office Manager Jill Waldrop, Russell Bliese, Peggy Little

A. President Zimmer called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM and Pastor Chris gave a devotion on the Lord's Prayer.

B. Consent agenda

Motion: Adoption of agenda *.

Motion: Approval of minutes (July 20, 2020)

MOTION: Beckham moved to accept the Consent Agenda; Lemaux seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

C. Discussion agenda

As David and Linda Fischer are moving to Kentucky to help care for family, David Fischer is resigning from the TOL Council. Zimmer has received David Fischer's resignation letter. Zimmer has appointed two TOL members to replace recent Council vacancies: Russ Bliese to complete David Fischer's term through 2022 and Peggy Little to complete Jim Voelz's term of 2020. Zimmer requested Council ratification.

MOTION: Pastor Chris moved to ratify the two appointments to council positions. Kevin Solberg seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

Lemaux has accepted an interim role as Treasurer and began transitioning into the role with a meeting which included TOL staff and Ted Dinklage. New Council member Peggy Little has also offered to help. Lemaux and Little will co-chair the "Treasurer interim task force" through this fall, focusing their attention on the 2020 budget and proposed budget for 2021. Discussion followed. Beckham will send financial reports to Officer Manager Waldrop and to Lemaux. Pastor Chris will help set up any new signatories and Waldrop will contact those persons when TOL checks need signing. Zimmer offered Council appreciation to Lemaux and Little.

D. Financial reports

Jim Lemaux began his report of the July monthly financials, showing a screenshot of the month-by-month details as well as the yearly trends. He reported that we are actually doing fairly well, with a surplus of \$3000 this month. We are not seeing a decrease in giving. Payroll expenses for May and June were covered by the federal Stimulus (PPP) loan and have resumed coverage via traditional income in July. Expenditures using PPP monies are itemized under "Dedicated Funds", showing that we have used those monies as the loan requires. We anticipate that the PPP loan will be forgiven, essentially becoming a grant. Any additional information requested by the government will be provided. Ted Dinklage is handling this. From next year's budgetary standpoint, the PPP monies (\$39,700) will be reflected as "Other Income".

MOTION: Klotz moved to accept the July financial report; Schaper seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

Julie Timmins gave an update on the **2019 Audit**. She will continue her work in September as she receives the year-end reports.

E. Pastoral report

Pastor Chris began his report with a congregational update: Ida Craig's father-in-law was hospitalized. Connie Crowley's niece Kimberly was hospitalized. With the usual emergencies and the many changes this year, pastoral ministry has been challenging. TOL and Council have lost George Timmins and Jim Voeltz this year and it has taken a toll on all of us.

The TOL worship team continues to do good work and Peggy Little will join them this week. The team of ten (three families) who implement our Sunday livestream service have done excellent work and continue to tweak the process. Next is the challenge of training replacements as two of our youth on the team, Madie Lake and Courtney Stoutes, go off to college. Lemaux remarked that we need to be attentive to burnout of the livestream team members as they have worked intensely and consistently over the past five months.

As Covid-19 cases continue, so does the planning for the gradual transition to in-person services. TOL now offers "Drive-in" Communion for several hours on Sunday afternoons, with Pastor Chris and Bunny Stoutes rotating weeks to serve. (As a Seminarian, Bunny is allowed to give individual communion). Families reserve spots in 10-minute intervals to receive Communion. The feedback has been very good. The question was raised: who are we missing? How can we attend communicants in nursing homes or home-bound? Pastor Chris is aware of this need and Pat Rowe is compiling names of those folks.

The **Memorial Walk/Prayer Path** was begun in honor of the Jorgensons by their son, who would like to see it completed. The ashes of Mary Ellen Moran and her husband have been laid to rest in the Prayer Path.

The **Mutual Ministry Committee/Coaching Team**, formed as a support and feedback group for Pastor Chris, will reschedule its monthly meeting set for this Wednesday. Instead, Pastor Chris and Katherine will be taking their eldest daughter Madie to Texas Lutheran University to begin her freshman year of college.

F. Old Business

I. Covid Task Force

Lemaux, as Chair of the **Covid Task Force**, reported that the group reconvened last week. He presented statistical analyses of the case numbers from Montgomery County, expressing frustration at the most recent uneven reporting. The Task Force suggested waiting to see how the school districts respond as in-person classes resume in order to guide a decision on when to reopen in-person worship. The Task Force plans to reconvene in 1-2 weeks. Discussion followed. Solberg reported that the school districts expect a spike in Covid cases with school openings and will be watching those numbers. Zimmer reminded us that the sanctuary is ready and we just need to decide *when* to reopen in-person services.

Discussion continued. Timmins asked about outdoor services. Pastor Chris suggested we keep that option open. Perhaps a "low church" service on Wednesday evenings could be done, when the weather cools down. Social distancing could be handled via chairs placement or cars. Lemaux reviewed the TOL Task Force chart summarizing a three-level phased reopening based on ELCA Synod and CDC recommendations.

ACTION: Solberg agreed to help with the Covid Task Force as Lemaux will be concentrating on additional tasks as Treasurer. Zimmer thanked Lemaux for all his work on the Task Force.

II. Employee Manual Update

Zimmer and Pastor Chris have completed their work on the **Employee Policy Manual**, along with Waldrop's proofing and final formatting. Copies had been emailed to the Council for review the previous week. The Council is reminded that the Manual is a resource and starting point rather than a binding document. Discussion followed on the topics of PTO (personal time off) for full-and part-time employees, Compensation time for full-time employees, and the smoking policy. Stoutes wanted further clarification on Comp-time of full-time employees, noting that Youth Ministry and Office Manager roles and hours are very different. Pastor Chris reassured her that he and staff can work together on this; the Manual will be amended to add "Comp time is at the discretion of the supervisor".

Discussion included performance evaluations (scheduled for May, the end of church year) with salary evaluations to be handled at a separate and different time.

Zimmer appreciated all the discussion points. He will walk the TOL staff through this Manual following Council approval.

MOTION: Pastor Chris moved to accept the Employee Policy Manual as stated, with minor corrections; Timmins seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

III. Memorial Walkway

Klotz reported that the brochure for the **Memorial Walk/Prayer Path** is being worked on and will be presented to Council next month.

G. New Business.

As Chair of the **Nomination Committee for 2021** Council elections, Solberg reported that the Committee has met, with updates to come this fall.

Tom Gros will work with Jim Lemaux on the **Stewardship Campaign for 2020** which begins in September.

H. President Zimmer adjourned the meeting at 9:05 PM and Pastor Chris led us in the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Rust
Council Secretary

NOTES: **2020:** Jack Zimmer President (second 2 yr. term), Kevin Solberg VP, Jim Voelz, Treasurer (Peggy Little appt. to fill 2020 Council term), Susie Rust, Secretary, Heidi Beckham, Financial Secretary, Larry Klotz, George Timmins (Julie Timmins appt. to fill 2020 Council term), Richard Schaper; and elected for 3yr. term in 2020: Jim Lemaux, David Fischer (Russ Bliese appt to fill 2020 Council term), Tom Gros.**2018:** Jack Zimmer. President 2yr. term, Jim Voelz (Treasurer), Linda Baumgartner (Sec 2018), Kirk Helberg, George Timmins, Heidi Beckham (Financial Secretary); elected for 3 yr. terms: Susie Rust (Secretary 2019), Richard Schaper, Kevin Solberg, Larry Klotz (VP). **2017:** Jim Voelz (Trea), Linda Baumgartner (Sec.), Kirk Helberg, George Timmins, Jack Zimmer (3Yr. terms) **2015** - Heidi Beckham, Elected 2014 - Jim Voelz. (2nd term),