

Tree of Life Church Council Minutes
Monday, April 20, 2020 6:30PM ZOOM Meeting

Members present: President Jack Zimmer, Vice-President Kevin Solberg, Treasurer Jim Voelz, Financial Secretary Heidi Beckham, Secretary Susie Rust, David Fischer, Tom Gros, Larry Klotz, Jim Lemaux, Richard Schaper, Pastor Chris Lake

Visitors: Youth Director Bunny Stoutes

Joining Meeting at 6:40: Julie Timmins (after Council ratification of Zimmer appointment)

A. President Jack Zimmer called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM. Pastor Chris Lake played guitar and sang “The Church Song” by J. Beach to open, and read Psalms 46, followed by our opening prayer.

B. Consent agenda

I. Motion: Adoption of agenda *.

II. Motion: Approval of minutes (March 23, 2020)

III. Motion: Ratify new members: None

MOTION: Pastor Chris moved to accept the Consent Agenda; Solberg seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

C. Discussion: Council vacancy for 2020

It was with sadness that TOL acknowledged the recent death of George Timmins, our brother in Christ and Council member. Zimmer has spoken with Julie Timmins to see if she would be interested and willing to fill this vacancy on Council, serving the remainder of George’s term, through December 2020.

MOTION: Zimmer recommended and moved that Julie Timmins serve on Council the remaining eight months of 2020. Solberg seconded the motion. Discussion followed with the question: could Julie be eligible for 2 complete terms following 2020? Zimmer answered yes, according to TOL bylaws and policies. All were in favor and the **motion passed**. Julie Timmins logged onto the ZOOM meeting and was welcomed as our newest Council member.

D. Financial reports

Treasurer Jim Voelz reported that we are doing fairly well through March. Total income was 105% of our budget, with our pledged offering up by 8%, but non-pledged offering down by 16%. There is a new line item, “Undistributed Credit Card Charges” which reflects outstanding charges carried over from January through March. The April financial report may be a different story; we do not have sufficient data yet to predict, as our revenue has trailed off with worship services now in stream-only mode due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Fischer suggested that money transfers through banks may affect usual timing of income. There is the possibility of an income surge towards the end of the month. Voelz applied early for the PTP (stimulus package loan) for TOL but has no response as yet. He will follow up with First National Bank next week. **MOTION:**

Solberg moved to accept the March financial report; Fischer seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

Zimmer asked if the Council needs to act on any income projections. Voelz responded that we have kept our costs as low as possible, with the exception of a high electricity expense with Ideal Impact in March (128% of budget, due to meter catch up). Lemaux is continuing with income analysis which should be ready by the end of April.

E. Pastoral report

Pastor Chris was very appreciative of a dedicated worship team responsible for streaming our Sunday service: Jeremie and Shantell Brown, Bunny and Courtney Stoutes, John Burkwall, and Katherine, Madie, and Ainsley Lake. The behind-the-scenes work is very stressful and most do not have experience going “live”. Pastor Chris helps with Synod Assembly and has had more experience with this. The pre-recorded readings, music, and “Children’s Church” segments are well planned and well-received. Katherine Lake has been accepting information from TOL families for the “TOL Family Updates” segment, following the service.

TOL volunteer Wayne Rambarran has been working to extend the sound table wall to 16 feet. Costs have been donated. Mary Dinklage has been helping with checking in on our shut-ins. Tommy Daniels is in hospice. We mourn the loss of George Timmins this month; his funeral is scheduled for Sunday, June 7.

We will open our doors for church services as soon as safely possible. Currently about 100 devices are tuning in to our live-streamed Sunday service, generally divided equally between Youtube, Facebook, and from the TOL website. Pastor Chris reported one “hate-mail” review. Julie Timmins asked about the decision not to have Sunday service communion at this time. Pastor Chris and Bishop Mike Rinehart agreed that communion should be done in community, but as the quarantine extends for a longer time, this policy may be revisited. Zimmer echoed appreciation for our “backstage” worship team and Courtney Stoutes as Assisting Minister. Pastor Chris will make the decision as to when TOL will transition back to public services in our sanctuary. Solberg applauded our live-stream services.

F. Old Business

- I. Pastor Chris has delivered all the material for the Employee Policy Manual to Zimmer for review and edit.
- II. Larry Klotz reported that work on the Memorial Walk/Prayer Path will resume as soon as the company in College Station reopens according to the pandemic mandates.
- III. Council members have received a copy of “Planning Areas for 2020 and Beyond” towards future vision for TOL. Surviving 2020 is our first priority. As we look

ahead, Zimmer would like Council to think about one area on which we each could focus. Pastor Chris suggested we think about meeting people's needs where they are at: ZOOM meetings are filling that role right now. Youth Director Bunny Stoutes is leading children, youth and parent meetings viz ZOOM weekly. Kathy Scott is leading the Sunday morning Women's Bible Study ("Bad Girls") through ZOOM. Perhaps we can foster small groups this way, Pub Theology, for example. Julie Timmins suggested a "virtual happy hour". Pastor Chris asked for volunteers to help organize potential small groups.

Zimmer suggested that our immediate planning may be tactical rather than strategic, more month-to-month instead of long-range. Stoutes reported that we must wait on the State Health Department to decide whether Lutherhill summer camps can happen this year. As Megan Dillon is stepping down as Office Manager, Stoutes has had to resume that role and youth activity plans are on hold. Dillon will remain on staff to help a while longer, but we could consider a new staff person if our revenue allows. Music Director John Burkwall has been helping with Staff tasks as well. Lemaux suggested that Staff not be shy about asking for Council help if needed.

IV. Pastor Chris has talked with our employee contracted to clean TOL weekly. In place of the usual cleaning tasks, the plan for April (and possibly May) is to take sections of the church for deep-cleaning (kitchen, nursery, sacristy, pews, etc.).

V. **ACTION:** Zimmer will continue work on the Preliminary Report and Recommendations for the 2018 Audit.

VI. Dr. Liz Johnson (Lutheran Foundation of the Southwest) gave a presentation via ZOOM on Sunday, March 29th. LFS provides information about estate, legacy and general financial planning for churches and church families. TOL currently has an Endowment account with them. Lemaux reported that his family and three other families joined her for good discussion following an informative video (found on our Youtube treechurch channel). There is a plan in place for a future visit in the fall. Fischer hoped that folks would also keep The King's Embrace ministry in mind as they consider legacy investment. Lemaux suggested that Fischer consider meeting with Dr. Liz Johnson as well on behalf of TKE and Fischer was glad to do so.

G. New Business.

I. As far as inviting our Council guests in May, Vickie Rogers and Kathy Krauzer, Fischer suggested that we revisit that possibility next month, as we are still in social distancing mode. Council agreed.

II. Discussion followed about the topic of a Congregational meeting scheduled for June 7. We would still need a quorum (10%), even if this is planned as a ZOOM meeting. A letter from the President could update financials and any other details. **ACTION:** Zimmer will talk with Pastor Chris and generate a letter to the congregation.

III. Mortgage Rate Negotiations

Klotz spoke with Mission Investments; our church mortgage rate is 4.75%, a 3-year ARM with a monthly payment of \$8461. MI offered two possible mortgage rate deductions, with a \$7000 buy-down, but neither were a bargain. Discussion followed.

ACTION: Klotz will talk with MI to get specifics on a conventional 15-yr or 30-yr loan. Voelz will ask the same of First National Bank of Texas.

H. Zimmer adjourned the meeting at 8:38 pm and Pastor Chris closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Susie Rust
Council Secretary

NOTES: **2020 Congreg. Mtg.:** Jack Zimmer President (second 2 yr. term), Kevin Solberg VP, Jim Voelz, Treasurer, Susie Rust, Secretary, Heidi Beckham, Financial Secretary, Larry Klotz, George Timmons, Richard Schaper; and elected for 3yr. term in 2020: Jim Lemaux, David Fischer, Tom Gros. **2018:** Jack Zimmer. President 2yr. term, Jim Voelz (Treasurer), Linda Baumgartner (Sec 2018), Kirk Helberg, George Timmons, 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),