

Tree of Life Church Council Minutes
Monday, May 18, 2020 6:30 PM 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, Julie Timmins, Pastor Chris Lake
Visitors: Youth and Families Director Bunny Stoutes

A. President Zimmer called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM. Pastor Chris opened with a devotion from the book of Jonah, chapters 3-4, reminding us that God forced Jonah to see the world through different eyes. This helps guide the story of our faith when things don't go as planned. Pastor Chris led the opening prayer.

B. Consent agenda

- I. **Motion:** Adoption of agenda
- II. **Motion:** Approval of minutes (April 20, 2020)
- III. **Motion:** Ratify new members: none

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

C. Pastoral report

Pastor Chris reported that our average number of devices for viewing Sunday services was 65-75, which includes streaming equally distributed among the three venues: Youtube, FB page for TOL and Pastor Chris's FB page. This number does not take into account multiple viewers (families or friends) and suggests our average worship attendance continues fairly normally. Pastor Chris did note that following the sermon some of our viewing numbers have dropped.

Pastor Chris reported on the issue of returning to in-sanctuary worship. How do we decide this and when do we open up? Pastor Chris provided several charts of statistics: numbers of people who have Covid-19, and numbers of those who are hospitalized. Hospitalized numbers have stabilized. Another chart revealed new active cases in Montgomery county (population, one million) which had been declining and then began climbing again. ELCA has released information with 20 questions to help churches decide when they open up and updated recommendations (May 6, 2020), including a 3-phase approach on how to open. Pastor Chris also provided a list of state reopening recommendations, especially important with insurance issues. **ACTION ITEM:** PC will email all these documents to the council. Discussion followed. **ACTION ITEM:** A Task Force was established to recommend a decision of how and when to open. Members include Jim Lemaux, Heidi Beckham, Larry Klotz, Jim Voelz, Jeredith Pasechnick, Wayne and Aprill Rambarran and Pat Rowe. The Church Council makes the final decision based on Task Force recommendations. Discussion continued. Pastor Chris has been in touch with other churches as to what and how they are deciding.

A Mutual Ministry/Coaching Team has been meeting with Pastor Chris to help him find a healthier rhythm in his work.

D. Financial report

Treasurer Voelz reviewed the monthly financial statement for April, 2020. Voelz appreciated Pastor Chris and Youth Director Bunny Stoutes for helping to update the information. Our revenue continues to be solid, Lemaux noting we had 5 Sundays in March and 4 in April. We are behind in budgeted income for Youth due to our annual spring Garage Sale being postponed until October, 2020. We should be receiving a refund of \$20,000 pre-paid to Lutherhill. Our bottom line is good, however and should be the rest of the year. We did receive the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan: 75% of which will cover payroll plus some benefits and the rest going to mortgage interest (interest only for 2 months) and utilities. This will help us build up our cash reserves. We had taken \$6000 out of Seeds to cover a shortfall, but expect to repay that by the end of June. The building fund is under budget by about \$3000, which can be spent on a service contract for the AC. The final payment to Ideal Impact in April spiked the utility line item last month. Stoutes shared a screen to show that we are significantly under usual monthly electricity expenses compared to last year. Voelz again commended the church staff for keeping expenses down.

MOTION: Jim Lemaux moved to accept the financial report and Richard Schaper seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

E. Old Business

- I. Zimmer reported that updating the Employee Policy Manual is continuing.
- II. Klotz had no further update on the Memorial Walk/prayer path, as the company has temporarily shut down with the pandemic mandates.
- III. Pastor Chris reported that a deep clean of the TOL kitchen has been completed.
- IV. Zimmer reported that we have an incomplete 2018 Audit Report by Kathy Krauzer. Zimmer recommended that we accept this as our official report, however, as most of the recommendations are being addressed. Fischer suggested we have a list of who is responsible for addressing these recommendations and a written record of what has been done. Pastor Chris assured the council that Stoutes has addressed 90% of the items. Voelz will help Staff, including our new Office Manager Jill Waldrup (June 2020), with this as needed. **ACTION ITEM:** Timmins offered to be our auditor for the 2019 Audit. Zimmer thanked Timmins for stepping up to do this and said the Synod has a prototype of instructions to guide an auditor.

F. New Business.

- I. Klotz reported the results of his conversation with the Investment Mission Fund (IMF) to investigate the possibility of a 15- or 30- year mortgage in place of our current mortgage with them; the IMF did not have a favorable offer to do this. Voelz

reported similar negative results with the First National Bank of Texas, who was concerned with the decreasing revenue stream over the last 3 years. Our current interest rate with the IMF is 4.75% and we are looking for 3.75%; the bank will review their response at the end of the year if our revenue numbers have improved. Though interest rates on home loans have dropped, commercial rates have not necessarily done so.

II. A new Sunday morning (9:15 AM) Men's Bible study has begun, led by Dennis McConnell; it is open to all and not just to men. Support personnel will be available prior to the meeting to help with ZOOM technicalities.

III. Zimmer reported that the informational letter sent out to the congregation had good feedback. Though the Constitution mandates quarterly congregational meetings, the pandemic has impeded efforts to do this in June. Zimmer suggested that we resume those meetings when we are able to gather in person. Discussion followed. Could we send out an email in lieu of a letter to save money and staff manpower? Could we pre-record a congregational update to show prior to our streamed Sunday service at 10:30 AM, in addition to an email? Zimmer may issue another informational update to the congregation at the end of this month.

G. Zimmer adjourned the meeting @8:14 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),