

**Tree of Life Church Council Minutes
Monday, January 14, 2019, 6:30 PM**

Members Present: Pastor Chris Lake, President Jack Zimmer, Vice President Larry Klotz, Treasurer Jim Voelz, Secretary Linda Baumgartner, Susie Rust, George Timmons, Kevin Solberg, Annie Lindemann

Members Absent: Financial Secretary Heidi Beckham, Kirk Helberg, Richard Schaper

The meeting was called to order by President Jack Zimmer at 6:35 PM. This meeting was conducted remotely using the ZOOM conference App.

B. Consent agenda

- I. **Motion:** Adoption of agenda
- II. **Motion:** Approval of December 10, 2018 Council meeting minutes
- III. **Motion:** George Timmons moved that the Consent Agenda be approved. Larry Klotz seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

C. Financial report

Jim Voelz presented the monthly statements for December, 2018, and January, 2019. Our shortfall of \$10,196 in December has been covered by \$14,000 (carryover) in our checking account. In the 2019 budget, we anticipate a year end shortfall of \$23,553, minus \$8000-9000 anticipated carryover. We borrowed \$18,000 from Seeds in 2018 and have repaid this in full.

Jim Voelz also addressed the financial aspect of a new ELCA women's group forming at Tree of Life. It is sponsored by Synod and was initiated by Carrie Petersen. He suggested a dedicated fund for monies received and spent through them. This line item could replace the former sabbatical fund line item for Pastor Chris. Discussion followed. We will need Bylaws to suggest a minimum limit and timeline. Synod may have directions for this. Individual chapters organize and there are clusters of chapters within Synod. **Action item:** Annie Lindemann will contact the ELCA for further information.

Motion: Annie Lindemann moved to accept the Financial Report. George Timmons seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed.

D. Pastoral report

Pastor Chris presented an analysis of our church attendance numbers. In 2018 our yearly average attendance was 177 (rounded up) and the middle number was 180 (rounded up). The middle number is better than the average number as to how we are doing. Overall we are down a bit from the previous year: If this is a trend, we may have some concern next year. Christmas Eve services attendance was 429 in 2017 and 373 in 2018.

More folks vacationed this past summer (2018) and donations seem to reflect this. We have not compared ourselves with other churches, but Pastor Chris always reviews our

attendance numbers. The positive from this analysis is that the yearly middle number has generally increased over the last several years. Reviewing the standard deviations, we seem to have less consistency in the week-to-week attendance. A number of people come to church once a month.

We are pushing through the average weekly attendance of 200. Everything changes with this transitional goal; people who prefer smaller churches might leave as our numbers increase. We are certainly in a better place than in 2011 when we averaged 140 attendees. President Jack Zimmer says the church photo directory shows about 150 families, not necessarily always same ones. We have 138 in directory right now.

In January Tree of Life will have an opportunity to serve the Synod and to earn some electronic equipment. Pastor Chris, John Burkwall, and Jim Lemaux will serve as sound/media technicians at the Tri-Synodical Theological Education Conference in Galveston.

Other reports include positive feedback from the Christmas Eve services. Carrie Petersen is doing well in her continuing seminary work, with her overseas trip to France. Worship and administrative planning continue for 2019. Office Manager Megan Dillon is sending out reminders for our committee/team leaders reports for the Annual Report at the Congregational meeting January 20.

F. Old Business

I. Discussion continued on the acceptance of the Council Policy Manual. We still need the Appendix. With respect to the topic (page 13) "Delegation to the Staff", editing is needed. The Pastor is the head of and responsible for the Staff. Teamwork and good communication between the staff, the ministry team leaders and the council is encouraged. **Action item:** President Jack Zimmer will rewrite this item to reflect discussion. Other smaller edits were suggested.

Motion: George Timmons moved that we accept the Council Policy Manual with an amended rewrite on item #5 (page 13) of "Delegation to the Staff" and other small edits suggested by Council. Kevin Solberg seconded. All were in favor and the motion passed. **The Council Policy Manual is established on January 14, 2019.**

II. President Jack Zimmer reported that a rough draft of the Employee Policy Manual is in the Staff's hands, with plans to finish and polish a draft in the next quarter.

The update on the Memorial Walk/prayer path was presented by Vice President Larry Klotz and Kevin Solberg. Larry Klotz talked with Stone Creations; he is awaiting a return call on the question of pricing for 4 bricks to honor 4 pastors. We could use a photo of a finished brick for our brochure. We should also include history (Pastor Chris will provide this), purpose, and pricing for the memorial bricks, as well as a spot to fill in engraved words. We have yet to determine font, which would suggest how much could fit on the smaller brick(s). If brochures were finished, we could introduce them during the congregation meeting. Slides are ready but not the printed brochures yet.

- a. To commemorate the roster of veterans listed on the TOL flagpole plaque, we continued discussion of a Veterans Plaque/Memorial Stone. All but one of the nameplates have fallen off the flagpole plaque. We have a few names on a sheet of paper, but Pastor Chris remembers a green pamphlet, yet unfound. Linda Bliese researched old newsletters but there is no mention of the roster. **Action item:** Pastor Chris will talk with Bob Fellers in further research.

III. Jim Voelz presented a Budget Review for 2019. This will be the main topic at our Congregation Meeting on January 20, 2019. Shown are the actual revenues for 2018 and the proposed 2019 budget.

G. New Business

I. The **Motion** was made, voted on, and passed to accept Susie Rust as Council Secretary for the duration of her term and consistent with the guidelines for terms as Council Secretary.

II. The Council Retreat will be on February 23, hosted by Linda Baumgartner at her home. The format will be similar to last year: strategic goals and plans review and dreaming big. Jim Lemaux is facilitating our retreat. There is no February Council meeting on the usual 2nd Monday evening, but we will have it during the retreat time. Linda will email us as to food needs for that day.

H. Our meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM and we closed with the Lord's Prayer led by Pastor Chris.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Rust,
Secretary

NOTES: Congregational Meeting 2018: Jack Zimmer. President 2 yr. term, Jim Voelz(Treasurer), Linda Baumgartner(Secretary), Kirk Helberg, George Timmons, Heidi Beckham (Financial Secretary); elected for 3 yr. terms: Susie Rust, Annie Lindemann, Richard Schaper, Kevin Solberg, Larry Klotz (VP). Congreg.Mtg 2017: Jim Voelz (Trea), Linda Baumgartner (Sec.), Kirk Helberg, George Timmins, Jack Zimmer (3Yr. terms), Dennis McConnell President (term expires in 2017). 2016 Congreg. Mtg.: Susan Blough (Sec.) Elected 2015 - Heidi Beckham, Matt Hannes (2nd term), Chuck Will, Lawrence Zuelke, Elected 2014 - Linda Baumgartner, Alicia Macha (resigned position January, 2015), Jim Voelz. (2nd term), John Nye. (2nd term), Julie Weeks. (2nd term)