

Council Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2019 at 6 p.m.

Attending: Laura McArthur, Susan McKay, Gail Lund, Robin King, Sandy Moretz, Jeff Voss, Vicar Ethan, Mary Ballard, John Smyre, Charlie Wallin, Pastor Steve, Janice Koppenhaver and Carol Norris

Call to Order at 6:02 p.m. by Charlie Wallin.

Devotion - Susan read a devotion "I heard the voice of Jesus" based on a hymn.

Review of Council Ground Rules - Charlie reminded the Council to please raise hand before speaking.

Congregational Input - None

Approval of Council Meeting Minutes - A motion to accept the February Council Meeting Minutes was made by John, Gail seconded. Motion carried.

Strategic Visioning Charlie

○ **GOAL: - Strategic Planning Retreat held February 16th**

Retreat Follow-up (Pastor Steve) The next phase is for Pastor Steve to meet with groups (OPUS, DORCAS, Lizzie-Estelle, Choir etc.) plus individuals to do quick "why" discover conversations to affirm the direction and language created by Council.

○ **Review updated Organizational Structure** -

The Youth & Family Committee asked about the possibility of putting Christian Education under Youth & Family. It was also noted that Christian Education includes adult faith formation. A motion to combine Youth & Family and Christian Ed was made by Jeff, then seconded by John. Motion carried.

○ **Review Council Liaisons Job Description** - Janice asked if there is a mission statement exists for committees. Pastor Steve said that once the congregation's mission statement is released, then each committee will need to create their own charter including their committee's purpose statement. Jeff noted that we should remove Mark White and Jayne Dowdy from committee chairs due to recent changes.

○ **Stewardship and Budgeting Process** - It's time to begin to work on the 2019-2020, so the Council needs to request committees to work on budgets for 2019-20 in the next 60 days. Jeff noted that we shouldn't plan to increase budget line items and be conservative with estimates. Requests will be compiled and reviewed in May. In June, a congregational budget discussion should be planned. In July, the budget should be finalized. In August, Congregational meeting should be scheduled, in September, the books are closed. Simultaneously, the stewardship drive should get pledges in before final budget (July). A longer pledge drive is planned and we

need to communicate a goal with some visible representation (thermometer). Pastor Steve is sending a weekly message during Lent. The second part of the drive would begin May 1 - See the themes in the Council Reports. A piece he'll add is a story telling piece prior to the June 9 meeting. A follow-up second letter will be sent to anyone who hasn't pledged in a six week drive instead of 3 weeks.

Policy

- **GOAL: Provide Feedback on Policies** - Personnel Policy - General consensus is that the policy is a good beginning. Pastor Steve stated that the Personnel Committee has worked on the execution of the policy. Pastor Steve continues to work with the staff to balance work. He has some concern about the sick leave, but want to work on the relationships, rather than focussing solely on the policy. Annual reviews are coming up and employees are required to sign that they've read the Personnel Policy. It needs an update, but isn't an immediate concern. (Yellow)

ACTION ITEM: Appoint Nominating Committee

(Roger Bodo, Jan Burgess, Lynne Mauney, Greg Perreault, Shannon Shanely) A motion to approve the 5 as nominating committee with the need to add one more member was made by Gail, seconded by Jeff.

- **Open Council Position** - Charlie stated that the Exec Comm discussed this and suggests that we not fill it until the congregational meeting in August.
- **Introduction of NEW Safe Church Policy** - Pastor Steve will email it to the Council for the next Council meeting. Pastor Steve noted that the policy is only part of the document with lots of supporting procedures and forms.

Monitoring and Oversight

- Reports (See included reports in Pastor's Steve's report):

Senior Pastor Report

GOAL: Review Updated Engagement Report - Pastor Steve said there wasn't a number for the first week of February. Still having some issues capturing numbers.

Visitation Pastor Report - Pastor Steve said Pastor John doing about 3-4 visits per week, usually with Nancy.

Vicar Report

Campus Ministry Coordinator Report

Youth and Family Ministry Director Report

Administrative Secretary Report

Facilities Manager Report - Jennifer submits this report for Property

Treasurer Report - Jeff reported that all members should have received a giving statement/pledge report. Another will be sent out again quarterly. Mortgage fund have about 3 months left in it, maybe a little more, and then the mortgage comes out of the budget. Jeff is very concerned. We're about \$30k behind in the budget and that isn't a good sign. As of now, we're on dire straits and put anything on hold that can be put on

hold. Incomes are down and we've had to transfer money to cover checking and payroll. We're paying our bills and slowly moving along, but there is not enough for anything extraneous. Charlie said Kathy was cautious about whether there would be enough to cover payroll on Ash Wednesday. On the fifth Sunday, all Council members need to stand together to be very honest about the state of the budget.

Pastor Steve reminded the council that in April 2018, Jeffcoat Proctor voted to move money into the General Fund in order to offset the decline in Synod support of Campus Ministry. However, those funds were not applied to the General Fund. Those funds were then used in support of Campus Ministry over the past year. The Jeffcoat Proctor Board will need to meet to approve moving an additional \$9200 to the General Fund. Pastor Steve also noted that if things do not improve, we'll need to talk about staffing. Jeff said we've all known this is coming. Currently, seventy-percent of the budget are personnel costs.

Gail asked if any large contributors not giving. Jeff said that we have lost some members to death. Carol asked Pastor Steve for a list of the paid staff members - Pastor Steve, Joy, Tyler, Vera, Jennifer, Kathy (½ time). Nursery attendants for 4 hours/week, Deacon Stacy is 10 hrs/week with half from Jeffcoat Proctor. Pastor Steve has been forthright with the staff about the current situation. Charlie made an announcement about the state of the congregation and written in the newsletter to give a report to the Congregation.

Laura asked how many snow birds there are. John thought it was 10-15 families. She also asked if there is a way to connect to new people. Mary said she ran into someone who used to go here and they now go to Alliance Bible Church because of their active children's ministry. John said many churches are losing members to the big churches. Pastor Steve suggested that this is the reason that we are doing the "why discover" process -- to be more clear about who we are so that we will attract and engage those who believe what we believe. Council discussed the better utilization of the banners to advertise and let people passing by know that we are up to something.

Jeff noted that there were some changes in the tax laws which might be playing a role in the decline in giving. Mary asked if we have Instagram and Pastor Steve said we do as of Fall 2018. She said we need to appear to doing something. Gail thought we need to focus on college kids. Carol reminded that we have a program with Amazon to donate to Grace Lutheran that should be publicized. John made a motion accept the treasurer's report. Carol seconded.

Giving Report

o **Old Business (10 minutes):**

- **Wilkes Property** - Vera identified the Ag Ext Agency as a possible resource for information about logging the Wilkes Property. Pastor Steve talked with Jim Hamilton. He suggested the following:
 1. Can call a mill and you can bid it out, but probably will leave the land in not in a good place, plus we would probably not get the best price for the trees.

2. Develop a forestry management plan and suggested that the State Forestry Office (Wilkes). While this would be free, it could take some time, and then we'd still be responsible for contacting mills directly.
3. Consultant would develop a plan and would draft a RFP, run bids for mills and then execute the contract correctly (roads, tree management).

Pastor Steve talked with Darren Brown at Evergreen Management who could develop a plan and manage the tree cutting process. He takes 10% of the proceeds. If we developed a plan and submitted it to the Wilkes office we might be able to reduce the tax burden because the land becomes a tree farm instead of raw land to about \$1,000 instead of \$6,000. The average value is \$1500-1800 per acre for roughly half of the 240 acres +/-.

(NOTE: Pastor Steve later confirmed that the church would NOT be able to take advantage of this option because we are a non-profit. The church would have to organize an LLC and move the title to that organization.)

Robin inquired about selling the land to Blue Ridge Conservancy, but we can't sell it until December 2024. Charlie said that he didn't believe this land is in their master plan, but they might know of other groups who might be interested. Pastor Steve reminded that there are two family trustees who have to approve the sale of the land. Pastor Steve suggested that we should create a plan so that we can discern best the path to take. Darren Brown will come to the April Council meeting.

(NOTE: As Pastor Steve looking into other options, the Council later decided NOT to invite Darren Brown to the April meeting.)

- **General Fund Alternate Income Paths** - No Update
- **Breeze Implementation** - Haven't purchased it yet. Probably next week. And will run a test document.
- **Internet Service Provider Change** - The changeover is mostly finished
- **Security Protocol Group** (Sandy and Carol) - No Update - Sandy and Carol met and went to Property with recommendations. It is recommended that three panic buttons (usher closet, pulpit, Vera's office).
- **Sound System Update** - No Update
- **Fire Alarm System** - Grace has received a \$5,000 gift which can be matched. - No Update

Active Items

- **Parking Lot Drainage Issue** - Jeff said we have a permit and hopefully within two weeks the construction will come and will take about a week. We're not going to repave it until we can see if it's fixed. It will be graveled. Carol suggested letting the congregation know that will be fixed now .

- **Troutman Update** - John reported that the committee met and distributed money for 10 group and held some money back for unexpected situations.
- **Jeffcoat-Proctor** - Pastor Steve met with the Jeffcoat-Proctor Committee and the money is coming. The committee will meet again and work on the bylaws.
- **Non-Binding Resolution: Same-Gender Marriage Discernment Process** - Coming out the retreat, Council would like to engage the Congregation in “listening post” with 2 council members recording comments from members of the congregation. Council members will only listen to answers and read it back notes, but not respond. Council will need to further consider the best time to schedule this in light of the busy church calendar during Lent and Easter.

Stewardship: Pastor Steve suggested that we move to one service on April 28-June 9. He would like to ask Worship and Music to consider. Council asked if there anyway that we could choose a middle time and do more together. Then the congregation can consider in earnest what to do after that. Council agreed to direct the Worship & Music Team to look into the possibilities for the best time for this one service.

Breakfast sign ups - Council members should please sign up to bring food and volunteer. .

Game Day Sign-ups - Pastor Steve updated the game day parking. Gail brought up selling parking for Christmas parade, graduation, etc.

Adjourn Meeting with Lord’s Prayer

Next Meeting: April 15, 2018 at 6 p.m. Devotion: Mary

May: Robin

June: Janice

July: Jeff

August: Charlie