



**Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church Council
Meeting of August 26, 2019**

Devotion by Dewey Patrick: Imagine that you are playing the game of Life and you must choose the piece that represents you. Growing up, Dewey identified that piece as the military. After college, he joined the Army and met his future wife, Tina, at Ft. Benning. They shared many interests and values. Tina was a Catholic who had grown up in a military family and Dewey was Baptist. They married two years later. They spent twenty years in the military, moving every two or three years. In this life, there are many pieces and paths that can make it hard to retain your spiritual life. They went to Protestant chapels on post and focused on their spiritual family. Retiring from the military, they came to Peachtree City thinking anything is possible. They visited all the churches. He found that most of the women in these churches weren't leaders or pastors. A neighbor told him to come to COS. Sitting in the back row, he watched as a woman and man, both who were pastors, debate on the meaning of the Scriptures. He found a sense of values from that. Twenty-one years later, they are still here. Dewey loves COS because it shares God's love for all and teaches us to be children of God, accepting differences and differences of people. In Acts: 11 (NIV), Peter goes back to Jerusalem and has a vision where God tells him that he can eat non-kosher food;⁹ *"The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'* Peter preaches to Cornelius a Roman Centurion and a Gentile. God commanded that he preach the Word to everyone, not just the Jews. God created us all. Dewey is grateful to be here.

Attendees: Pastor Fritz Wiese, Pastor Miriam Beecher, Don Livingston, Bernice Huie, Holly Monahan, Kevin Hawkins, Marty Hagberg, Dewey Patrick, Eric Jakubowski, Robbi Martin, Andrea Williams, Michael Oliver

Absent: Molly Breckling

Guest: Sue Kunig, Director of Operations

Opening Comments by Don Livingston: There will be decisions, discussions, and follow-ups from July's Council meeting.

Questions from Council on Financial Documents by Kevin Hawkins:

Operating Fund Analysis General Comments -July Income \$117,099 exceeds budget by \$30,443 due to investment income and \$10,265 in higher offerings. We also took \$20,000 of investment income. July Expenses were \$88,102 and a little over budget by \$324. Expenses were flat to budget with timing of Personnel expenses. The July Net Profit/(Loss) \$28,997 is better than offsetting. \$3K of additional benevolence. budget by \$30,119.

Discussion:

- Pastor Fritz said this is the month for special gifts and investment income. Members know this is the beginning of the fiscal year and have contributed this way before.
- Don asked about the Positive variance of \$20K for the month of July. This was from the two, one-time upfront offerings. The other \$20K is from income investments; there would be \$8K deficit without them.
- Don asked about the fiscal year deficit income vs expenses. We budgeted \$30K but the actual was about \$48K-50K. Kevin shared we ate in to the surplus from the previous year and we there is a positive balance in the checking account. Plus we have a lot in reserves.
- Don asked if we have found out how much the 15 families, who have left recently, gave yearly. Kevin said no but they now know who the top 10 contributors had been.

Follow up action items:

- Don to give a list of names of the families who have left/leaving to Sue. Sue will get a total amount, excluding names, from Bob Blackburn.

Questions on Expenses by Sue Kunig: Don had asked Sue to address three questions that were raised at the last Council meeting: insurance expenses, phone expenses, and revenue replacement for the Foundry. Sue's responses follow:

1. Insurance:

a) Property Insurance has gone up \$1500 a year (\$14,500 to \$16,000) because of the rotting dock is still in the middle of the lake and there are 14 trees that were marketed for removal. The Insurance company came out and did a physical exam of the property and share that was the reason for the increase.

Action Items: The Council agrees that the trees should be removed from the Palmetto Road property. They do not want to pay \$14,000 from the contractor who provided a bid. Holly will inform Facilities Management that Council agrees with their plan.

b) Employee Insurance: Workman's Comp for 2017 and 2018 was \$1843; for 2019 it is \$2483; COS is fully staffed now. For 2020, Portico is going up by 4%. In 2019, it went up 4.5% and in 2018 it went up 5%.

2. Phones:

a) Phone cost: We have two telephone bills; one is for four analog lines. Our Emergency system cannot be on fiber optic lines for safety requirements. AT & T requires a minimum of 4 lines for a business, we only need two, one for the fire alarm and one for the elevator. In 2017, total cost for internet and phone was \$7750.78. In 2018, we paid \$563 a month. In 2019, the cost has been August: \$695.32, July: \$659.70 and June: \$ 659.70. This July the bill went to over \$1000 because we are out of contract

Action item: Don said that he would follow up on additional options from AT&T.

3. **Legal Contact to use for TSV interaction:** Sue will give Don the contact information for Eric Slepian, an attorney in Peachtree City.
4. **The fire alarm board needs to be replaced.** The relay doesn't work so no calls can go through to the fire department. It is on an analog line. The replacement cost for the wireless dialer is \$3,207.17. The cost for the mechanics to convert to wireless is \$1,498.44. The annual cost for wireless Fire Alarm Monitoring is \$552.00.

3. Revenue replacement for the Foundry:

- a) Sunday evening: The Peachtree City Tamil School, \$80.00 per week. Annual income is \$2,560.00.
- b) Monday: Progressive Home Schoolers, \$80.00 per week. Annual income is \$2,720.00.
- c) Classical Conversation, \$30.00 per week. Last year they were charged \$25 per week. Annual income is \$720.

Discussion:

- Sue said September expenses will show how much we are losing. We received \$6,675.00 from the Foundry, which included usage. With the new groups, we will make \$6,000.00, a difference of \$675.00. The building is only being used three days a week instead of five, for a total of 13.5 hours in comparison to 40 hours with The Foundry.
- Mike asked about wear and tear expenses. Sue inspects rooms after groups leave; they will be charged for any damage found and will also be assessed with \$50 fines.
- Pastor Miriam said The Foundry will pay for the damage to the Loft walls, once it is assessed. They have already paid for damage to the floor. She said that the Foundry has now added a fee to their monthly tuition to account for damages.

Pastor Fritz Update: see attachment

- Hops and Hymns was successful with over 150 people in attendance. The coasters were great for advertising the church. Pastor Fritz's FB page garnered many responses. There was an overflow crowd and a larger venue was discussed for the next time.
- The recent decisions of the ELCA Assembly were discussed. A church member had emailed their concerns. Gary Pederson was available to answer questions last Sunday. Pastor explained how conventions take place and that sometimes communication glitches happen.
- There is a long list of recent visitors. At the recent Country Music Service, a mother with and her young family attended. She was interested in attending the church but works on Sunday mornings. Ellen Pfundt reached out to the family and helped her by picking up the children for church Sunday morning.
- There will be an October Connect Class.
- The Summer Sack Lunch Program was very successful with 267 children served weekly.
- The 'Meaningful Series' begins September 8 and continues throughout September.

Pastor Miriam Update: see attachment

- Recently two families asked for a reception after their loved one's funeral. The family of Bryan Skelton were overwhelmed by the church's response. There was also a wedding inside the church this weekend.
- Pastor Miriam thanked the members, who worked in the overbearing heat, for cleaning up at the Palmetto Road property. She thanked Don and the TSV team for the recent Q&A session. She mentioned the TSV picnic that will be held in September.

Improving Decision Making Check-up by Don Livingston: Don asked for updates.

- Marty said her committee is good. The website was discussed.
- Mike said David is still studying livestreaming. Recently a query went out to members asking about hearing issues; only 4 people responded. Thus, we will not be installing a hearing loop/ sound system.
- Dewey is continuing to study employee guidelines to ensure that we are compliant with the ELCA.

Old Business: Minutes were circulated via email on August 19, 2019. The approval quorum was met on August 22, 2019.

Update on Plan to Refresh Key Pages on Website by Pastor Fritz: Website work continues with plans to refresh the site weekly.

Discussion:

- How do we move COS up further in the list of churches, when people search for churches in Peachtree City?
 - In the results we get from our Google Paid Search Campaign, the most popular search terms in order were: 1) Christian, 2) Christian church, and 3) Lutheran church. Best Practices among all major companies show incorporating these 3 search terms on the home pages will move COS up higher on the list of churches in Peachtree City when people search for churches.
 - Pastor Fritz agreed with making 'Christian' church dominant.
 - Need to measure how long it takes to Load the front page. Shorter/faster load terms will move us up further in the search, especially when customers are search on mobile phones (which 85% of our searches on mobile)
 - **Action:** Marty to work with Reach Right on book those key words and load times
- Don asked about the plan for refreshing the website with timely events. He said that each week the front page needs new information; Thursday is the optimal day to do this. He said that this could be scheduled within the function of the website.
 - **Action:** Marty said she would check with Reachright.

- Dewey complimented the work, design, and formatting that has been accomplished.
- Pastor Miriam believes that we need feedback about the website from people not associated with the church. We need their impressions on ‘what would it feel like to attend worship’, ‘what the service will feel like’, and ‘how to explain how to find the church’. She will ask her sister to have a friend do a search for the church and relay those impressions to her. She suggests we ask our friends how they would describe the church after reviewing the website. Don and Bernice agreed that it would be beneficial to ask for outside opinions
 - **Action:** Pastor Fritz said they would collect outside opinions 4 times a year and use that to update design and language

Evangelism Meeting Update by Robbi Martin:

- The goal of reaching new people by hosting the recent Hops and Hymns event at Line Creek Brewery was successful with over 150 in attendance. People who could not come in, ate outside. People from other churches were there and some of them videoed it. This was a great way to engage people and grow members. The event was advertised in the local papers, The Citizen and The Fayette News. No date has been planned for September, but they hope to repeat the event in October using the LCB’s front room.

Discussion:

- Visitors to the church were discussed. The Visitor list is turned in every Sunday. Eric asked who oversees contacting new people. Robbi said Carol Linton Jensen told her about a couple and reached out to them. Advertising in the Pinewood area was discussed.
- Mike suggested having flash drives with music and videos in visitor packets, He said these need to be more readily available every Sunday; other churches have someone welcoming visitors to fill out information. Robbi said her group will help with that.
- Don has seen Southside Church signs/banners located at the entries of neighborhoods. Robbi suggest banners with ‘All loving and all accepting’.
- Mike asked about reaching out to non-attendees. A Missing Person’s Card could be added to the pocket in the pew or added to the Connect card.
- Discussion on who contacts non-attendees followed. In other faiths, Elders, Deacons, or disciple groups do this.
- Robbi talked about new ideas. A new church, Foundation Christian Church, is always present at community events; they give out free ice cream. Southside Church members eat lunch in schools with their young members. Heritage Church uses a banner during live streaming saying, “the church has left the building.”
- Mike suggested posing a ‘What if?’ question to congregation. Give us your two biggest ‘what if’s?’. A ‘Church Fair Expo’ for all the churches could be held and advertised in the community. Everyone agreed that if this takes place, we would be good with people choosing other churches to attend.
- Robbi asked Council if she could carry a COS banner, with ‘Y’all means All’ on it in the upcoming Atlanta Gay Pride Parade. Council said yes. Pastor Fritz said there is a wide spectrum of people on every issue, but we are together in Christ. God loves all people and God loves you.
- Pastor Miriam asked if we are welcoming to conservative persons? Have we shut people down without realizing it?

Action:

- Mike and Robbi and team will prioritize what they want to work on and bring that back to council at the next meeting.
- Robbi said she would reach out to Sara Circle.

Debrief on TSV Info Meeting by Don Livingston:

48-50 people attended the meeting; 4-6 people emailed questions. Don highlighted Palmetto Road’s history, that we do not have enough funds to maintain it, and what TSV hopes to do there. Infrastructure needs to be brought in. He gave a brief description on what an option to lease is. The major concern was: ‘How can we give anyone a direction if the church doesn’t have a master plan. How will we use the property?’ The Congregation understood for the most part.

Discussion:

- Pastor Miriam said the Congregation wants to ensure that COS is protected if TSV goes bankrupt. She heard someone say they were happy about it for a friend.
- Andrea said Lincoln Rd and Triple Creek residents are excited about it.
- Don discussed the three areas of concern: zoning, funding, master plan. He answered the question of the use of CTA funds: ‘If you leave an entity, you leave your money behind.’

Signature of Option Lease: Don, Pastor Fritz, and Kevin will sign the contract.

Update on forming a New team:

- Fritz and Don are identifying candidates that would serve on TSV’s board and represent COS’s interests. Brad Jubian is a potential; We are exploring others until we find the lead.
- Besides the Committee head who serves on the TSV board, we need to identify 2-3 additional members to work with the committee head; members should include Gary Thompson, the FMT Chair, and Lisa Manthey (Andrea’s mother).
- **Action:** Don and Pastor Fritz will work on the document defining the scope of work for the team.

Stewardship Update by Eric Jakubowski:

The Stewardship campaign is, ‘Blessed with Plenty in 2020.’ He discussed how to present stewardship for the next year. Ideas included: a 30 second survey completed on a card, ‘What does Stewardship mean to you?’; ‘What percentage do you think the average church goer gives?’; ‘In your faith journey, do you give this average? More? Less?’; ‘COS just received \$1000 anonymous gift? How should we spend it?’. He wants to raise awareness over the next year.

- Timeline: Oct 20 Kickoff, (nothing on Nov 3-All Saints Day), concluding on Nov 17. There is a Congregational meeting on that day.
- Specific Goals & metrics: Eric hopes to receive 200 response cards back and add two pledges to the Apple Tree Society.

Discussion:

- Eric asked can we pinpoint pledges that helped with reaching something we hadn’t done before. We could then say, ‘With your help, we were able to do this.’
 - **Action:** Don asked Pastor Fritz for a list and a paragraph to Eric can use .
- Kevin mentioned the additional musician for contemporary service was something new.
- Pastor Miriam raised the topic of paying off the mortgage after this fiscal year and that we can celebrate it. Marty said that was good motivation.
- Eric hopes to have tablets in the church so people can give on-line, to swipe cards for giving. He discussed different ways to instruct people on how to do it. He will ask Sue about what is available to do this.
- Mike suggested a step-by-step paper to instruct people on e-giving. Eric said there may be people willing to help people to do this at church.
- Eric shared his plan for getting the word out was to have the gift groups share the information. Don shared only 30-40% of the church is in a gift group. Thus, Eric will need additional was to reach and to connect with the church.

Input:

- Ways to increase response rates:
 1. Don-Constant Contact
 2. Eric- Second week of the campaign make phone calls.
 3. Marty-Text blasts
 4. Mike-Start advertising within 2 weeks. Eric-hang banner 2 weeks ahead of time.
 5. Eric-Ask people for testimonies
 6. Robbi-Use ministry leaders for testimonies
- Pastor Fritz commented that Stewardship is about everything we do after we say, “I believe”. We need people who see themselves as part of the Resurrection.

Closing Prayer: The Lord’s Prayer

Meeting Adjourned

Next meeting agenda items:

- **Evangelism;**
- **Attendance**
- **Plan to Repeat Worship Effectiveness Survey;**
- **TSV:** Scope of Work/Resources; gather input on vision for Palmetto Road Property

Next Council Meeting -September 23, 2019.

Offering Count Schedule

DATE	COUNT SUPERVISOR	DATE	COUNT SUPERVISOR
September 1	Breckling	October 6	Martin
September 8	Oliver	October 13	Williams
September 15	Monahan	October 20	Oliver
September 22	Hagberg	October 27	Jakubowski
September 29	Huie		