## **Minutes from Christ Our Shepherd Lutheran Church Council Meeting**

**Monday November 23, 2020**

**Members Present:** Don Livingston, Rick Burnett, Pastor Fritz, Robbi Martin, Molly Breckling, Lisa Manthey, Sue Byers, Eric Jakubowski, Mike Oliver, Mark Bunker

**Members not present:** Pastor Miriam, Bernice Huie

**Guests Present**: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by Council President Don Livingston.

This meeting was conducted via Zoom video chat.

**Devotional**:

There was no devotional during this meeting.

**Pastor Reports:**

Pastor Fritz:

-Pastor mentioned several points to council:

1. After discussing with staff, the pastors believe we can add another live in-person service beginning on January 3, 2021 at 8:30am. This service will be predicated on getting enough volunteers to help greet, usher, clean between services, etc. The thought would be to conduct a 6-7 week trial of the new time slot and then evaluate its effectiveness before deciding to make the addition permanent. Council supports this course of action, provided the needed volunteers can be found.

2. The ongoing IT infrastructure changes may yield upwards of $38,000 in savings over the next two years over the cost that we would have had to pay to stay with Liberty Tech. This full savings will only be realized, however, if we do not end up replacing our server, as LT would have required. Challenges remain, however, especially with maintaining a stable internet access point so we can safely broadcast live services.

3. Barb Anderson has coordinated for a daily Advent constant contact email with short testimonials by COS members.

4. Moravian Love Feast set to premier this year as a virtual event. Much work has been done to record all the various performances and prepare them for broadcast.

5. The Angel and Star trees will shift this year to gift cards instead of actual gifts.

6. Sara Juhasz has been accepted into the Air Force critical care nursing field.

**Financial Report:** Mark

-October collections were down 25% from budget, swinging us to a net loss for the fiscal year.

-November collections are forecast to be down 10-15% as well.

-Currently projecting about a $100k shortfall in collections for the fiscal year, but also about $70k less in expenses than budgeted due to COVID, leading us with about a $30k projected deficit at the end of the FY.

-The PPP will close the gap for this FY. Forgiveness for the PPP loan has not been applied for yet, but our entire amount $109k received is expected to be forgiven.

-Preliminary analysis is being done on a 5-year historical trend for giving, so as to better inform the next FY budgeting process.

-Mark discussed our Synod funding intention is due in January. COS has been very consistent in its desire to maintain a 10% “tithe” to the Synod and will be doing so again this year. That will result in roughly a $90k commitment intention being transmitted to Synod.

**Stewardship:** Eric

-The scheduled stewardship drive timeframe has finished and we have seen about a 30% decline in responses this year compared to last year. Since the campaign was conducted virtually this year, it is likely that the main factor for the decline is that people either are not receiving constant contact or have not read the COS emails that have been delivered to them.

-Because of the drop-off, the decision has been made to print and mail stewardship packets to any member that has not yet responded to the campaign this year. This will obviously extend the length of time that the stewardship campaign is running and soliciting responses from COS members. More analysis will be provided as the campaign closes.

**Tech Initiatives:** Eric

-Eric delivered a detailed synopsis of recent tech team initiatives, from switching IT support providers, to phone equipment, to internet access. Much work remains, but the efforts of the IT team, lead by Richard King, are already yielding synergies and cost savings over previous COS practices.

-The IT team has a standing Tuesday evening zoom meeting schedule to continue addressing COS tech modernization issues.

**Council Priorities:** Don

Don discussed council’s votes toward potential priorities for 2021. The #1 item voted on by all council and staff was creating an effective Evangelism Plan.

Other top priorities included: Live worship, online worship, support to those in need, and rebuild the Contemporary service.

**Congregational Survey:** Rick / Don

Rick shared some early results from the ongoing annual COS congregational survey.

-10% plan not to come back to live worship, even once the threat of COVID has passed. Online worship or disengagement has become their new normal.

-20% feel disconnected from COS.

-A big key for the congregation is how they personally see their own worship experience, which may be different than how Council sees the business needs of the church.

**Administration**

-Robbi spoke of the 3rd wave of calling all COS members, that it was an ongoing process, and that about half of the calling volunteers had completed their assigned calls. There may be a need for a round #4 of calling if the pandemic restrictions continue.

-Pastor Fritz mentioned that multiple Christmas Eve worship opportunities will be held, both live and virtual. *UPDATE-Due to increasing COVID cases in Fayette County, the decision has been made not to worship in the sanctuary for Christmas Eve. Instead, several drive-in live services will be held in the parking lot, in addition to the already planned streaming services.*

-A motion was made by Rick and seconded by Don to approve the October Council meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

-The Council conducted a vote via email prior to the November council meeting to approve the nomination of Barb Anderson to serve as the new Director of Connecting Ministries. The motion and vote passed unanimously.

-The council will host a day-long retreat on January 23rd to welcome in new council members and get a jump on 2021 council focus areas and work.

-The annual congregational meeting will be held on January 24th. Proposed new council members will be presented to the congregation to be formally voted into office.

**FMT:** Lisa

**-**A detailed report of the FMT’s activities was provided by Lisa.

**-**Additionally, an update was given on the status of the proposed Fellowship Hall upgrades. *UPDATE- Work has begun in the Fellowship Hall. The old stage has been completely dismantled, electrical wiring has begun and an industrial scissor lift has been rented in order to facilitate the construction and painting needs of the renovation.*

**Governance:** Don

Robbi, Shirley and Don met on November 23rd to discuss proposed updates to our governing documents based upon the detailed research work done by Bob Spruck. They looked at a number of changes (continuing resolutions). All proposed updates will be provided to council during December for a council vote to adopt at the December meeting. If approved at council, the next step would be to provide the changes to the congregation to approve at its annual meeting in January.

**Council Nominating Committee:** Rick

The nominating committee held a very productive meeting at Palmetto Road and came up with a list of names that Rick will speak with about serving on Council.

**Communications:** Don

-“Entrances” to the website continue to be dominated by either our home page (44%) or live stream of our worship services (35%).

-Don recommends that we add a special event page to highlight events like the Moravian Love Feast, Christmas services or more. It will cost approximately $500 to create the add-on page to our website, but then it will be available to be modified and updated in the future at a fraction of the initial cost.

-Additionally, there have been discussions about adding a montage background video to our homepage to give visitors a better idea of what services at COS look.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44pm by Don. We remotely closed with the Lord’s Prayer together.

The next regular monthly council meeting will be Monday December 21st, vice the 28th, due to Christmas.