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

**Monday October 26, 2020**

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

**Guests Present**: None

**Members not present:** Mike Oliver

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 by Council Vice President Rick Burnett.

This meeting was conducted via Zoom video chat.

**Devotional**:

The devotional was given by Robbi Martin.

She spoke about “Love and how it relates to the Bible.” She began by saying that there had been a weight on her shoulders lately concerning a 15-year-old young man that Robbi hired last April to work at her landscaping company and that he’s been a great worker since that time. Robbi and Shirley had eaten lunch with him recently and he relayed that his family was both religious and firmly anti-gay. He mentioned that he was feeling conflicted about how he was taught that being gay was paramount to a mortal sin, but that in his interaction with Robbi and Shirley (and overhearing a random phone call from Pastor Miriam to them) has shown him what love and acceptance could look like. Coincidentally, during that meeting Robbi received a notification on her phone that Pope Francis had recently stated in a documentary that “Homosexuals have a right to be a part of the family. They’re children of God and have a right to a family,” as the pontiff called for countries to enact new civil-union laws.

Robbi also mentioned to council Matthew 5:45-48, which states “*that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.****46****If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?****47****And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?****48****Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* Robbi also relayed a quote from Shirly Brezin that “Love your enemies is just not natural, unless the Holy Spirit is within you.” Only Jesus can tell us to pray for our enemies, and it will soften our heart toward those who wish us ill will.

**Pastor Reports:**

Pastor Fritz:

-Pastor highlighted several points from his written report:

1. He held a leaders’ Zoom meeting with any congregation members interested to discuss the latest happenings of the church. About 10 people joined in the meeting.

2. The Wednesday night “Walk into Wittenberg” would be postponed a week due to weather.

3. A 3rd round of calling would take place to connect with COS members.

4. He mentioned several activities taking place: children’s pageant and Moravian Love Feast both going virtual this year, more Christmas Eve services being added to comply with social distancing accommodations.

5. A meeting was held at the Palmetto Road property with Two Sparrows Village that ended up being attended by nearly 30 neighbors. Unfortunately, it went very badly, and many of the neighbors came loaded to bear with multiple allegations, falsehoods, and vitriolic accusations that were very disheartening to both the TSV and COS members present.

6. Goldilocks gatherings at Palmetto Road will conclude for the season as its now beginning to get colder and darker much earlier.

7. Robbi and Shirley hosted another very successful Blood Drive at COS.

Pastor Miriam:

-Pastor discussed how the Moravian Love Feast was being done virtually, with many recordings being made ahead of time with musicians from 8 states. On the day of the feast COS will host a drive-in event in the parking lot with our FM transmitter to watch the feast in addition to being able to view it online. Bags will be put together for each family so they could still have the essentials that they would have received at a live program.

-Much ‘pastor stuff’ still going on from funerals, a wedding, a baptism, counseling, etc.

-She has been very please with how Ingrid has hit the ground running in her new Dir. Of Children & Family Ministry. They will be hosting a socially distanced “Breakfast with Santa” in December.

-Congregation B’nai Israel in Fayetteville has approached COS about a collaboration next year. Details still need to be developed but it could be another way to show our community connection.

-3rd round of care calls is going out. She’s still winding down the 500 names and asking the staff to take roughly half and volunteers the other half. She also will be sending out another message and small gift for all the children of the congregation that will be delivered to each of their homes.

**Financial Report:** Mark

-Mark presented the September financial report and answered several questions pertaining to it. Collections were down $15k for the month and October is looking to be low as well. Expenses were down as well however due to less facility usage and lower personnel costs.

-PPP numbers are not being included in the reports as of now. Once COS has applied for load forgiveness in accordance with the program and the debt is officially forgiven, the amount will be brought into the ledger as additional income.

-IT expenses will be under budget for the year thanks to the work the IT team has made in looking at all of our IT-related expenses and developing a plan to more efficiently handle them which has included switching service providers. Email, phones and cell phone coverage within the building are all being addressed.

**Congregational Survey:** Rick / Don

A new survey is being developed for the congregation to take in November. It will feature many of the same questions as last year so we can see trends over time. It also will have questions asking the congregation to set council priorities, thought about Two Sparrows Village, and potential Palmetto Road enhancements.

**Council Priorities:** Don

Don mentioned that it was time to start thinking about what next year’s priorities should be, and he discussed how the “Vision 2020” team had developed a spreadsheet that the council still uses to determine emphasis items. He will send out a separate communication soliciting council inputs for next year, and will compare that against the congregational survey results.

**Administration**

-A motion was made by Rick and seconded by Molly to approve the September meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

-A COS COVID Exposure and Tracing Policy letter was drafted by Eric and submitted for council and staff input. Don made a motion to approve the policy letter, and Sue seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

-The annual Stewardship Campaign will run through the first three weeks of November with Eric as its lead. The theme this year is “Christ Our Shepherd—Our Connection Is Strong.” The logo plays off the fact that so much of this year we’ve had to rely on virtual connections, but the campaign will also highlight the many important connections that we have with God and our community and how stewardship plays into them.

-The Personnel committee in concert with staff leadership conducted a search and interview for a prospective new Director of Connecting Ministries. Not desiring to wait until the next scheduled monthly council meeting to be able to approve the nominee to the position, the council conducted an email motion and vote to approve hiring Barbara Anderson as the new Director of Connecting Ministries. The email vote passed unanimously.

**Finance Committee:** Rick

-There are several maintenance projects in the pipeline, including external painting of the church, HVAC replacement and others. Additionally, we are close to settling in on a solution for the lighting issues within the sanctuary. Funding has been allocated and work should be completed within the next few months.

-Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall improvements will be forthcoming based upon a very generous gift from a deceased COS member. A briefing will be given on the plan for the Fellowship Hall on November 8th which includes a new stage construction, painting, sound and lighting enhancements, refurbishing the audio cubicle in the back of the room, and enhancing the appearance of the kitchen window area.

-Don will write a letter to the congregation concerning Christmas staff gifts.

**Governance:** Don

Robbi will find some other people to help her review COS governing documents and potential edits/updates recommended from Bob Spruck.

**Council Nominating Committee:** Don

A meeting will be held on November 21st at Palmetto Road to discuss and nominate potential new council members to serve a 3-year term from 2021-2024. The meeting will be chaired by the council Vice President (Rick), and it will be looking to come up with 2-5 new council members to replace Don and Bernice who are rolling off the council due to term limits and fill current empty slots.

**Communications:** Don

-Website traffic is trending upward month to month. After we began streaming services directly from our website (in addition to Facebook and YouTube) the numbers have continued to increase. The breakdown of traffic coming to the COS website is:

-67% Paid searches (our $10k monthly Google grant)

-14% Organic searches (Google, Bing, Firefox, etc)

-13% Direct entry (www.coslutheran.org)

-2% Social Media

-Planned updates: Update the website to include upcoming activities, incorporate background videos, add Moravian Love Feast info

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46pm by Don. We remotely closed with the Lord’s Prayer together.

The next regular monthly council meeting will be Monday November 23rd.