

Minutes from the November 28, 2022
COS Church Council Meeting

Members In Attendance: Pastor Fritz, Pastor Miriam, Rick Burnett, Scott Bosecker, Lisa Manthey, Shelly Jones, Brad Harris, Mark Bunker, Steve Gundersen, Patrick Bauer

Members not in Attendance: Carol Jensen-Linton, Sue Byers, Sydney Watton

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

The devotional was led by Scott Bosecker who told the story of a family that he grew up with in his small Indiana community, a family with 11 kids, members of the Lutheran Church and well known within the town. The family did not have much from a material point of view but were rich with love for each other and in their mind always had enough to be grateful for what they had. Scott ran into one of the daughters a number of years back when he was in town visiting and in conversation she told the story of how one Christmas the Church brought over to their house bags of groceries for their holiday meals. She explained to Scott the negative affect that this event brought to her and her family and how to this day she winces when she thinks about it. She told Scott that she and her family never believed or thought of themselves as poor or wanting for anything in life, but that day drove home to her that as far as the community was concerned her family was the poorest of the lot. An act that the Church and community thought to be an act of kindness turned into a life-long memory of hurt and pain for her and her family. In our love for others and our desire to help the needy, we do need to be careful that our good intentions are well thought out and therefore taken in the spirit of our intentions. We might feel good about providing something to others that we believe need assistance but think it through and make certain that the recipient's feelings are taken into consideration.

Rick gave an update on the ERTC Request. About 10 days ago Rick had requested a status update from Mark Reese (CPA that COS had contracted with to apply for ERTC Funding). As of tonight, no response to that email had been received. Rick speculated that Mr. Reese may have prioritized his efforts towards larger Midwest churches that potentially offer a bigger payback.

Pastor Wiese provided his monthly report that centered around the following topics/updates:

- Comments on the Stewardship Campaign: Good news – Many people who have filled out Commitment Cards have increased their commitment from the previous year. Bad news – The number of Commitment Cards submitted (so far) is less than hoped for. Good feedback has been received on the printed materials used in this year's Stewardship campaign.
- David Beecher's retirement Sunday was a huge success and Pastor Wiese passed on to Council a huge thank-you from David and the Beecher's for making his day such an enjoyable experience
- Pastor Wiese stated that David, as he moves into retirement, is willing to continue to lead the M&M group and the Bell Choirs as we move into 2023 and transition to a new Minister of Worship & Music and will receive a weekly stipend for doing this.
- We are in the process of upgrading our technology under the leadership of our Technology team and with these upgrades have come a few issues that we have successfully dealt with. While

frustrations have arisen we are so fortunate that we have talented members who have worked hard to put these issues behind us.

- We had a very successful Thanksgiving food drive and were able to provide Thanksgiving dinners to a record number of families within our community as a result of the generosity of our members.
- As Christmas approaches the Pastors pointed out that we will need volunteers to participate in our Christmas Eve services,
- If Council has no issues with it, new member Karen Shelnutt will be using a room at the church to talk with people in the community that are looking for spiritual direction.
- Pastor Wiese indicated that trip to Israel in June has room for additional people. Rick mentioned 3 books that would be good to read prior to the tour.

Pastor Wiese then moved on to provide Council an update on the **Sanctuary Improvement Project** making the following points:

- Alberto has made presentations to the large group of congregation members who have been involved with the project from its inception. Back-and-forth conversations have taken place in real-time and progress continues to be made with regards to gaining concurrence on ideas.
- The outcome of these meetings and information sharing with Alberto will be taken to a smaller group for further discussion and recommendations in the near future.
- To date, money has not been discussed
- New flooring, seating arrangement and Chancel improvements continue to be at the forefront of many of the conversations.
- Rick asked “What support does this group (Sanctuary Improvement) need from council?”. The general answer was, “Nothing right now.” Going forward Brad Harris will continue to be the interface between Council and the Sanctuary Improvement Team.
- We have finished the project to paint the ceiling and install the new lights much to the satisfaction of all and, in the process took great care to protect the organ from any damage while the work was being completed. This part of the project was completed on budget.

Pastor Wiese then moved on to provide Council with an update on **filling the Minister of Worship and Music position**. We have advertised the position with a number of relevant associations to include the American Guild of Organist. We have had 136 individuals view our posting on AGO and only 2 have actually inquired/applied for the position, neither of which really met our requirements. We have been very fortunate that an applicant from the Midwest, known to a few members of the search team, has shown great interest in the position and a Zoom interview will be conducted with this individual in the upcoming days. We are very hopeful that this individual might be the answer to our prayers. The Personnel Committee will be discussing this in much more detail at the December 12 monthly meeting.

Pastor Miriam then took over and stated that she had been crossing things off her list as Pastor Fritz gave his report. The few items that she still wanted to bring to the attention of Council were as follows:

- Shelly Jakubowski is still working quite effectively as our Interim Director of Youth and Family Ministries. Where Shelly has been quite clear to emphasize the “interim” portion of her title, she will continue to provide leadership to this ministry as we move into CY 2023, with the promise that we will continue to vigorously work to fill this position.
- The Contemporary Music Team continues to excel. We have begun to pay a Sunday stipend to a number of our musicians in order to establish regular participation from these musicians.
- As always, Pastor Miriam ended on a positive point, that we are a Church, a congregation that is full of welcoming people and that this attitude is contagious and is evident with our recent new member classes and ever-increasing participation by our people in the service to our community.

Mark Bunker then provided the **monthly financial update**. The report (excel spreadsheet) is attached. Mark reported that October Income was about 18% below budget (\$14,500 short). Expenses were about 13% below budget (around \$11,000). This results in about a loss of about \$5,300 for October. Despite this, the year-to-date numbers are still in the black. November giving is looking very favorable at this time – so much so that Mark felt that quite a bit of the previous couple of month’s shortfalls would be made up.

Mark then brought a motion to the floor for discussion and vote as follows:

Motion & Vote to Approve: Move that Mark Bunker and John Musil be appointed as Mission Investment Fund (MIF) Online Administrators who will be granted access to MIF Online Services to manage access and ministry investments. Mark Bunker will be the Enrollment Officer

Scott Bosecker seconded the motion. There was no discussion from the members present. A vote was taken and unanimously approved.

Scott Bosecker then led a discussion on our **contract with Reach Right for 2023**. Reach Right is our webmaster, our Google Grant administrator and our listing management consultant. In a nutshell, those services provided by Reach Right are increasing \$150/month as we move into 2023. We are very pleased with our partnership with Reach Right as we now begin our 5th year of working together. Because we are budgeted on a fiscal year basis (July-June) we have six (6) months remaining in this budget year where this additional \$150 is not budgeted for. The discussion therefore was two-fold, a) do we stay with Reach Right and incur this additional cost and b) if so, where is that money coming from. Two to-dos came out of this discussion. First, Scott would confirm with Reach Right that we could sign up for the increase in cost and additional services on a month-to-month basis and not get locked into a longer term contract that we might not be able to afford. Second, with a few suggestions being made related to Restricted & Reserve accounts being possible funding sources, Council sent this request to staff to work to find a funding source for these services.

Scott then gave an **update on this year’s nomination committee** stating that he had two commitments to serve on Church Council for a 3-year term beginning January 2023. He still has a few folks to call and is confident that he will get the minimum of 3 new Council members from this remaining group of folks recommended by the nomination committee. 5 of the 14 names suggested at the meeting remained to be contacted. Scott anticipated he would be through the list by December 9th.

Scott also reported that two couples had been identified as possible Synod Assembly attendees. Scott indicated

A few administrative items were discussed, a) motion to approve the October Council Meeting minutes which was approved unanimously, b) Staff Christmas Love Gift letters have been sent out to COS members and c) annual reports from staff/council are due to Linda by January 6, 2023.

There was no further discussion and the meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted

Rick Burnett