

Saint Luke Lutheran Church
Congregation Meeting
November 22, 2020

The meeting convened on webcast from the Saint Luke website at 11:33 am.

Pastor Miller opened the meeting with prayer.

President Scott Leonard called the meeting to order.

Voting and Comment Procedures

Deacon Warfield explained the process for voting online and by telephone. He also explained the process for submitting questions or motions through the website. For those who preferred to use the telephone for voting or asking questions, volunteers were staffing the phones to record responses. Financial Secretary Scott McKay acted as teller for votes received by internet and telephone votes were relayed to him by the tellers.

Members were invited to try the process by voting on a test question regarding Deacon Warfield and coffee. Everyone was asked to vote in order to determine the quorum for the meeting. A total of 126 cast votes, so a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda

The agenda for the meeting was presented and Scott Leonard asked that it be approved by unanimous consent. There being no objections, the agenda was approved as proposed.

The minutes of the congregations meetings of June 2 and 9, 2019 and September 13 through 28, 2020 were presented for approval. Scott Leonard proposed that they be approved by unanimous consent. There being no objection, the minutes were approved as presented.

Senior Pastor's Report

Pastor Miller presented the report of the Senior Pastor. She called members' attention to the book of annual reports, noting that these were prepared in April to cover the preceding year and that a great deal had happened since that time, particularly the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pastor Miller reminded everyone that this was the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in the Lutheran Church in the United States. Pastor Elizabeth Platz was ordained in November 1970 and served as the Lutheran Campus Minister at the University of Maryland and continues her ministry by serving as the Teaching Pastor at Saint Luke. Pastor Miller then reminded us of the women who have entered ministry from this congregation as well as other women who have served in ministry at Saint Luke.

Pastor Miller reviewed the changes in ministry required to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Buildings are closed but ministry continues in new ways, particularly through outreach using the internet. She expressed appreciation for the work of Deacon Warfield, Dan Thomas, Andrew Vigliotta, and Jonathan Hernandez who provided technical skills for the webcasts of worship and educational events. Pastor Miller also expressed appreciation for the leaders of the faith formation programs that involve people of all ages. She noted that this meeting was the 102nd webcast from Saint Luke. Pastor Miller noted that there were also losses as we have not been able to gather to grieve the deaths of members nor visit those who are hospitalized. She reported that we are monitoring information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and the Montgomery County Health Department but that with an increasing infection rate it is not likely that we can open soon. Staff who are working in the church building are being tested periodically for COVID-19.

Pastor Miller thanked members for the financial support that has been provided to Saint Luke. She urged everyone to complete a faith commitment if they had not already done so. The need for food assistance has increased and Saint Luke's food pantry was able to provide \$10,000 in one week in food vouchers to those in need.

Ralph Watkins presented the report of the Nominating Committee. Sarah Pfanz moved that the congregation elect the following persons for the positions noted:

Congregation Council

Benjamin Gray, Matt Shugert, Gerson Vasquez, Valerie Grussing, Reyna Lopez, and Emi Carlsperger (Youth Member).

Mission Endowment Fund Board of Managers

Alysha Rajnarine and Nancy Gurganus

Audit Committee

Phil Curtin and Rachel Cobbs

President Scott Leonard opened the floor for additional nominations, but none were received. Voting then began and at the conclusion of the voting period, President Leonard announced there were 123 votes in favor, 1 opposed, and no abstentions, so the nominations were approved.

Stewardship Campaign

Dr. Lynne Yao updated the congregation on our stewardship campaign for 2021. She began with images of the pandemic as a reminder of how we needed to adapt to changed circumstances. Dr. Yao described the efforts of the Stewardship Committee to communicate through the internet to both our regular members and those new to our community through their participation in internet worship. She then displayed a graph of the number of pledges received to date, compared to the previous year. The next graph showed that we are slightly more than halfway to the dollar amount pledged in the previous year. It appears that some of our members are increasing their support in response to the increased needs caused by the pandemic. She

then reviewed the method for pledging online. She noted that everyone who had set up automatic giving is counted as pledging but asked people to submit a faith commitment for the coming year.

Financial Report

Deacon Warfield presented an update on finances. He noted that our fiscal year begins August 1, and since March there were many changes caused by the pandemic, particularly the closing of facilities. The gap between income and expenses has been reduced and we anticipate that we may have a positive cash flow, reversing a long-standing trend of deficit. He noted that offerings have exceeded the previous year's for two months. This has been achieved by reducing expenses through reductions in staff and controlling other expenses, particularly for heating and cooling the building. The goal is to be more efficient in our use of resources so that we can continue many of these savings when COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and we can resume normal activities.

Budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

Deacon Warfield then reviewed the budget that is proposed for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Because of the delay in holding the Annual Congregation Meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Finance Committee had recommended that Council act to approve the spending limits from the prior year until the congregation was able to meet and act on a budget.

Sarah Pfanz presented a motion on behalf of Congregation Council to approve budgets for the 2020-21 fiscal year as follows:

General (operations) Fund	\$1,084,836
Christian Day School	446,445
Hallowood Fund	260,773

President Leonard then asked if there were any motions from the floor. Benjamin Gray questioned whether it was appropriate to approve a budget with a deficit when the intent was to operate with a balanced budget going forward. Jeff Erickson asked for a display onscreen of the full budget rather than the partial year that was shown earlier. Deacon Warfield responded that we would post the full budget as soon as possible. Treasurer Rick Ahlberg responded with regard to the potential deficit budget, explaining that, if our building is able to reopen as the pandemic ends, there would be increased expenses so the budget allowed some leeway for spending above current levels if needed. Another question was about using a shorter-term resolution rather than a budget for the remainder of the fiscal year. Rick Ahlberg explained that as a budget requires congregational approval, it seemed better to have a budget and allow the Council to make adjustments as needs might arise.

President Scott Leonard then opened the voting. At the conclusion of the voting, President Leonard announced that there were 127 Yes votes, 2 No votes, and 4 abstentions.

Mission Endowment Fund

Brock Beamer gave a presentation on behalf of the Mission Endowment Fund. He reminded members that the Fund was established in 1999 to provide a financial base for the congregation and for ministries beyond the congregation. For the current year, earnings on the endowment were approximately \$80,000. Explanations regarding the proposed window inserts for the sanctuary windows would reduce heating and cooling costs as well as outside noise. The Girl Scout project proposed by Emi Carsperger would teach young women to use power tools in repairing the deck of the house at 915 Highland Drive. It was explained that Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem was proposed because of greatly increased demands for healthcare due to COVID-19 at the same time that its sources of government funds were disrupted by political disputes.

Sarah Pfanz, on behalf of Council, moved to approve the following grants recommended by the Mission Endowment Fund Board of Managers:

Saint Luke Congregation

Caring Ministries quilting, prayer shawl, and needle ministries	\$1,650
Sanctuary windows retrofit inserts	9,999.25
Emi Carlsperger Girl Scout Gold Award Project	1,600

Local Community

Food Pantry	\$20,000
National Capital Area Lutheran Social Services	5,000

Global Community

Poultry and Gardening Supplies (El Jacerero and Joiutla, Mexico)	\$12,000
Augusta Victoria Hospital	20,000

The total of all grants was \$70,249.25

A comment was submitted by Brian Horick through the website regarding the MEF grants. Correcting the amount for the Girl Scout project (originally listed as \$8,217 but was actually \$1,600). The correction was accepted by unanimous consent.

President Leonard then called for the vote on the MEF grants. The vote tally was announced as 121 yes, 2 no, and no abstentions.

Renewing Call of Pastor Morales

Pastor Miller explained that Pastor Morales's call is a term call because the funding for his position includes funding from the Metro DC Synod as well as other sources not under St. Luke's control. The funding has been renewed so the Council recommends that the call of Pastor Morales be renewed for an additional two years.

Sarah Pfanz presented the motion from Council that the two year term pastoral call for Associated Pastor Franklin Jose Morales be extended (renewed) for two additional years.

There was no further discussion.

President Leonard then asked people to vote on the question of renewing Pastor Morales' call. At the conclusion of voting, President Leonard announced that there were 115 yes votes, none against, and no abstentions so the call was renewed.

Amendments to the Constitution

Sarah Pfanz moved the approval of the amendments proposed by Council.

Scott Leonard explained that the majority of the amendments were provisions that are mandatory in the model constitution for congregations as approved by the Churchwide Assembly. There were also proposals for amending optional provisions where the Council was recommending language identical to amendments recommended by Churchwide Assembly. The Council also was recommending a change to an optional paragraph regarding the membership of Council. Council proposed to delete the requirement to have a young adult member under the age of 30, and to replace that with a direction to the nominating committee to set a goal of having at least one person in that age category.

Barbara Sanders asked why the congregation's constitution varied from the model and also raised a question about the election of synod assembly members by the congregation. Scott Leonard explained that the difficulty of recruiting Council members under the age of thirty was the reason that Council was proposing to change that from a requirement to a goal. Rick Ahlberg reported that the proposal for congregational election of synod assembly members was a required paragraph.

President Leonard called for members to vote on the amendments. At the conclusion of voting, President Leonard announced that there were 90 votes in favor, none against, and 1 abstention.

Motion Concerning Finances

Benjamin Gray moved, seconded by Sarah Pfanz, adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, while operating under the budget for fiscal 2021 approved by the Congregation today, the Congregation Council - as advised by the Finance Committee - will also continue existing efforts to balance expenses and income over the course of the fiscal year.

President Leonard suggested that the resolution be adopted by unanimous consent. There being no objection, the resolution was adopted.

Closing Remarks

Pastor Miller stated that in reading her notes on the women who had served in ministry at Saint Luke she had misread her handwriting and overlooked Deacon Katie Miller, who served in the Christian Education ministry for several years.

Pastor Miller then offered a closing prayer.

Adjournment

By unanimous consent the meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Ralph Watkins
Secretary