

Congregation Meeting
Saint Luke Lutheran Church
Silver Spring, Maryland
March 26, 2023

Note: The meeting was held in person and also online, beginning at 10:00 am following the 8:45 am worship service.

Announcement of Agenda

President Matt Shugert reviewed the purposes for this special congregation meeting.

Opening Prayer

Pastor Miller opened the meeting with prayer seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit for all our discussions and decisions.

Election of Voting Members of Synod Assembly

Pastor Miller noted that the procedure for selecting voting members of Synod Assembly had been changed, requiring election by the congregation, so this special meeting was necessary. She also noted that Saint Luke was allocated nine lay delegates, with rostered members also attending.

The nominees for lay voting members were:

Kathy Bergeron
Dee Clarkin
Ry Cobbs
Blake Danser
Carlos Esquivel
Ruth Manchester
Paola Morales
Sarah Province
Matt Shugert

Andi Carlson moved, seconded by Ed Fenstermacher, to elect the persons nominated. There were no nominations from the floor.

President Matt Shugert explained that the vote would be held open until Thursday, March 30, at noon to enable those who could not attend in person to cast their votes. It was noted that the electronic ballot allows voting for individual nominees as well as voting for all nominees.

The results of the voting were: 80 all nominees; 1 for all nominees except Dee Clarkin; and 6 invalid votes (no name of voter to check against membership list).

Approval of Change in Funding for Roof/Solar Project

Treasurer Rick Ahlberg, Jr. explained the need for the resolution. The previous resolution for repair of the roof and installation of solar panels included the amount of \$349,000. Due to cost

overruns on the roofing project caused, in part, by the bankruptcy of the contractor that was, in turn, largely the result of the job foreman returning to El Salvador after family members there were murdered. These unforeseen developments increased the cost of the roofing project. Also, due to a change in tax laws, the benefits of paying directly for installation increased substantially. The Council recommended that the amount allotted for the installation of the solar panels be increased accordingly to implement a direct purchase of the solar power system.

The previous amount approved for the solar project was the net cost, based in part on the expectation that under tax law applicable at that time an investment corporation would pay for the installation, receive tax credits, and then sell the system to the church. With a change in tax law, tax exempt organizations are now eligible for tax rebates on solar installations. This would require the church to pay a larger amount for the installation at the outset but we would receive the full benefit of tax rebates for the solar system.

The proposed new total expenditure would be \$408,000. The final net cost will be \$295,600.

A question was asked what would happen if a contractor defaults. Deacon Warfield responded that the roof was complete so that was not anticipated with respect to that contractor. He also stated that the solar company was a large national firm that seemed stable and the church has paid only a portion of the total cost and that later payments would be due only after completion of various phases. Rob Hebensperger, the Chair of the Property Committee, advised that he understood that the solar installation company had a performance bond, so we would be protected from a default.

A question was asked about the savings that would result from the solar panels. Rick Ahlberg and Deacon Warfield responded that the savings would be approximately \$30,000 annually, based on current usage at Saint Luke.

President Matt Shugert then displayed the resolution that had been approved at the June 5, 2022 congregation meeting with the proposed amendment noted:

Be it resolved that Saint Luke Lutheran Church

- 1) sell the cell tower easement to Symphony Wireless for \$300,000, with sharing of future additional revenue of additional carriers 50%/50%; and
- 2) have the building reroofed by Luna's Home Improvement and a solar array installed by Sustainable You, at a cost not to exceed [~~\$349,000~~] **\$408,000**, with detailed spending to be managed by the Congregation Council and appropriate committees.

Because this would amend a previously adopted resolution, a two-thirds majority would be required.

President Shugert announced that the voting would be held open until noon on Thursday to enable absent members to vote on the resolution.

The results of the voting were: 86 yes; 3 invalid votes – no name; no votes against; and no

abstentions.

President Shugert expressed gratitude to Deacon Warfield, Ron Hebensperger, and Rick Ahlberg for their work on the roofing and solar power installation proposal.

Closing Prayer

Pastor Miller closed the meeting with a prayer of thanks for those serving as voting members of the Synod Assembly and for the opportunity to care for the environment through use of solar power.

The meeting was then in recess until Thursday, March 30, at noon.

Ralph Watkins
Assistant Secretary/Archivist