



FARMINGTON EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES



February 10, 2009

Present: Senior Pastor Jeff Dorman; Council Members Scott Neurauter (President), Matt Piller (Vice President), Chris Birch, Phyllis Bles, Vicky Cole, Rick Fencil, Tim Grundler, Gary Johnson, Sara Otterness, Matt Piller, Diane Randall and Alison Wenck; Treasurer Sandy Christensen. Absent: Craig Beissel

CALL TO ORDER

President Neurauter called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

DEVOTIONS

Pastor Jeff led devotions, based on "25 Promises for Troubled Times." Council members discussed a list of 25 promises that come from God's Word.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Turning Grips into Goals – Pastor Jeff said that Council members should realize that conflicts come up in any church family. Members should listen to concerns but not let them rule the day. Discussion should include what someone would really like to see changed. He encouraged goal setting for ministry teams to help them deal with concerns and issues.

APPROVALS OF:

Agenda – Wenck made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Cole. Johnson asked for an addition to the agenda regarding the rule that the Council must pass a motion to extend a meeting past two hours. Motion carried.

Secretary's Report -- The minutes for the January 13th regular Council meeting were approved on a motion by Johnson, seconded by Randall. Motion carried. The minutes for the January 25th Annual Congregational Meeting were accepted on a motion by Johnson, seconded by Birch. Motion carried. These minutes will be considered for approval at the annual meeting next January.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Neurauter reminded Council members of "Tool Kit," a February 28th continuing education event for congregational leaders offered by the St. Paul Area Synod.

He announced that installation of the Council would take place February 22nd at both services. Installment would take place at the end of the first service and the beginning of the second service. Council members were asked to meet and greet people in a receiving line at the end of each service.

He announced that the annual Synod Assembly was scheduled for May 29th and 30th, which is graduation weekend in Farmington. He said the congregation is entitled to five delegates at the assembly. Anyone interested in attending was asked to notify either Neurauter or Pastor Jeff.

COMMUNION SIGNUP

Neurauter distributed a signup sheet for communion assistants.

REPORTS

Treasurer's Report

Christensen said Council members would notice that the printed report looked different. She said the report now compares the monthly performance to the same month the previous year to help monitor changes in contributions and spending. The report indicated that total receipts for January were \$50,667.87 compared to budgeted receipts of \$55,032. General Fund offerings of \$37,000 were very close to the budgeted amount. However, receipts for the Building Fund to pay the building mortgage and assessments were only \$11,314 compared to the expected \$14,000 and the \$16,551 needed to make the monthly mortgage payment. If giving to that fund were to continue at the present rate, FLC would be about \$100,000 short by the end of the year. Her report stated that January expenses were \$69,538.93 versus a budgeted amount of \$67,101. The report showed a negative cash flow for January of \$18,871.06.

Johnson asked if there was any way of knowing if some members who had pledged to the Building Fund were not keeping up with those pledges. He also suggested contacting those who have not kept up. Pastor Jeff said that a list of total giving to that fund in 2008 does exist. He said the Council could review the list to see if some people were not keeping up or if some had never made a pledge.

Pastor Jeff said he thought it was helpful to see the month-by-month comparisons in the treasurer's report. Randall asked if there was a way to compare giving "to what we actually need in revenues." Christensen said she could add another line concerning the unfunded amount.

Christensen said that FLC's financial status is about \$19,000 to the negative. Dedicated funds are being used to help meet budget obligations.

Pastor Jeff said, "We're already borrowing from ourselves to make ends meet." Christensen said that some funds remain from the "Moving Forward" campaign although a property tax assessment payment will be due in May.

She added, "We can't afford too many months where we are eating \$18,000 into our pocket." Discussion also included saving money by sending correspondence via e-mail to members who request it. FLC spends approximately \$7,000 per year for mailings.

Blees made a motion to approve the treasurer's report; seconded by Johnson. Motion carried.

Senior Pastor

Pastor Jeff had not prepared a written report.

Ministry Team Reports Received

Several ministry team reports were distributed via e-mail, including:

Children's Ministries – The report said Maria Tarpinian, Director of Children's Ministries, and Autumn Enright, Ministry Coordinator, had compiled attendance figures from Sept. 10 through Dec. 17 for education sessions. Attendance on Wednesday evenings (74.3%) was more consistent than at the Sunday sessions (9 a.m. classes – 56.5%; 10:30 a.m. classes – 39.8%). The team had discussed naming classrooms to make it easier for parents and children to find them. Even though attendance was low, the team thought the Epiphany Extravangza had been a worthwhile event and decided to offer it again next year.

A Camp Sunday was planned for February 15th, featuring summer camps and Vacation Bible School. A FamFest with the theme “God’s Blessings” would be offered for families from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Sunday, February 22nd. Youth and Children’s ministries are considering a family campout on FLC’s grounds, which offers both nearby woods and a fire pit for campfires.

Fellowship and Service – This team had discussed the budget, the need for signatures from the Council representative for all expenses and reorganizing/cleaning the pantry. June 11th was set as the tentative date for the salad luncheon. The group discussed the possibility of asking for donations of ingredients as well as salads and desserts.

Global Missions – The team had approved sending \$1,000 to Mission Jamaica to be used for gifts and items for the children at Garland Hall. Funds had been donated to sponsor two additional students in Tanzania, making the total 15. The \$1,000 donated to Community Action Council would assist Farmington families with utility emergencies. Global Missions planned to support a monthly food drive for the local food shelf on the first weekend of every month.

Worship and Music – This group had unanimously voted to table the purchase of the new ELW hymnals due to financial challenges faced by members and the congregation. The budget for this team had been reduced by a total of \$1,500. Discussion had included expanding the opportunity to assist with communion beyond Council members, planning for Rally Sunday, training of ushers and identifying those in the congregation who have been trained as emergency responders. The Sonshine Singers had asked to have a fundraiser in May for Last Hope Animal Shelter. The Design Team had requested that those who set up tables/displays on weekends remove them after the last worship service. If the tables are not removed, they can interfere with other activities during the week. Also, if the custodian and volunteers have to remove displays, materials can be misplaced. Neurauter said the goal is to keep the narthex space fairly uncluttered.

Outreach and Growth – The team had discussed the value of participating in the recent Farmington Expo. For a cost of \$20, participation was determined to be effective. It was decided to present new members with red ribbons and nametags rather than carnations, which cost \$3.00 each. Another cost-cutting move was to discontinue the FLC listing in Thisweek newspaper. Six weeks of ads would cost \$122.40 with the cost increasing after six weeks. Instead a postcard will be sent to new residents, with 1,000 postcards costing \$101.14.

Neurauter reminded Council members to fill out and submit the ministry report form each month. The form provides space for proposed motions and brief notes on team activities and the group’s meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Development Task Force Update

Neurauter said the task force had met several times. The group has been keeping the congregation informed through a letter, newsletter articles and a presentation about the annual meeting by Roger Randall. A celebration of ministries is underway. The basic theme has been “***Deeper Commitment, Greater Generosity.***”

Pastor Jeff said the team believes the congregation should be informed about the financial situation in January. He asked if a member of the task force would volunteer to speak briefly about the fact that FLC is \$18,000 short and explain why. Johnson volunteered to provide a brief update at worship services.

Pastor Jeff said that one of the many things being considered was asking members to give 1% above that they gave last year. The task force is looking for people to raise their giving on a permanent basis, otherwise FLC will be doing fundraisers every six months or so. Also, he said, "We could use an infusion of cash right now. If some are able to give that 1% in the near future, it will help us with the cash flow crunch while waiting for the rest of the congregation to catch up if spreading it out over the next 10 months." He added, "We are the leaders of the church. You need to take a look at 1% of your income. We can't just sit in this room and say, 'They should do it.' We have to make a deeper commitment and invite the rest of the congregation to join us."

Reminder about the Expense Motion that was Passed and the Process

Neurauter reminded the Council about the recent motion that called for all expenses to be approved by ministry team leaders/Council members.

NEW BUSINESS

Appoint representatives to the Endowment and Cemetery Committees

Neurauter said Council representatives were needed to serve on the Endowment Committee and the Cemetery Committee. Cole volunteered for the Cemetery group and Wenck for the Endowment group.

Quilters' Request for Raffle

Wenck said the quilting group had inquired about offering a raffle to benefit the youth mission trip. The group had learned that some youth might not be able to take part in the mission trip due to financial reasons. The quilters had recently received generous donations for quilting materials and wanted to share their blessings. They proposed making three quilts to be raffled off, with the youth required to sell the raffle tickets. She had researched the ELCA's guidelines for raffles and distributed them via e-mail to Council members.

Wenck made a motion that the quilters be allowed to set up a raffle for the purpose of raising awareness of their group and raising money for the youth mission trip. Birch seconded the motion. During discussion, Pastor Jeff suggested a friendly amendment stating that this was a one-time raffle due to a specific nature and needs. Also mentioned were encouraging the youth to sell raffle tickets outside the congregation, specifying a time period and providing youth with a script for marketing. Bles made a motion to amend the motion, inserting the statement about "a one-time raffle due to a specific nature and needs." Johnson seconded. The motion carried unanimously, as did the original motion.

Keys and Security Code

Neurauter said he would provide building keys and security codes to new Council members. He said the security system is armed automatically at a specific time. Whoever is the first to arrive after the system has been armed must enter a code to disarm the system. If someone enters the building without disarming the system, a silent alarm will go to the security company. He said the Farmington Police Department responds to three alarm calls each year at no charge. Each additional call is billed at \$150. Thus far in 2009, FLC has used two of its three free responses.

Communion Training

Pastor Jeff said he would train the new Council members after the meeting.

Offering Training

Neurauter said that Council members are required to collect the offering envelopes and information cards if no one from the Stewardship Ministry Team is present. Two people should collect the offering baskets and take them to the office. They should then separate the envelopes from the cards and place the offering in the specified secure place.

Rule to Extend Council Meetings – Grundler said the rule came into being several years ago when meetings routinely ran until 10:30 or 11 p.m. The rule was developed so the meetings would be finished in a timely manner. Johnson made a motion to abolish the rule that required a motion to extend the Council meeting if it went beyond two hours from the starting time. Wenck seconded the motion. Pastor Jeff said the goal is to have meetings completed in a timely fashion. Motion carried.

Budget Decisions

Neurauter said he wanted everyone to be aware of what was happening with the budget, where FLC might possibly be next month and that the Council might have to make some decisions. Pastor Jeff said he had talked with staff members and asked them to avoid spending for anything that is not necessary. He encouraged the Council to ask their ministry teams to avoid any expenses that can be avoided. Neurauter asked that Council members keep the budget situation in their thoughts and prayers. Pastor Jeff said, “We don’t want to panic. We want to be in prayer. It’s going to take some sacrificial giving.”

The Council also discussed establishing a task force to assist with negotiating a new mortgage. Johnson made a motion to establish a task force with a minimum of three members for the purpose of negotiating a new mortgage for the church. Grundler seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Cole made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Birch. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m., followed by the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Lea Guenther
Recording Secretary

MEETING REMINDERS:

Executive Board: Tuesday, March 3, 7 p.m.

Next Council Meeting: March 10, 7 p.m.