



FARMINGTON LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING



November 10, 2009

Present: Senior Interim Pastor Phil Walen and Treasurer Sandy Christensen; Council Members Scott Neurauter (President), Chris Birch, Vicky Cole, Rick Fencl, Diane Randall, Phyllis Bles, Alison Wenck and Kent Porter. Absent: Council Members Vicky Cole, Gary Johnson, Tim Grundler and Sara Otterness (Vice President).

CALL TO ORDER

President Neurauter called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

DEVOTIONS

Bles led devotions.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Neurauter asked for additions or changes to the agenda. Randall asked to add two items regarding outreach under new business. Bles also asked to mention an item from a member and Birch requested the addition of an item. Porter made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Birch. Motion carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Neurauter asked for a volunteer host for the December meeting, which traditionally has been a potluck. Wenck volunteered. Neurauter explained that he had been absent from the Town Hall meeting the previous weekend due to illness.

COMMUNION SIGNUP

The communion sign up sheet was circulated.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

Interim Senior Pastor

Pastor Phil distributed a written report. He said he would be officiating on at a memorial service. He had attended two days of interim ministry course work and would complete the requirements with a week of course work in the spring. He has been assisting the Worship and Music Team with exploring a Worship Coordinator program for Sunday mornings. The Ministerial Association was planning an ecumenical Thanksgiving service to be held the evening of November 23rd at FLC. Pastor Phil said that as a member of the Synod Book of Faith he would be a presenter for the Book of Faith Toolkit event set for November 14th.

Pastor Phil said he would like to spend a half-hour in Bible study prior to each Council meeting. The Council agreed to begin the study at the next meeting.

He asked the Council for reactions to the recent Town Hall meeting, both regarding what they had heard and how things were received. Wenck said she thought Pastor Phil had done "a fabulous job." Fencl added that questions had been handled very well. Christensen said she thought it was good to point out to people the recommendation that FLC would not "bring in people that we don't have money to pay for."

Questions had included why FLC needed transition time and if FLC was actively looking for a permanent pastor. Another remark dealt with a misunderstanding that the Synod had been trying to manipulate FLC's process. Fencl said he thought the fact that attendance was small meant "that most people are very happy with things now, compared to the crowd at our last Town Hall meeting." Randall said she thought the analogies used were good. She had heard only positive comments. Bles was pleased that no one appeared to be angry or put Pastor Phil on the defensive. Birch said that the members he has talked with are no longer in a hurry to start a call process. Fencl said he liked the fact that Pastor Phil had provided attendance numbers. Pastor Phil said he would like to see additional specific numbers provided, possibly on the web site. Christensen suggested that copies of the Treasurer's report be made available at church.

Pastor Phil thanked the Council for their responses. He said his sense was that most of his comments were well received. Fencl said he appreciated Pastor Phil taking the time to present a Town Hall meeting. It was noted that the meeting was audio-recorded for anyone who would like to listen to it.

Treasurer's Report

Christensen pointed out that cash balances were lower for October than for September. She said the drop was mostly the result of dedicated fund activity and "pretty much all related to cash that went out the door for the mission trip to Tanzania and a contribution to the St. Paul Area Synod." Also, she said, payment had been made for the second portion of the assessment.

She asked the Council to take a look at the General Fund figure, which was up to \$38,000, very close to the figure at the start of year. The Building Fund was not looking good, Christensen said, due to the payment of the assessment. Total operations totaled \$36,000 after starting the year at \$39,000, she said, adding, "At the beginning of summer, we did not expect to be anywhere near there. It really is very exciting that we're holding steady to where we were at the beginning of the year. Cash is down but activity for the operations of the church is actually on a positive trend."

Christensen said the Building Fund was on track with \$12,000. A very large contribution of \$20,000 had been received in October. General Fund income was over \$58,000, which she termed "very helpful and very nice to see. Current projections indicate we should come out at least \$10,000 ahead," she said. "Considering how things were looking earlier this summer, it's looking good. Hopefully it will be even better than that."

She said the second mortgage on the building had been refinanced at the same rate and the same terms as in the past. She said she had received another bill from Allied Tech, the company that formerly provided HVAC services. Birch said the company's representative had requested a meeting before the cancellation went into effect. Birch said he already had sent a cancellation letter. Christensen said she would send a copy of the letter to the company and state that the bill would not be paid.

Randall asked where the payments to the St. Paul Area Synod were listed in the Treasurer's Report. Christensen said the payments were under benevolences. Randall commented that Synod payments should be clearly listed.

The printed report said the cash balance on October 31st was \$86, 632.95, which compared to \$100,998.78 at the end of September and \$91,788.41 at the start of the year. The report showed a decrease in cash of \$13,618.69 during the month of October and an overall decrease in cash of

\$7,155.46 for the year. The Statement of Activities showed that revenues in October totaled \$71,478.11 versus expenses of \$75,362.07 for a net decrease of \$3,883.96. The report noted that General Fund offerings totaled \$55,149.94. Also, \$12,033 was contributed to the Building Fund. Year-to-date Building Fund activity showed a negative balance of \$3,278.56 resulting from the second half assessment payment.

Christensen distributed printouts of year-to-date transactions to ministry teams to assist with budget planning. She asked the teams to review their current budgets and submit next year's budgets with adjustments included.

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

Reports had been e-mailed by several teams and others provided verbal information.

Children's Education -- Wenck provided additions to her report. She said the team wanted to buy small chairs for preschoolers. The existing chairs have been "zip tied" so they would not fold up on children. Chairs were expected to cost \$27 each, with 20 to 25 chairs needed. She asked about paying for the chairs with a fundraiser. In addition, she said, the Education wing's sound system is difficult to reach because it is located in a closet. She asked about moving the system. Neurauter said he thought an infrared extender might solve the problem. He said he would take a look at the system.

Regarding a possible fundraiser to purchase the chairs, Pastor Phil said that if fundraising were done for everything needed, "it skews the budget for what we really need." Christensen said the chairs should be considered supplies and that \$600 to pay for them could be found before the end of the year. Randall moved that 25 small chairs be purchased out of the 2009 budget, seconded by Birch. Motion carried.

At the team's meeting discussion included the possibility of starting confirmation at the 6th grade level to coincide with the 6th through 8th grade middle school grades, KiC activities, the Christmas program that will be presented December 12th and 13th during worship services, an Epiphany Extravaganza planned for January 10th and a memorial donation from the Kallevig Family.

Fellowship & Service – This team had met to discuss the Craft and Bake Sale.

Global Missions – More than two barrels of coats were collected for the Salvation Army Coat Drive and a thank you had been received from the Shakopee Schools for the donation of funds for emergency clothing. Funding of \$500 was allotted for medications for the Idete Dispensary. Benevolence funds were reviewed with distributions as follows: \$2,500 to Tanzania Mission, \$2,500 to Garland Hall Jamaica and \$3,350 to the St. Paul Area Synod.

Outreach & Growth – This group had discussed staffing the information booth and developing an informational flyer about FLC to be placed at the River Senior Center.

Property – Birch said the fall cleanup had gone well with about 15 people turning out. The workers had been multi-generational, including a few Boy Scouts. The meeting report indicated that the team had discussed lawn maintenance for next year and the possibility of accepting bids, finding teams of volunteers to remove snow from sidewalks, and working on lights in the parking lot and on the main driveway.

Stewardship – Porter said the Stewardship Team had met just prior to the Council meeting. He said that a couple of FL’s members wanted “to build up and help catch up the Building Fund.” They had offered \$5,000 but wanted others to be part of the whole giving process. After brainstorming for a couple of months, he said, the team came up with the title “Gifts that Give.” For a three-week period after November 23rd, anyone who writes a \$100 check for the Building Fund would receive a gift SCRIP card from EconoFoods or KwikTrip Porter said the plan could turn \$5,000 into \$20,000. The Council agreed that the plan was workable.

Youth Ministry — The team had learned that more than 200 people attended the first Holy C.O.W. service on October 21st. The confirmation service project held October 18th had collected more than 4,000 pounds of food for the local food shelf, the largest single donation ever. Twenty-five confirmation youth and five adults had attended the Luther Retreat; eighth grader confirmation students and ninth graders who missed the trip last year would be visiting the Temple of Aaron November 20th.

A confirmation retreat would be held from 7:30 p.m. December 11th to 6:30 p.m. December 12th. Participants would travel to the Union Gospel Mission in St. Paul that Saturday afternoon for service work. Mission Trip 2010 would take place July 10th-17th at Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Twenty-five youth and four adults had signed up so far. The raffle of a quilt provided by the FLC quilters had earned \$249 for the youth fund. Also discussed were a December Lock-In for 9th-12th graders, a December college student reunion and a 2010 North Shore trip. The youth budget had been submitted to the Council with a request of approximately \$4,000 for scholarships to Camp Wapo and TIM Team and for the cost of chaperones for the 2010 mission trip.

Worship & Music – Randall referred to Worship Coordinator team that would be developed to do the basic things that needed to be done on Sunday mornings, from opening the church closing it. The team would make sure the heat was turned on, money was secured, ushers knew what type of communion would be held and that everything was set up for baptisms and communion. The intent, she said was to take off the load on the pastor and the staff. Two pairs would be sought to serve as worship coordinators each Sunday. “The more people we get, the less often they will have to serve,” she said.

The Worship and Music Team had revisited the purchase of hymnals, Randall said. A request had been made to purchase enough hymnals for the choir, perhaps 30 to 35. The price would be \$20 per hymnal without embossing. The team also had discussed the cost and feasibility of placing monitors in the chancel and choir loft so that the pastor and music leaders could see what was being projected on the screens to the congregation. Neurauter said there were two ways to do this, either by placing 42” monitors on carts that could be moved or by installing a projector that would project on the back wall, above the doors that enter the worship space. He said a projector could easily be tied to existing equipment. Costs would be explored further. Later, Porter said he might be able to obtain a large screen at little or no cost.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

Secretary’s Report – Porter made a motion to approve the report, seconded by Blee. Neurauter asked for the addition of a brief discussion about adding to the Administrative Assistant’s job description the responsibility for updating the membership rolls. Motion to adopt the amended report carried.

Treasurer’s Report – Birch made a motion to approve the report, seconded by Randall. Motion carried.

Ministry Team Reports – Blees made a motion to approve the reports, seconded by Wenck. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Church Directory – Neurauter said the signup for photographs was underway.

Budget – Christensen said that the original budget schedule called for Council teams to submit drafts by November 2nd. She said she did not have all drafts at that time so was unable to prepare a draft budget for the Council meeting. She said she would try to send the draft budget to Council members prior to Thanksgiving. Randall said she thought a meeting should be held to review the proposed budget. The Council set November 30th at 6:30 p.m. for a budget workshop.

Town Hall Meeting – This item had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

Nominating Committee – Randall said the committee had met the previous evening and would welcome more suggestions for possible Council members. She said the committee had prepared a listing of people who have strong faith, have a vested interest in the congregation, have lived through FLC's struggles and challenges, and realize what FLC is moving toward. In addition to several Council members, she said, two members are needed for the Endowment Committee. Pastor Phil had written a letter that would invite the candidates to become part of the Council.

NEW BUSINESS

Janitor -- Birch said that the janitor had been dealing with some health issues so replacements had to be found at short notice. He said that the janitor was doing well now but the Property Committee wanted to develop a backup plan for replacements. Christensen said she thought replacements should receive nominal compensation. Pastor Phil said he would ask the staff for suggestions.

Year-end Summary Reports – Neurauter said that December 13th is the deadline for submitting team reports for the Annual Report. The report must be ready for congregation review by January 9th, 2010.

Resignation – Neurauter said he had received notice from Jared Sachs that he could not continue to serve on the Council. Neurauter said the position would remain vacant until the annual meeting.

Calendar Review – Pastor Phil asked the Council to review the proposed December calendar.

Additional Items – Birch said he had been contacted by people who were interested in submitting bids for lawn maintenance. He said companies are bidding now for next summer. It was agreed that obtaining bid would help the Council determine if a contract would be feasible. Snow removal in the FLC parking lots is currently contracted – with sidewalks cleared by volunteers.

Randall said that she had been approached by several people who asked if FLC would be presenting information regarding gay and lesbian issues. Pastor Phil said he was open to answering questions and had been thinking about holding a breakfast forum where members could speak and listen. The Council concurred that an informal forum would be appropriate. Pastor Phil said he would explore dates.

Randall said she had been approached by a member who wanted to develop a proposal for outreach. It would involve finding new residents more quickly. Blees said she currently receives a list of new

residents from the City of Farmington and sends a welcome postcard. The Council was open to taking a look at the proposal.

Blees said someone had asked her if she had noticed that not many people sing during hymns. She asked if there would be a way to project music along with words on the screens. Pastor Phil said staff had been reviewing bulletin formats that would include music “in hand, including a collapsed form of printed music.” He said printing the music would enhance congregational singing and worship. Christensen said she was concerned about paper waste and costs. Pastor Phil said that an announcement sheet could be separate from the worship folder so the folder could be left behind for use at the next service.

Fencl mentioned that one of the topics at the Town Hall meeting was the pastor’s workload. He said he wanted to be sure that Pastor Phil was getting some time off. Pastor Phil said that budget planning included looking at funds to cover pastor staffing. “I’m okay for right now but we really need to do something so we are realistic about the demands that are here,” he said. A Council Member mentioned that FLC is a huge business that handles a huge cash flow.

ADJOURNMENT & LORD’S PRAYER

Birch made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m., seconded by Wenck. Motion carried.

The meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Lea Guenther,
Recording Secretary

Meeting Reminders:

Executive Board: Tuesday, December 1, 2009, 7 p.m.

Council: Tuesday, December 8, 2009, 6 p.m. at the home of Alison Wenck