



Congregational Council Meeting Minutes September 29, 2009

Attendance:

Name	Present	Not Present
Peter Geisendorfer-Lindgren	X	
Karen Geisendorfer-Lindgren	X	
Phil Dell		X
David Lippitt	X	
Todd Buegler	X	
Laura Dirks	X	
Al Albrecht	X	
Kris Bjorke	X	
Tom Brady	X	
Lisa Toms	X	
Lisa Gedker	X	
Tim Jenneke	X	
John Hanson	X	
Jason McCarty	X	
Jennifer Baldwin	X	
Roger Seim	X	
Katrina Bahen		X

Roger Seim called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM.

Approve Agenda:

Tom's proposal is to defer the caring community governance policy to October.
Motion passed. Agenda approved.

Roger welcomed the guests:

Devotions: Lisa Toms offered a devotion from Luke 6:37 about getting back what you give. She hopes that we are a good tree and bear good fruit and that we do not judge as the only judge is God.

Council Action:

- APPROVE MINUTES
 - Minutes of the August 18, 2009 Congregational Council Meeting were reviewed for accuracy.

A MOTION WAS MADE BY Al Albrecht, SECONDED BY Jason McCarty TO APPROVE THE August 18th 2009 CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES. MOTION PASSED.



- OFFERING COLLECTION SIGNUP
 - Passed around.
- FINANCIAL REPORT
 - At end of Sept variance on income is now \$73,000 vs. \$65,000 at end of August.
 - We will be sending out a third quarter statement to motivate individuals to catch up.
 - Seeing more and more individuals cutting back or ending direct debit due to job losses.
 - Have started looking for contingency plans if income does not come through.
 - Will be doing an analysis to see if the expenses that we are under are real or if they are expenses that are committed. Next month we may come with ideas for cutting expenses.
 - Organizations that we support are really hurting. (Camps, etc)

Caring Community Governance Policy Monitoring: (Tom, Laura & Pastor David)

- Deferred until next month.

ELCA Church-wide Meeting Resolutions Discussion & Response Plan:

- Roger encouraged council members to participate in tonight's discussion.
- Roger reviewed the resolutions from the ELCA assembly and explained how the voting assembly works. ELCA website has the details.
- Peter reviewed the process of who gets to be a delegate.
- Peter provided information on ELCA
 - ELCA came into existence in 1988.
 - The LCA (predecessor to ELCA) started our church provided money and expertise to make it happen.
 - They guaranteed loans and provided us the ability to build and assisted with funding expenses so that we could grow.
 - The ELCA is a consortium of congregations that allows all churches to participate in funding missionaries, assist in starting or restarting churches, support the seminary, fund global world hunger appeal, or other outreach.
 - Synod also provides oversight if things go wrong in congregations.



- We give our money to the Minneapolis area synod. They pass on 55% to the ELCA at large and keep 45% for local ministries and support.
- Roger laid out some options for us to consider concerning our relationship with the ELCA.
 - Fully Endorse ELCA actions
 - Middle Ground
 - Affirm council actions and governance policies
 - Broaden our relationship with other organizations
 - Restructuring our benevolence support directly to institutions; provide a directed giving option to members.
 - Develop a “Bound Conscience” statement that determines Lord of Life’s position.
 - Do nothing
 - Leave the ELCA altogether and join another Lutheran organization or become independent.
- Al Albrecht shared information on the constitutional impact of leaving the ELCA.
 - Affiliation may be determined as follows
 - Congregation ceases to exist
 - Congregation takes action to dissolve
 - Congregation removed for disciplinary action
 - Congregation follows procedures to vote to leave
 - Consisting of multiple votes and cooling off periods.
 - Property ownership:
 - Property goes to synod if we cease to exist.
 - If they remove us we get the property
 - If we leave and affiliate with another Lutheran body we keep the property.
 - If we and go independent the ELCA has the option of keeping the property.
 - Peter shared about how if some churches split neither of the new groups can afford the property.
 - 501c3 status if granted through the ELCA
- Peter shared information about the impact on the pastors.
 - For the pastors it is a big deal. They would no longer be rostered pastors. All options for future calls within the ELCA go away. Benefits as far as pension and insurance change or go away.
 - Our pastors have other rolls within the ELCA that they would have to give up. (Counseling, ELCA Youth Ministry Network, Clergy Coach, Chairing of ELCA Pastors of Large Congregations Committee)



- Peter was disturbed by many of the emails he received.
- Peter responded to the calls/emails that his leadership style is to bring individuals together and not let this issue be a polarizing event.
- Not everyone is going to agree on all points, but we are not going to accomplish our seven ends policies if this becomes a focus of our congregation.
- Peter shared some struggles/issues that other churches that have chosen sides have had to go through.
- Roger talked about how he would like to see a strong amount of support 80+% from the congregation as a whole before making a decision.
- Laura thanked the pastors for holding the sexuality open forum and sees the good the congregation can do and hope this doesn't get in the way.
- Al sees the potential for doing big things with the ELCA and sees that it is very tough to leave the ELCA if we so choose.
- Lisa commented that the ELCA has given congregations an option and is not forcing anything on them.
- Tim spoke about how we need to find the middle ground and that we need to think about not only our opinions, but also what is best for our congregation.
- Kris stated the ELCA slogan "God's work in our hands".
- Lisa Toms doesn't want to see the church be divisive.
- Karen, when discussing differences of opinion, we need to trust the integrity of the other person and that their faith may be just as strong as yours.
- Jason sees the good that we can do as a congregation and that we can, as part of the ELCA affect the future of the ELCA rather than running from it.
- Tom contributed that we have a lot more to do on this issue.
- Jason commented that there are so many more important issues we need to focus our time on as well.

- Open comments from guests:
 - Debbie Olson: This issue has nothing to do with gay people, but how do we want individuals to teach the gospel and how love is defined.
 - Deb Cook: Learned a lot tonight about the ELCA and is very thankful for all of the work the council is doing, but would like to help provide input for a response to the ELCA
 - Bissens: happy that we are proceeding prayerfully and founded in scripture and not just brushing it aside.
 - Larry Pivek: Hearing this discussion is great prayer material. His prayer is for God to bring us together.
 - Lee Newman: Wondering how it came to a vote at the ELCA convention. Peter explained that it has been discussed for a long time. Peter: the vote at ELCA Assembly was a reflection of society's changing ways and that bureaucracies tend to be more liberal.



- Barb Hoeker: respects all of us, but still holds true to her beliefs that she put in the letter.
- Roger: great opportunity for the faith formation policy. Ever the Optimist: What if we develop a platform that changes the whole thing for the ELCA?
- Proposed Process:
 - Communication from Pastors
 - Communication from Council President
 - Forming an elders' task force consisting of former council presidents and a few current council members.
- Roger passed around a communication outline to provide a response.
- John Hanson: People get stuck on their narrow view point. We need to get the facts out there.
- Task force can take a good chunk of this- as far as how and when to promote/ share it.
- The response now is that we discussed it at council and are creating a task force to help formulate a response. They can help us find a way forward. Whatever they do will be a "recommendation" to the council. The council will then have the ability to approve or disapprove the recommendation.
- They will be able to provide input as far as how they want to gather data and at least include input from current council members and pastors.
- David Lippitt: Whatever process they choose should be to not create a polarization while gathering data.
- Tom Brady wanted to give them some structure.

MOTION MADE BY JASON MCCARTY AND SECONDED BY TIM JENNEKE TO FORM A "FIND A WAY FORWARD" TASK FORCE CONSISTING OF PAST COUNCIL PRESIDENTS, PASTORS AND SOME CURRENT COUNCIL MEMBERS TO STUDY THE ELCA ASSEMBLY DECISIONS. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE COUNCIL WILL HELP DEFINE THEIR TASK. MOTION PASSED.

Ministry Update: Deferred until next meeting.

Adjournment

A MOTION WAS MADE BY JASON MCCARTY, SECONDED BY AL ALBRECHT TO ADJOURN THE September 29, 2009 CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING. MOTION PASSED. THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 9:40.

Next Meeting October 27, 2009 7:00pm at Lord of Life

Respectfully submitted,
Tim Jenneke