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**LUTHER PLACE MEMORIAL CHURCH**  
CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 17, 2017

**Present:** Christina Davis, Ann Hill, Patrick Callahan, Jackson Droney , Tara Hogan, Faith Korbel, Betsy Moutenay, Einar Olson, Christiana Lundholm, Michael Wendt, Kate Wulff

**Apologies:** Alex Adams, Pastor Karen Brau, Kristen Kane, Candace Lilyquist, Alberta Williams

**Meeting began at 6:35 pm**

**I. Devotions (Christina)**

Guided Meditation.

**II. Approval of July Minutes**

Jackson moved to accept the July minutes.

Second: Betsy

Motion Carried

**III. Jeremy Farewell**

1. Jeremy Grenhart gave notice on August 1<sup>st</sup> that he is leaving Luther Place. He attended the council meeting to say thank you, to encourage us to continue to think about engaging the arts, and to ask for continued prayer, as he will also be praying for Luther Place. The Luther Place Council is extremely grateful for all Jeremy has contributed to the community over the past three years.
2. Jackson moved to accept Jeremy's resignation.  
Second: Betsy  
Motion Carried

**IV. Pastor's Report**

Pastor Karen is on vacation, but asked Jackson to highlight a few things:

1. Prayers – Pastor Karen asks for prayers as they travel to visit her son.
2. At the last council meeting council members volunteered to act as point people during the 10:30 services through the month of August. Staff has put together an information sheet (on the wall in the back of the sanctuary) providing information and telephone numbers. In addition, a few council members have been trained in how to turn on/turn off the sound system, which may be on, but will need to be checked on Sunday mornings. Betsy noted that Sunday School teachers are not able to volunteer due to the timing on Sunday mornings.
3. Jackson asked that council members try to make a point of introducing ourselves to the guest pastors and thanking them for coming.

**V. Worship/Vision Report**

1. Jackson shared a one-page information sheet outlining Racial Equity at Luther Place Church (including the background and definitions of Equity, Inclusion, and Unity), which was also discussed at the last Worship Team Meeting. Council discussed the ideas on the sheet.
  - Kate noted the Lura Gruen is a pastor and former Luther Place member who shares a lot of these same themes on Facebook and was in Charlottesville during the recent violence. She shared that a lot of us grew up in congregations that considered themselves "welcoming" (in that people can come if they are like us). Equity means that we don't always get to decide.



- Einar would like more transparency in how people are asked to participate in committees and teams.
  - Patrick noted that, of the unchurched, 75% say it's because nobody has asked them to participate.
2. Council reviewed the final paragraph of the document, which states:  
"Racial Justice (equity) is the systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.  
Understood in the context of worship, racial equity refers to systematic processes and relational interactions that create equitable opportunities for participate and generate shared power over worship-related decision, and yield intentional equitable racial outcomes (attendance, musical variation, leadership, and outreach)."
- Christiana noted that worship is the work of community and strengthens the community.
  - Einar asked if Pastor Karen was well versed in these ideas from her time in Baltimore. Jackson shared the Pastor Karen understands that racial equity in worship means she will have to let go of some things.
3. Jackson shared that when the Worship Team discussed these ideas, they realized that they, as a team, are not reflective of the documents. In light of Jeremy resigning, they decided to disband and re-form a team that more faithfully represents the ideas presented.
- Betsy feels this is a good time to re-think the team.
  - Kate thinks it might be a good time to let things settle and allow people to process their feelings.
  - Christina added that we need to allow space for grief for the people who loved the 5 pm service.
  - Christiana asked how this team might figure into a search team for a new music director.
  - Patrick agrees that it's good to stop and re-think things, rather than continue to push the team forward without direction.
4. Jackson will work with Kristen to lay out a plan and timing for the next steps.

## **VI. RIC Recommendation**

Michael Sonnenburg contacted Reconciling Works (previously Lutherans Concerned/North America) regarding updating our RIC designation. The language in our current RIC statement references "gay and lesbian Christians", while the updated RIC statement references: "sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression".

If Luther Place chooses to update this language, we would receive a new certificate and the updates would be made to the Reconciling Works database. Jackson noted that the process of making this update (a vote at the December congregational meeting) would be an excellent teaching tool for the congregation. Leading up to the vote, we could have education and discussion opportunities.

Council requested that Michael put together the updated statement for review.

## **VII. Relational Culture**

Council reviewed the session on Relational Culture from the Council Retreat in July. This is particularly important in terms of our Teams.

## **VIII. Committee Reports**



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1. Finance (Patrick)
  - a. Report as submitted, with highlights. Income is trending favorably and expenses are better than budgeted. Giving for July was \$37,322.25 and was budgeted at \$31,000. Betsy moved to accent the Finance Report.  
Second: Chelsey  
Motion Carried
  - b. We have an opportunity to apply for a grant through Wheat Ridge. Due to upcoming changes in the program, we need to act quickly to start the process. Bianca and Kristen have asked the Council's blessing in moving forward.
    - Tara asked for clarification in the case we apply for the grant, are approved, and then can't follow through – are we obligated to accept the money? Kate is not sure. Council gave the blessing to move forward in exploring the grant.
2. Personnel (Betsy and Jackson)  
Report as submitted with highlight:
  - a. The team plans to meet the last week of August for a final exit interview with Jeremy Grenhart.
3. Property (Patrick and Alex)  
Report as submitted.
4. Membership (Chelsey and Alberta)  
Report as submitted with highlights.
  - a. The Team performed evaluations with the new members from 2016. Through these conversations, they learned that people like the low pressure lunch, but asking people to attend two meetings is a lot.
  - b. Membership is looking at growing and diversifying roles in the coming year. Kate Mueting will likely take a leadership role.
5. Stewardship (Patrick and Candace)  
Report as submitted, with highlight:
  - a. Fellowship One is close to going live, we just need to get everyone transferred from Vanguard.
6. Engagement (Faith and Alex)  
Report as submitted.
7. Racial Equity (Ann and Tara)  
Report as submitted, with highlights
  - a. Our Black Lives Matter was stolen from in front of the church, so the team decided to order more.
    - Einar asked about where the signs came from and how much they cost, as the Reformation Team also needs to have signs made.
  - b. Tara shared how amazed she is by the gifts and energy in the congregation.
8. Celebration 2017 (Einar and Christina)  
Report as submitted, with highlights:



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- a. Luther Place is partnering with St. Paul's Lutheran to host a screening of the Martin Luther movie at Landmark Bethesda on October 4<sup>th</sup> at 7:30.
  - b. The team is planning to create a calendar of events for all Reformation-related events.
  - c. They are also working on signs to put on the Martin Luther statue.
9. Community Care (Christiana and Christine)  
Report as submitted, with highlights:
- a. The purpose statement has been written and they are now in the process of building the team.
10. General: Jackson asked that team reports include: the purpose statement, the team goals, and team roles.

**IX. Closing**

1. How do you feel? What have you learned?
2. Closing Prayer.
3. Next meeting – Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>