



**Luther Place Congregational Council Meeting Minutes**  
**December 19, 2019**  
**Luther Place, All Saints Room**

**Present:** Tara Hogan, Pastor Karen Brau, Emma Northcott, Amanda Lindamood, Einar Olsen, Caroline Eayrs, Joan Hay, Kate Wulff, Jay Forth, Doug Walter, Tom Randall, Joan Hay, Jay Forth

**Apologies:** Cathi Jones, Elizabeth Ellis, Michael Wendt

The meeting was called to order at 6:50 pm by Tara.

**Agenda**

A motion was made Tara to approve the agenda for the December 19th meeting. The motion was passed by unanimous consent.

**Minutes**

The minutes were distributed electronically via our google group prior to the meeting for the November 21<sup>st</sup> Congregational Council meeting.

A motion was made by Tara to accept the Council Meeting minutes. The motion was passed unanimously.

**Congregational Meeting**

The meeting is December 19th. The Executive Committee met and determined to continue our pilot time with a new agenda sequence for meetings, that was introduced at the August meeting. The current agenda includes the Finance reports, the Devotion, the Pastor's Report, the President's Report, and a review of Council Commitments in a larger discussion format, the proposed budget, the council retreat and our move to review and revise our process using a lens of racial equity, with three presented focus areas to consider.

Council was asked to approve the new members that have joined the Congregation as new Confirmands and adult joined members on Sundays December 15th and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Names are listed in Pastor Karen's November Pastor Report.

2019-2020 Teams and Liaisons—list reflects signups for the 2019-20 Year

*The focus of reports has been clarified to spotlight key highlights, support requests, and concerns.*

*This month, all committees were asked to provide solely written reports, with the exception of finance. Brief verbal updates were shared.*

Finance - Kate + Tom (Chair)

The finance report was approved with no objections. A motion was made by Kate, seconded by Jay and Einar.

The focus of our December meeting will be to approve the budget in preparation for the Congregational meeting on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. It was noted that congregational giving is ahead of where predicted, and that both staff vacancies and the income generated by the Steinbruck Center can be credited with being slightly in the black.

## Personnel

Doug highlighted points regarding the Sexton, Director of Spiritual Direction and areas of hospitality, referring council members to his written updates.

## Membership

Pastor Karen highlighted that a new model was used for a December 8<sup>th</sup> New Member Brunch and is being evaluated.

## Stewardship

Of the 190 letters that went out, only 20 pledges were received; 3 from council members.

Thank yous will be sent out to each individual who pledged.

This experiment provides information that will be reimaged through the lens of sufficiency.

Committees of Long-Range Planning, Property, Membership and Engagement, and Community Care have been asked to provide reports to Council specifically for the January meeting, highlighting goals and progress areas of key importance to the congregation.

Caroline highlighted that the Synod listening session was a disappointment, and demonstrated a myriad of blind spots. Further discussion will emerge in 2020, as well as the evaluations of Sunday School's pilot.

Remaining teams submitted reports via email.

## Administration

- It was clarified that parking at the hotel is reserved for Sundays, we will message the changed policy
- We are looking for a volunteer to coordinate the calendar of counters
- Office will be closed from December 26<sup>th</sup> through January 1<sup>st</sup>. Dick and Andrew will cover the building in the interim.
- Pastor Karen will be traveling January 7<sup>th</sup> through January 20<sup>th</sup>; more elaboration provided in written Pastor Report

## Pastor's Report

- As a strategy for engagement, there's a desire to pair new members with "buddies"; Joan, Doug and Einar volunteered
- A written update of the hiring update for the position of Director of Spiritual Formation is included in writing.

There were five initial candidates, and the decision was made not to hire any of the five. An agreement was made to enter job analysis—a process of reexamining the job description, and exploring the possibility of a less than full time position. The budget conversation dovetailed within this question, and was

considered more seriously. This shift correlates with an emphasis on outcomes more than hours, and a priority of capacity building, seeking to contextually focus on fit, in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as organizational fit. A formal conversation with staff is scheduled for January 15<sup>th</sup>. A noted shift is a change in title—Director of Faith Formation and Community Connections. The question of health insurance is currently unresolved as a potential included benefit.

- The parsonage is open for a New Year's celebration after the service on Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>

### Congregational Proposed Budget

- Before cuts this budget was 130,000 dollars in expenses from a balanced budget
- Shown through our overview, congregational offering was budgeted for 20,000 dollars less than 2019
- An increase in revenue is projected for Art Smart and Steinbruck Center
- Due to the efforts of Long-Range Planning, increased revenue from facilities and investments is indicated
- Revenue from grants in 2020 is decreased
- Total budget for 2020 reflects an increase for the operating budget
- Key expenses include personnel, operations, education, worship, congregational life and property maintenance. Two notable changes include changes to the positions of Sexton and Director of Faith Formation.
- In lieu of accepting her annual raise this year, Pastor Karen has received a second weekly day off
- It is noted that the proposed expenses for hospitality will be covered using restricted funds, or potentially a grant from the Synod
- Discussion over the Protest and Movement Committee budget request occurred, highlighting the trade offs that come from proposing a balanced budget
- Ongoing conversation regarding the Poor People's Campaign continues
- A commitment to Stewardship was restated, and a clarified responsibility of council in evaluating the budget monthly
- Outside of the Operating Budget, property was asked to identify their priority expenses for the Capital Improvements Budget for council to comment on and the congregation to then authorize

A motion was made for council to recommend the proposed budget for approval by Tom, and then seconded by Doug. Council moved to put forth this budget proposal for the Budget Meeting in January.

### President's Report

To begin this conversation, Tara distributed a document highlighting characteristics of a liminal season, quoting the book, "How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going". Liminality was described as being on the threshold, a neutral place between a beginning and an ending; central to our Christian understanding. What it can feel like is disorientation, ambiguity, sense that neither old or new ways are working, exhaustion, anxiety, freedom to experiment. It is neither positive or negative. Rather than think big, think next, immediate step.

This builds on the previously distributed document referencing the 2009 Visioning Process, and the vision and guiding principles adopted at that period ten years ago. We are discerning how to adjust our vision and principles at this ten-year mark, emphasizing how to imagine the practical. This is proposed as the focus of our council retreat, with an invitation to expand participation to staff and lay leaders.

Our intention is to examine purpose, culture and climate.

The second priority is to identify and respond to emerging areas for council to prioritize. The framework laid out highlights the areas identity, context and values.

### **Devotion/Spiritual Practice**

As a part of the new agenda sequence, the placing of the devotion and check in was moved to the middle of the meeting, following committee updates. There is a new intention to link the devotion with the area of discussion that is the focus for the meeting. For this meeting it happened last.

The closing questions were the following:

- 1) What do you remember about 2009/2010?
- 2) Did you know anything about Luther Place then?
- 3) Did you know anything about Logan Circle then?

### **Closing Reflection/Prayer**

Council concluded by sharing something longing for, and something grateful for.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for at 6:30pm at the All Saints Room on January 16, 2020.

*Submitted by: Amanda Lindamood, Secretary, 2019-2020*