



Luther Place Congregational Council Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2020
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)

For the duration of this season of physical distancing, Council Meetings are being convened over Zoom weekly, with a new starting time at 6 pm. Minutes will be aggregated topically for four meetings over a month period.

Beginning on Thursday, May 7th Council will meet two times a month, the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 6 pm.

May 21st Present: Amanda Lindamood, Justin Fitch, Mike Wendt, Kate Wulff, Tara Hogan, Caroline Eayrs, Pastor Karen Brau, Emma Northcott, Doug Walter, Tom Randall, Sarah Johnson, Joan Hay, Cathi Jones

May 21st Apologies: Einar Olsen, Jay Forth

This meeting was called to order at 6:08 pm by Tara. April 16, 23 and May 7th Minutes were approved through unanimous consent, as well as the agenda for tonight.

April's Financial Report was approved via unanimous consent.

June 4th Present Amanda, Emma, Tara, Einar, Kate, Mike, Sarah B., Sarah J., Justin, Christine F., Pastor Karen Brau, Jay F, Doug, Tom, Cathi, Caroline, Joan

June 4th Apologies none

Congregational Meeting

All committees are asked to provide solely written reports, in order to redirect Council Meeting time to essential areas of responsibility for the Congregation at this time.

A disclaimer was made that we would be using an adjusted meeting format, as shared prior. It was reiterated that this was a rather unique year for council, with a focus of slowing down, and a rocky and late start. For the remaining three meetings of this council term, there is a desire to build on recent momentum and integrate it, which has informed this agenda and the connections identified for the remaining roles of this council year.

In the context of an unprecedented global pandemic, Council is seeking to be responsive to an evolving context of leadership, with a greater emphasis on shared leadership, and cooperative systems. This doesn't change the overarching function, priorities or responsibilities of council, but it does necessitate continued attention and adjustments, including meeting more frequently. It was affirmed that greater participation and commitment will be needed from Council along with regular attendance from staff in Council meetings, as well as meaningful check ins with each other and the full congregation on a regular and coordinated basis.

Within our scan of safety concerns, this is an incomplete start, and emerging questions and examples have changed. A conversation was opened on guiding principles and terminology as a loose starting point, with consensus that each of these terms need expansion and edits to be utilized.

Essential Operations updates (15 minutes)

Building Use

- Occasional tenants use office space for mail use; written report
- Composting still coming
- Note some expenses in April Financials mistakenly not taken out of capital expenses, will be corrected in statement
- Are there property considerations for regular or irregular walk throughs to assess building needs; are there are recommendations from the property committee?
- Lessoned our cleaning to two days a week by GNLB
- Mindful of costs of utilities during this time, making further impact on bills going forward

Personnel

- Personnel met last night, working with Pastor Karen to keep Barbara, Angelica and Kathleen payed through at least June 21st. Seeking ways to continue to utilize their skills thoughtfully. Plan now to continue to pay them per their usual salary through August. LVCer will begin serving at Luther Place in August. Kathleen will transition out of her role on August 9th.

Faith Formation

- Meeting weekly, maintaining collaboration with Communications
- Maintaining increased interaction initiatives in worship and using social media
- Utilizing Faith Formation Programming to help prepare for the Retreat
- Sending out weekly updated calendars highlighting all faith formation activities

Fiscal Impact

- Finance report sent out from April
- Holding stable at the moment, continuing to promote Stewardship
- Kate moves to approve the April Financials; approved using unanimous consent

Community Care / Organizing

- Discerning using calling campaign what next steps are
- WIN and neighborhood initiatives continue that Luther Place is a part of; further updates to come at next meeting

Retreat Update

- Invitation extended by Pastor Karen
- Invited to pause, mindfully as we consider what it means to be church now
- Utilizing Scripture and structure to explore together
- Link to RSVP shared in enews each week—retreat on Saturday, June 6th 10-4:45 pm

Communications and Worship

- Happy Ascension Day!
- Livestream of Sunday worship continuing to get more confident, community feel
- Communications Team meets weekly, practicing creatively
- Talking about how to honor graduates, celebrate Milestones
- Send in pictures wearing red for Pentecost!
- Plug to RSVP for the Retreat*
- Annual Meeting—offer to help with day of logistics, training for Zoom
- Attendance was up this week for worship, including more shares
- Justin Harrison and I will offer a benefit for Art Smart in June
- Worship team is meeting after the Pentecost Sunday liturgy to evaluate worship and consider the future

Steinbruck Center (Emma)

- Preliminary considerations that the Steering Committee put together for Council to give feedback on (related to procedures for opening)
- Outline, criteria, considerations articulated
- Goal to open this conversation with staff, Council and other stakeholders, and will be linked to the larger Church 2.0 Strategy
- Steering Committee will meet to discuss in about 3 weeks
- DC's reopening plan for reopening was released today, and will be considered and integrated

Where are you noticing creativity? What habit have you started, or broken, since the pandemic began?

New ways to play, worship, “virtual equivalences”, nature, homeschooling, wildlife, private teaching especially with youth, my teachers, those I have interacted with, cooking, hobbies picked back up, gardens, adapting of big life events.

More chances to read, writing circle, need to control/lowering the bar on expectations, separating home and work, phone check ins, drumming, taking walks, reading while walking, Peloton App Family Brain Breaks, cooking, knitting, “do you want to go sit in the sun with me?”, notice my emotions, especially anger, frustration or judgment at someone else, taking in less information, incorporating more music, turning off notifications, taking long walks especially in cemeteries.

Transition Tasks

- Annual report – team reports due **June 12**
- **Sarah will oversee this process; staff, council and team leads will receive a letter tomorrow (from Sarah)**
- **Reports will be a page or less, focused on these two questions.**
- **Invite especially a lot of visuals.**
- **A draft will be shared for review before it is printed and shared to website**
 - Report content includes:
 - (1) Your team’s priorities and highlights over the past year;
 - (2) How has your ministry changed/adapted during the pandemic, including any shifted priorities?

Annual meeting:

§ Reminder: June 28; time will be set within next two weeks
 Communications Team has offered to assist
 § Looking for 1 other person for day-of help

Doug and Tom offered to assist

§ Looking for 2 members to join Technology

- Consult with Communications team
- Develop contingency if technology doesn't work day-of

Emma will assist with technology

*instructions of specific tasks are forthcoming

Nominations Committee

§ Need one Committee member

§ Who on council is willing to talk to candidates about their experiences?

§ Handout/Talking points for candidates

§ Prepare item for e-news for entire congregation

Need to formally establish a committee of congregants and Council Members: Faith and Tara will serve, looking for one additional Council member (Doug offered); Doug and Amanda offered to talk to those interested. Tara will draft a handout for review.

Executive Committee for 2020-21

§ Report expressions of interest

Amanda expressed interest in Presidency. Emma expressed interest, most interested in Vice President or Secretary. Tom expressed interest; no position specified.

Season of discernment ongoing.

Pastors Report

Emerging Priorities: Stewardship, Community Care, Luther Place 2.0

Three emerging themes are rising as fairly clear priorities for the next iteration of the Council.

Community Care—inside and outside of the congregation

How do we effectively care for each other across the generations in these days?

There is opportunity in that, and some things that church can do that are needed to imagine in this distant context.

Stewardship

We are talking about money regularly, every Sunday in worship using a model of sufficiency.

Mindful to place ourselves in that continuum. Watching people put their gifts into this different time, discipline, creativity. What are some new things that we haven't thought about yet?

Lutherplace 2.0

It is unlikely that we will go back to just how we were before; we were learning some things about how to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it has more touches right now. Making surprising connections through sharing and connecting with the Gospel that this time is really called us towards, and we will not cease doing them, even as we can do a fuller complement in person. Tara has created a google folder to use as a hub.

Dr. Osterholm offered an assessment of where we are and where we are in terms of returning to worship—naming we are really at the beginning of something, not near the end. Seek nourishing, decide who we are listening to in this. NYC Synod looking at 18 months before regathering. Will take a lot of careful discernment and shrewd leadership, and the step we are in now is research. Practice having to grapple with not being able to have in person Art Smart Camp; looking at the reality of what is possible, having a building that people can't gather in currently.

Practicing church as a place of sharing and distribution.

Internal processing to let things go, and have emerging ideas of sharing and distribution.

Where Art Smart Summer Camp is ending up now: camp families are unemployed, food insecure, very nervous, exhausted from distance learning, low on resources. Creating a virtual experience including food, arts and crafts supplies, virtual teaching, books, reading partner program with, faith formation component with supplies bag (linked to additional programming offered congregationally, and adjusted to bilingual English and Spanish. Two pods of families—those we have worked with previously; Olga Salazar will coordinate. Second pod newly recruited of additional neighborhood families—3 bags and a Box, pick up twice a week to nourish the whole family. All in the arc of collecting, sharing and distribution. Brewing around the food piece linking with mutual aid work already running in Ward 2. They require a place to pack and refrigeration. They don't necessarily have the neighborhood relationships, and so a collaboration may be timely. There is a group already well organized in the neighborhood, and we can contribute responsively. The generous donations we've had in the congregation will allow us to help meet these needs now. These are the things that will take us into the next year, and will require us all. There has been an unfolding that has happened—relationally and by loving our neighbors.

What do you see as next steps? Where do you need lay leadership support?

Brad Eayrs is helping to contribute, Cindy Anderson as well. Vanessa Garcia will oversee—workplan will be articulated; planning begins tomorrow, as well as with the Ward 2 Mutual Aid Team. We will need people to help with leg work, drop off work, spend some time at the church for pickups. Please everyone pray for this—helps to create a net around new things and around the people. Be in touch with your ideas—not everything is for this year, but it might be. We also want to save some ideas for other times. Now is the step of building it all out, and then generating slots for volunteering.

One of the ways that the Long-Range Planning has supported the congregation is through tenants. Things we have done to make the building safer and more consistent, those things have been clarified. Terrific has now notified us that after June 15th that will end their programming with us. Sharing this with the whole Council. Pastor Karen tomorrow will write a letter tomorrow to receive this notice, and set a time limit for when they retrieve their stuff.

There have been iterative negotiations, and this is a natural if not timely shift. Consensus that this is a supportive move in the long term. Following their departure process, we will consider what is next for that space.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:41 pm on May 21st, concluding with the reciting of the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting is scheduled for at 6:00 pm via Zoom on June 4th, 2020.

Submitted by: Amanda Lindamood, Secretary, 2019-2020

Necessary Steps Towards Congregational Meeting and Lay Leadership Transition:

Council Election/Nominations

1. Council identifies any skills or gifts for ideal candidates
2. Council appoints Nomination Committee (comprised of 2 outgoing council members + 1 at-large congregation member)
3. Nominations committee identifies potential candidates
4. Council votes to recommend slate of nominees

Written Annual Report

1. Council identifies any particular content to be included in a team report
2. Council lead (usually president) works with Director of Operations to set timeline for submissions; editing
3. Teams/committee/ministry leaders are requested to provide written report of activities since last congregational meeting (team member names, highlights of year, etc.)
4. Senior pastor & president provide letters
5. Leaders submit written reports
6. Director of Operations compiles and edits report
7. Annual report made available electronically; limited paper copies are printed (would normally be distributed at the meeting; may decide whether to mail to certain households)

Notice of Meeting

1. Notice of annual meeting provided to members:
 - a. Announced the prior 2 Sundays during worship
 - b. Notice in e-news
 - c. Church office mails letter to households with no e-mail address on file
2. Written materials sent ahead of meeting: (1) Meeting minutes from last congregational meeting; (2) agenda; (3) any other material to be discussed at meeting

Remote Meeting Preparation

1. Identify appropriate platform and voting system
2. Identify method of taking attendance
3. Identify method to accept nominations from the floor
4. Test system
5. Offer written instruction and training(s) to congregation members

Meeting Itself:

1. Take attendance
2. "Tech support" offered
3. President chairs meeting
4. Secretary takes notes
5. Vote to accept minutes from January 2020 congregational budget meeting
6. Treasurer offers financial update
7. Nominations committee representative offers slate of nominees
8. Opportunity for nominations from the floor
9. Vote to elect council members
10. Any other business?

Other Lay Leadership Transition:

1. Team and committee membership and commitments run June-May;
2. Ask team members to affirmatively decide whether to continue as team members;
3. Determine whether new members are needed; what skills/qualities are needed; recruit;
4. Relevant operating documents, meeting minutes & notes, etc., are identified and stored for transition

5. Identify what on-boarding is needed for new members

Thursday, June 4th

Gathering in Silence - (5 minutes) - **Seems important to pause; possible breath prayer. Use chat function to**

LP2.0:

1. Acknowledge that we reopened the building without criteria for doing so, contrary to our commitment to be deliberate and slow.
2. Need for stakeholder meeting soon.
3. We'll have more info at next council meeting, and in anticipation of congregational meeting

Today, our urgent essential operations are focused on Mutual Aid and Hospitality Supporting Protestors. We have invited Sarah Bagge, Christine Frye and Emma Northcott to give those updates.

There is a swell of support, within church, immediate community and broader community.

What started on Saturday night as an initial outdoor table, has through some deep community connections turned into a need to provide some hospitality. Includes 24-hour staffing, daily meetings using a tool called Signal. Safety and security are primary. We knew even if we shut the doors folks would still come, so volunteering needed to expand. Much focused at night. 5-7 pm is outdoor hospitality, after 7 pm shifts to more emergency support. Includes healing practices for people of color, medics, volunteers. Every 12 to 24 hours evolves, driven by community partners and needs of the community. An overwhelming amount of donations have come through. There was a lot of support in the community, and we've been the first in the community to respond and have managed this first wave.

Very real physical needs, to be safe has involved moving protest/walking pretty fast. Medics are a really key part of physical safety, as well as first aid supplies. Jail support, snacks and water bottles, physical and emotional support. Emotional and Spiritual support component, building. Black Lives Matter core organizers—knowing that it exists matters. Iona Gregory healer on site. This approach has started to spread—Foundry, First Trinity, Studio Theater. What does it look like to have the whole community around these supporters? A part of the way the Holy Spirit is moving. First goal—adequate staffing of the church. All other responses build out next. Backpacks with support have been dispersed. An average day begins with trickle, last 3-4 days two big gatherings at least each day. Quick interactions, with clusters of 100-1000 two to four times a day. A couple of thousand in the course of the week have been supported.

Evolving is happening, and some moments have been in failure. Refocus beginning. Door monitors, limit who is inside, shifting to tent outside primary—making a more intentional shift.

Short answer is we could use more volunteers. There is a vouching system used—have to name your contact to Luther Place, and that person will be contacted. Negotiating who can volunteer outside of Luther Place members, one degree of separation. Group has put together a volunteer protocol document. Two protocols—no Law Enforcement is allowed on site, and one Luther Place volunteer must be on site at all times. This is a required value based on the needs of who we partner with.

What we pay attention to—values, needs of partners, safety of volunteers, safety for building, social distancing.

We at all times can press pause.

Idea—add bathroom trailer to parking circle. 2400 dollars on our property indefinitely, it is lockable, 350 dollars to remove and reset. So far have 5200 in donations for Protest and Organizing. It does not have an accessible bathroom—would make an exception for those needs.

Council supportive of this idea—will be ordered and moved forward.

Potentially pay Dolce Hogar for cleaning.

Hospitality Supporting Protesters: Sarah Bagge and Christine Frye will join us for the first part of the meeting to update us on efforts taking place to support protesters.

Mutual Aid Network: Pr. Karen will give us an update on an emerging relationship with Ward 2 Mutual Aid Network using LP as a food distribution site.

See Pastor Karen's attached letter.

Sarah B, Jay and Eddy give some testimonies. They work in Ward 4 Mutual Aid Network. Filled out a volunteer interest form, and given a list of options of how to engage. Runs weeks and weekends and filling grocery requests—began to encourage people to stay in, but also to support financial and food insecurity needs. It is all decentralized, out of mantra we keep each other safe. Emphasis on social distancing. Pairing people on shifts. Separate spaces for different tasks. Working on weekly cost savings to make sure it remains sustainable. 80-90% requests now coming in Spanish (originally 10%), overlaps with Luther Place context. The mutual aspect is significant—versus charity. An amazing connector of folks locally, amazing formation for folks, especially around sharing power.

New goal is clarifying the distinctions between these two initiatives (specifically in terms of donations and space designation). Currently, it is very clear in our online giving. Does require a large area (for Mutual Aid work—space designated and arrangement maintained). Will tie into our summer camp arrangement—one of the four pillars. The Crossover exists, as well as the new forming relationships.

Bianca Vasquez is volunteering and managing the relationship with the Mutual Aid Network. An MOU will be crafted, and a task group will be formed. Continue to have robust funds for direct financial assistance through the congregation.

What do you need from us as Council?

Propose a 2-week pilot that begins now. Council blesses, will resume and report back.

How do we navigate the stakeholder's pieces, specifically in terms of forming leadership?

Parking is a component/consideration, as well as keys. (Limiting what tasks get assigned to Sarah)

Considerations of internal locked door to separate.

Negotiating the formal agreements, particularly in light of this new relationship with hospitality.

ArtSmart camp: updates and calls for volunteers

Stewardship: Thank you note campaign

Will follow up via email.

Next steps on LP2.0.

Will follow up via email.

We did reopen the church without having a plan for doing so, and are converting to make sure the relevant stakeholders to navigate all of the components and competing priorities. Stakeholders will come together next Thursday night.

Protest and Organizing—will dedicate 5 people of their team to attend the retreat on Saturday.

Retreat Focus Questions are--

How are we working for racial justice now?

How are we Church together now?

Also, a reminder that submissions for the annual report are due to Sarah J. by next Friday, 6/12!

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm on June 4th, concluding with the reciting of the Lord's Prayer.

The next meeting is scheduled for at 6:00 pm via Zoom on June 18th, 2020.

Submitted by: Amanda Lindamood, Secretary, 2019-2020