

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pastor and Executive Committee:

- Pastor Dave Wrightsman
- Max Neuhaus (President)
- Teri Odegard (President-Elect)
- Angel Egan (Secretary)
- Steve Miller (Treasurer)

- Tyler Linton (Stewardship)
- David Bell (Personnel)
- Patti Graf-Palmer (Connect)
- Amanda Whipkey (Grow)
- Holly Mitchell (Invite)
- Tom Bauer (Worship)
- Lu Ann Hect (Guest – Former Personnel)

Committee Chairs:

- Michael Hofland (Service and Mission)
- Jeff Bjork (Property)

1. CALL TO ORDER – Max

- A. Max called the meeting to order @ 6:52 pm.
- B. Approval of Agenda:
 - i. **Moved and Seconded to approve February 18th, 2021 Council meeting agenda (Angel Egan/Jeff Bjork); motion passed unanimously.**

2. INTRODUCTIONS – Max

- A. Max invited Council members to introduce themselves and share something good that happened recently along with something they are looking forward to.

3. DEVOTIONS – Teri

- A. Hope & Waiting
 - i. Shared insights from *The Finishing Touch* book
 - ii. Romans 8
 - a. What does contentment and waiting look like?
 - b. Good things take time and great things take even longer.
 - c. We hope; we wait.
 - d. Best lessons are learned through defeat.

4. SECRETARY’S REPORT/APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Angel

- A. Angel suggested Committee chairs email their written updates (if available) each month to ensure accuracy of the minutes.
- B. **Moved and seconded to approve the minutes from the January 18th, 2021 Council meeting (Jeff Bjork/Patti Graf-Palmer); motion carried unanimously.**

5. TREASURER’S REPORT AND APPROVAL OF FINANCIALS - Steve

- A. **Moved and seconded to approve the January 2021 Treasurer’s Report (Steve Miller/Angel Egan); motion passed unanimously.**
- B. General Fund 2021 – Monthly Summary:

January Income	\$ 45,879
January Expenses	\$ 43,214

January Difference	\$ 2,664
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C. General Fund 2021 – YTD Summary:

2021 YTD Income	\$ 45,879
2021 YTD Expenses	\$ 43,214
2021 YTD Difference	\$ 2,664

D. General Fund Balance with Retained Income – YTD Summary:

2021 YTD Fund Balance	\$ 117,275.03
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E. Checking Balance:

January Checking Balance	\$ 454,823
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F. Mortgage Summary:

Mortgage Loan Balance	\$ 673,374
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G. Total Endowments & Other Investments:

Total Endowments & Other Investments	\$ 220,900
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H. Shine the Light! Campaign:

The Shine the Light! appeal campaign began in 2019 with a goal of \$840,000.

- i. Funds are divided among:
 - a. Mortgage: 75%
 - b. Ministry: 15%
 - Ministry funds are used to launch new staff and programs/initiatives.
 - Currently, only the new part-time Director of Youth Ministry (\$15,600) is funded through Shine!
 - c. Mission: 10%
- ii. Pledges received as of 1/31/21: \$530,178
- iii. As of 1/31/21, 36% of the campaign is complete; 52% of pledges (\$269,223) have been received.

6. MINISTRY COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Service and Mission: Michael

- i. Committee did not meet but Curt provided and update.
- ii. Article on Starfish program is in the current Connections Newsletter.
- iii. March 1st issue of Connections will include “Volunteers of the Year” presentation.

B. Property: Jeff

- i. Committee has not met this month.

- ii. They have a project they are working on - painting the hallways upstairs and downstairs in Jacob's Ladder areas.
 - a. Currently on hold until during spring break while kids are out of the building.
- C. Stewardship: Tyler
 - i. Volunteers have been found to assist the committee: Dick Seebach and Ryan Carns.
 - ii. Asked if we have conducted a Gifts & Talents survey recently; would be worth revisiting.
 - a. Max suggested sending out electronically.
 - b. Tyler to do a little checking and will follow-up next month.
 - c. Tom advised that there is a link on the Ezekiel website for time & talent questionnaires.
- D. Personnel: David /Lu Ann
 - i. Received over 50 candidates for Business Administrator position backfilling Paul Moe.
 - Divided current three-page job description into five major areas: Financial, Human Resources, Information Technology and Communication, and Facilities Management.
 - Very easy to exclude all but eight candidates based on experience in the required areas.
 - Three people suggested by Indeed that we wanted to interview did not respond.
 - Of the four individuals interviewed, only one was fully qualified in all major areas.
 - b. Steven Devine-Jelinski
 - Committee met with Lu Ann to discuss new hire for Paul Moe's Business Administrator position: Loretta Peterson, Lu Ann Hect, Sue Hodgson, and Pastor Dave.
 - Took Financial, HR, IT, Facilities Management job descriptions as guide.
 - Steven has experience in all required areas.
 - Currently works as a Business Manager/Bookkeeper for a company that has four sub-businesses under its umbrella.
 - Steven has contingently accepted position upon being able to begin FT May 3rd.
 - Would like to be able to work with Paul intermittently in the interim.
 - Offer includes: \$46,000 per year annually (30 hours per week), standard benefits including retirement/disability, 20 days of PTO, \$1,500 of relocation allowance (suggested final contract include provision to request repayment of allowance if employment does not reach specified term - for example, 6 months, etc.).
 - Ed Schramm met with Paul regarding the transition.
 - Paul is willing to come in 1-2 hours a week to handle interim needs, and potentially give Leslie back some responsibilities (recording offerings, etc.).
 - c. **Moved and seconded (Michael Hofland/Tyler Linton) to accept offer of employment as presented by the Personnel Committee, contingent on transition period between February and May 3rd being established. Motion carried unanimously.**
 - ii. Personnel Committee had a large turnover but have met several times.

- iii. **Moved and seconded (David Bell/Jeff Bjork) to offer temporary Traditional Worship Director position to John Albright with a \$12,000 salary. Hours will be revisited after April 5th depending on needs of Ezekiel congregation. Motion carried unanimously.**
 - iv. **Moved and seconded (David Bell/Angel Egan) restore Josh Tank’s hours and Matthew Mitchell’s hours that were previously reduced due to COVID-19 conditions. Motion carried unanimously.**
- E. Connect: Patti
- i. Committee did not meet. Will plan to meet again once in-person services have restarted.
 - ii. At Tyler’s request, Patti shared some of the projects that the Connect Committee leads.
- F. Grow: Amanda
- i. Committee has not met. Will be meeting in March to discuss spring and summer plans.
- G. Invite: Holly
- i. Committee met on Monday evening. 2nd Mondays will be meeting cadence.
 - ii. Committee Members: Sandy Tauferner, Corey Whipkey, Rich Kuss, Heidi Winberg, and Nicky Thompson
 - iii. Received list of interested members to assist with efforts.
 - iv. Looking for information to be added to redesigned website.
 - v. Spiritual Care Committee follow-up.
 - a. Was a group that took data based on attendance and followed up with members who became inactive over time.
 - b. All four members have retired due to pandemic restrictions.
 - c. We cannot currently make a relevant measurement until in-person participation resumes.
 - d. Want to use the time to assess how we are obtaining that data.
 - Previously attendance has been taken from red books in pews.
 - Are there other avenues for collecting that information?
 - What are we doing with that information? Are we going to use the information in new ways that would require backfilling those committee members?
 - Tom Bauer suggested that there will be the sign-in sheets due to contact tracing that can be used in the interim.
- H. Worship: Tom
- i. Met last Monday, as well.
 - ii. Discussed Matthew and the band.
 - a. Suggested musicians being able to sing with a mask on.
 - Moving drum shield out as an additional barrier.
 - iii. Churches are exempt from the CDC guidelines.
 - a. WI Council of Churches has put out their guidelines and recommendations.
 - Even by doing in-person services we are operating outside of those guidelines.
 - b. Services will be held with Safety as our guiding principle and will be operating in line with County guidelines and restrictions.
 - c. Other River Falls churches are operating in similar alignment.
 - d. Schools also returning to 4 days per week effective March 1st.
 - iv. Virtual services will still be held concurrently for the near term.
 - v. Will not do an Easter vigil service this year.
 - a. Additional details will be forthcoming for Easter celebrations.

- I. Jacob's Ladder Report: Teri
 - i. Met with Amy Nelson.
 - ii. Jacob's Ladder has been doing well with regard to COVID concerns, but unfortunately had a student and mother who started experiencing symptoms the weekend of February 6th & 7th. Tested negative at the time, but indicated they thought it was false negative. Family could not be contacted after by public health representatives.
 - a. Wound up quarantining class.
 - b. Teacher tested negative.
 - iii. Preschool update (ask Teri to send summary)
 - iv. Thank you to Jeff Bjork and property committee for painting!

7. PASTOR'S REPORT – Pastor David

- A. Beginning Wednesday, February 17th we have restarted the Wednesday evening community suppers.
 - i. 47 meals served. Thank you to the Linton family and Mary Fredrickson for their service; Barb Kuss coordinated. Josh Tank is now coordinating along volunteers with team.
- B. Ash Wednesday events yesterday:
 - i. About 50 people came between the morning and evening "services" to receive ashes.
 - ii. Made prayer list.
 - iii. 50 ashes on the go were distributed at the listening session on Sunday, February 14th.
 - iv. Experienced some challenges filming three different services over the course of a couple weeks but got through it with Thor's help.
 - v. *No Perfect People Allowed* –the of the five Wednesday services during lent.
 - a. Messages will be preached by staff and be held virtually.
 - vi. Weekly devotionals being distributed every Tuesday during lent (Ally).
- C. Volunteers are lined up for February 21st in person "practice" worship service.
- D. Marci has put together First Communion instruction.
 - i. Patti Graf-Palmer assisting with pinch pot chalices.
 - ii. Focusing on 5th & 6th graders (7 or 8) that missed previous opportunities.
 - iii. Communion class scheduled for March 14th from 11:00 am – 1:00 pm.
- E. Baptism coming up in March.
- F. New members who were planning to join last year still appear to be waiting to join once able to do so later this year.
- G. As calls for volunteers have gone out, some individuals are taking the opportunity to "step back."
 - i. Three people have stepped back from Altar Guild.
- H. 18 funerals held in 2020. But have gone four weeks without one.
- I. Grace Paulson is 100 years old!
- J. New website is getting ready to launch - but dropdown information needs to be populated.

8. BUSINESS

- A. New council member pictures.
 - i. Laurie Hanson – photographer has been taking our Council pictures.
 - ii. Will put on website as leader as congregation.
 - iii. 3rd Thursday in March at our next Council Meeting?
 - a. Pastor Dave is going to ask about doing it over a week
 - b. Max would like it done sooner rather than later, especially with the launch of the new website.

Following Jesus, Living a Giving Faith Overflowing With Love

- B. Spiritual Care Committee follow up.
 - i. Reference update under Invite Committee.
- C. Endowment follow up regarding Estate bequest.
 - i. Ezekiel was granted a very generous \$400,000 bequest in 2020 by a member who passed away. These dollars were given without assignment to a specific use. As good stewards of any bequest, our congregation (at Council’s direction) looks to use this gift in a responsible manner.
 - ii. To date, funds have been temporarily held in a money market at a bank and it was suggested at the January 2021 congregational meeting that this investment be reviewed.
 - iii. Ezekiel has an endowment called the *Ezekiel Lutheran Church Legacy Fund*.
 - a. These funds are invested for long term growth.
 - b. Per the Ezekiel Church Constitution, the goal of this fund is to “expand, enhance and augment the ministry and mission of Ezekiel beyond the operating budget of the congregation” and pays out 5% annually for these purposes.
 - c. The constitution allows for a larger withdrawal if approved by the “Ezekiel Council and the congregation at an annual meeting or specially called meeting.”
 - iv. Steve Miller submitted proposal by Brad Olson (Legacy Fund), including Sue Hodgson and Paul Moe, who met to discuss options for increasing return on invested dollars.
 - a. Since receipt, bequest has averaged under 1% interest.
 - b. Because endowment contributions are meant for long term gifts that last in perpetuity, it is recommended that a responsible portion of this gift be put into the Ezekiel Lutheran Church Legacy Fund (more funds can be added at a later date if deemed appropriate).
 - Suggest moving \$100,000 of bequest into Legacy fund, averaging a return of 10-12%.
 - c. Over the last several years, separate dollars from prior capital appeals have been held in an ELCA Mission Fund where they earned a greater return, but were available to cover substantial, unplanned building expenses. Most recently, funds were used for new HVAC units and the new roof).
 - The funds that were previously invested in that ELCA Mission Fund have been used in their entirety, but building maintenance is likely to be a continued need for Ezekiel.
 - Suggest reestablishment of \$100,000 for building maintenance in a short-term liquid investment ELCA fund earning a reasonable return.
 - d. Recommend that the remaining \$200,000 also be put into the same short-term liquid ELCA fund (averaging 7-14%) for long-range planning (to be used for other purposes such as potential to support or supplement future capital campaign endeavors) and should be reviewed by Council annually for appropriate placement.
 - e. Also verified with Valerie’s committee.
 - v. **Moved and seconded (Steve Miller/Tom Bauer) to allocate \$100,000 to the Ezekiel Lutheran Church Legacy fund, and \$300,000 to a short-term liquid investment deemed appropriate by the Treasurer and Business Administrator, earmarking \$100,00 for future building expenditures. Motions carried unanimously.**
- D. Organ Memorial Fund request from Annual Meeting.
 - i. Lois Michaelson mentioned the opportunity for creating a Memorial Fund for the Organ at the 2020 Annual Meeting.
 - ii. In reviewing the budget, we do have a budget line item for the organ.
 - iii. If members want to give for the benefit of the organ, they can do so by earmarking their funds.

Following Jesus, Living a Giving Faith Overflowing With Love

- iv. Tyler suggested listing our “special” funds available that people can donate to in a future church communication.
- E. Senior Pastor review process.
 - i. Max shared that he learned that in years past the annual review process for Pastor Mark was managed in more of a report style, whereby Pastor Mark made a report to the Personnel committee on an annual basis, which eventually made its way to Council.
 - ii. Max also revisited that several months ago Pastor David suggested that we have a review process for him that more directly involves leadership in the evaluation. PD views that Council Officers should conduct a review as they are the ones who work most closely with the pastor.
 - a. Max provided the following, which was taken from Pastor Dave’s position description:
 - *The Ezekiel Congregation Council, in supportive relationship with the pastor, will annually provide an opportunity for the pastor to evaluate the fulfillment of their call and ministry at Ezekiel. This annual conversation is understood as a leadership process focused on mission. The Ezekiel leaders involved will be, or will have recently been, serving in positions of leadership responsibility (i.e. president, president-elect, past president, personnel committee chairperson) in the ministry and mission of the congregation.*
 - b. After Council discussion, it was agreed Council can provide direction to the process; Council Officers and the Personnel Committee Chair will be tasked with implementing an evaluation plan/procedure.
 - c. Tyler thinks it would be a benefit for PD to get feedback.
 - Asked if PD would provide goals.
 - PD would layout goals vs. a strategic plan.
 - d. Tom suggested that there should be an annual review with all the staff.
 - Employee handbook outlines some guidelines but need to review who is responsible and what is currently outlined.
 - iii. David Bell to do a little research and review with Ed Schramm to see if there is a starting point.
 - iv. Plan to research and report back to Council in March.
- F. Listening Session input.
 - i. Based on information shared at the February 14th listening session, Council reviewed common themes from the listening session that were discussed:
 - a. Supporting our confirmation and senior high ministry age programs to ensure we are providing adequate programming and support for our youth.
 - b. Team building for support staff that includes a new counselor
 - Individual and teambuilding
 - c. Review of Constitution and Processes and Procedures.
 - Nominating Committee Duties.
 - What constitutes conflict of interest.
 - Max had discussion with Diane Bjornstal about specific areas of concern.
 - d. Breach of Confidential Information.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- A. Paul Moe – will be addressed in the future.

10. DATES TO REMEMBER

- A. Full Council meetings every 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30pm.
- B. March meeting via Zoom.
- C. April in Person.

11. NEXT MONTH:

- A. Business items: Will be generated within the next couple of weeks via email.
- B. Devotions: Tyler Linton

12. CLOSING PRAYER – Pastor David

- A. Lord's Prayer

13. MOTION TO ADJOURN: (Patti Graf-Palmer/Amanda Whipkey); meeting adjourned at 9:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Angel Egan, Secretary