

APPROVED

Gustavus Adolphus

LUTHERAN CHURCH

Congregational Council Meeting
August 27, 2019
Ronald C. Peterson Library 6pm

Present: Pastor Amanda Simons, Amy Lipetzky, Dan Bjorkquist, Carrie Fraser, Denise Hassenstab, Rick Howard, Dan Shogren

Absent: Pastor John Hierlinger, Jason Wittenberg, Brett Bowman

Devotion: Dan Bjorkquist shared a devotion on I Corinthians 12 and led the council in prayer.

Call to order: Vice President Amy Lipetzky called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm.

Virtual Votes since the 07.30.19 Council Meeting: Motion to approve the July 30, 2019 minutes was made by Denise Hassenstab, seconded by Amy Lipetzky; **approval** by virtual vote with two abstentions due to absence and final **approval** on August 3, 2019.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve agenda was made by Denise Hassenstab, seconded by Carrie Fraser; unanimously approved.

Approval of Financials/Treasurer's Report: Brett Bowman was unable to attend the meeting. Pastor Amanda gave a summary of what she and Pastor John discussed today regarding the July financial report. A motion to approve the financial report was made by Carrie Fraser, seconded by Dan Bjorkquist; unanimous approval.

Mortgage/Capital Campaign Update: A stewardship service will be held on November 24th with Blair Anderson preaching. It will be a celebration of the success of the campaign thus far and an acknowledgement of the additional payments made toward the mortgage principal.

Old Business:

1. Strategic Plan Update – Dan Bjorkquist, Denise Hassenstab, and Rick Howard completed their work on the strategic plan spreadsheet. This document will be reviewed at the All-Committee Meeting on September 17th. Council members discussed the goal of visiting other churches and the survey that will be completed after attending a worship service. Pastor John and Pastor Amanda will compile a list of potential churches to visit by September 15th and make an announcement to the congregation regarding this opportunity.
2. State Fair Parking – Pastor John provided the following written report: *As of Thursday, August 22nd, over 70% of the shifts have been filled. We have invited three*

congregations to join us in working the shifts: Arlington Hills, Our Redeemer, and Church of The Way. Thank you to Erik Hassenstab and Elaine Olson, our faithful co-chairs.

3. Parking Lot Repair Update – Pastor John provided the following written report: The work, according to Tim Himmer, is scheduled to start on Monday, September 16th. This date has been communicated with Merrick Community Services, so they are aware. As the date gets closer, we will have a better sense of which lot they will do first.
4. Hot Dogs and Brats During MCS Backpack Event - Pastor John provided the following written report: Thank you to Dan Shogren, Susan Meyer, Cathy Ronning, Amy Lipetzky, Ted Madison, Gene Haugen, Lorraine Vietor, and Dan Bjorkquist. They all helped us with the event. We served over 450 hot dogs and brats, 100 bike helmets and Thrivent t-shirts. Here is a note from Dan Rodriguez that was sent out to his staff and board: "And, this year we were very happy to partner with **Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church**, who supplied hot dogs and brats for our guests. I know the food was a very nice touch of hospitality. THANK YOU!"

New Business:

1. Continuing Education Funds Request for Pastor John – Pastor John provided the following written report: For the past year and a half, I have been working with a clergy coach, which has proven to be very helpful for me. My work with her helped me in many different ways as your lead pastor and the variety of tasks I work on and continue to work on. I would like to seek approval of additional budget money for four more coaching sessions for the remainder of the year. The amount for these sessions would be \$540 which exceeds my annual amount for continuing education. Pastor Amanda made a motion to approve funding this request, seconded by Dan Shogren; unanimous approval.
2. New Tenant Request - Pastor John provided the following written report: Back in July, I received an email from Julia Kallmes. Julia shared that she and Elizabeth Elcombe, a co-worker and friend, were in the process of starting a new Montessori based preschool here on the eastside of St. Paul, asking if we had any space. Right away, I thought about the space that was once occupied by Reconciling Works. For one, the Montessori curriculum uses everyday tasks in their learning. I knew the kitchen that is in that space would be a big draw for them. On July 31, I met with both Julia and Elizabeth and showed them the space that we have, that they would have exclusive rights to the two offices of Reconciling Works as well as doing a walk around the rest of the building. I shared with them about our partnership with Merrick and our other tenants. They were excited about this space and saw great potential. They appreciated our relationships with our other tenants, particularly Merrick. The next step for them was to invite their Board of Directors to come on-site to see the space. They were all here on Wednesday, August 7th. They joined us for dinner and were able to hear the VBS kids sing that night. I then took them on a tour, showing the board the same space I had shown Julia and Elizabeth. They shared with me that their board was meeting on Friday, August 9th. Here is the email that I received back from them after their meeting:

Dear John,

I hope you had a wonderful weekend! Thank you again for hosting our board members for the tour and dinner last week. At our meeting, we spoke about how much we

enjoyed connecting with such a warm and welcoming community. The board members were impressed with the space and excited about the possibilities.

Thus, we would like to take the next step of having someone from licensing look at the facilities. If it still works for you, I can go ahead and arrange for that to happen. Are there days/times that work best?

We were also wondering if there are general contractors or plumbers that Gustavus Adolphus or Merrick prefer to work with. We are interested in getting estimates on how much installing a separate entrance and bathroom would cost, just so we can keep that in mind as we navigate the process.

Absolutely let me know if you need anything (information, clarification, etc.) from us.

*Best,
Julia*

As you can tell, they are excited and desire moving forward with us. I personally think it would be wonderful to have a pre-school on our campus. For one, it gives us an additional connection with families in our community who might also be looking for a church. There are other benefits as well, such as good use of space here during the weekdays.

However, before I move forward with them, I want our Council to have a conversation about this. The biggest downfall is that they are not planning on starting until September of 2020 which means we would have more months where that space is not rented out. Of course, if they were to become a tenant, they would be in sooner and paying rent sooner than September, but this is something the Council needs to think about. I have not received other inquiries about this space. My plan for us this Fall was to list it with an agent to see if we could drum up interest and find a new tenant. This, of course, would take care of that, but is it the right decision?

I also need to state that there are other conversations I need to have with Julia and Elizabeth around their funding plan, what they have raised thus far, and what their future plans would be. Until I know this is something you would like me to pursue on behalf of GA, I haven't had that conversation. We would not sign a Letter of Intent until that conversation happened and I had a better idea of where the money was coming from. I would ask that the council have a conversation about this at the meeting. If this is something you would like to move forward on, I would ask that a motion be made, similar to the following statement: I move that Pastor John move forward with exploring the possibility of a preschool group becoming a tenant of Gustavus Adolphus and signing a Letter of Intent between GA and their group, laying out the next steps of the process.

Discussion was held regarding this agenda item and questions were generated to have Pastor John ask the potential tenants. Rick Howard moved that Pastor John move forward with exploring the possibility of a preschool group becoming a tenant of Gustavus Adolphus and will come back to the council with answers to the questions asked at this meeting before signing a Letter of Intent between GA and their group, laying out the next steps of the process, seconded by Carrie Fraser; approved unanimously.

- 2. Revision of GA By-Laws and Constitution – Pastor Amanda will contact Anna Marsh, Executive Assistant with the St. Paul Area Synod, regarding revising the GA constitution to match the ELCA model that will be in effect for the next three years. She will also make an announcement in church to find out if any congregation members are*

interested in assisting with this process. She asked council members to review the by-laws in order to make revisions to this document as well. The goal is to have the recommended revisions to both documents prepared for congregational review at the annual meeting in January.

3. Summer Worship Congregational Survey – Council members discussed questions to Include on this survey.
4. Communication with Committee Chairs - Jason Wittenberg was unable to attend the meeting, but sent a draft letter via email. Council members agreed that a letter will be sent out announcing the All-Committee Meeting on September 17th. The proposed communication plan will be shared at this meeting and a letter will be sent out to committee members after the meeting to formalize the plan. Council members reviewed the letter and recommended revisions to the letter before it is sent out to committee members.
5. Property Committee Proposals – Rick Howard presented two proposals on behalf of the Property Committee. The first proposal was to replace the carpet in the hallway between the Merrick Food Shelf distribution site and Luther Hall with the tile. The cost of this project will be \$1,766.00. Pastor Amanda moved to approve that Hamerick complete this work, seconded by Dan Shogren; unanimously approved. Rick also informed council members regarding the proposal of additional handicapped parking spaces outside of the northwest door adjacent to the main entrance of Merrick Community Services. Discussion followed about the placement of the spaces. No action was needed on this proposal.

No Committee Reports were given.

Council Schedule for 2019: Council Schedule for 2019: Usually the 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm. 9/24, 10/22, 11/26, (no Dec. meeting)

Motion to Adjourn: Rick Howard moved to adjourn, seconded by Dan Shogren at 8:00 pm.

Next Meeting: September 24, 2019 at 6:00 pm in the Peterson Library.

Submitted by Cathy Ronning, Council Secretary