

**TLC Church Council Meeting October 9, 2018**  
**Transfiguration Lutheran Church**

**Attendees:**

Council: Evan Collins, Dick Haugen, Carol Hill, Beth Mercer, Jerry Olson, Zac Schnedler, Patti Weichselbaum

Staff: Pastor Ed Treat, Pastor Arthur Murray

Regrets: Laurel Riippa

Guests: Ben Cherland, Renee Jefferson

**Devotion:** Carol Hill

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order by Beth Mercer at 6:28 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** Dick Haugen added Personnel Committee report to New Business. Motion by Patti Weichselbaum and second by Jerry Olson to approve the agenda. Motion carried and approved.

**Review and approval of minutes** of September 11, 2018: Carol Hill. Motion by Evan Collins and Zac Schnedler to approve the minutes. Motion carried and approved.

**Update on youth programming:** Ben Cherland shared that in 2013 there were 101 youth enrolled in confirmation. Since then enrollment has dropped by 10-20 youth each year. Renee Jefferson noted that based on her review of baptisms there is a trend toward fewer baptisms overall and increase in the number of non-members who have their children baptized at TLC and then do not enroll in Sunday School or Confirmation programs. Approximately 50% of children on the list of those baptized have attended Sunday School and approximately 50% show up for confirmation classes.

Discussion included the following:

- changes in participation appear to be part of the declining church culture/cultural shift 25% of those coming to church here were not Lutheran prior to coming
- there has been a change in that confirmation students don't know each other well when they begin the program because they did not grow up in the system (grade school or Sunday School) which makes it more difficult for them to feel part of a group
- increased participation is best driven by parental involvement and committed lay persons rather than the Membership Team
- smaller numbers may be an opportunity to interact more with the children and youth who are here
- Council can best assist by staying informed and supporting the strategic plan.

**Review and approval of September 2018 Financial Report:** Jerry Olson.

- General Fund receipts for September totaled \$54,036. Total disbursements totaled \$83,700 resulting in a deficit net income figure of \$29,664. The year-to-date figures show an increase in both receipts and expenditures in 2018 over 2017 which reflects pledges made as the result of the January appeal. The increase in expenditures is the result of paying benevolences on time this year.
- Capital Campaign receipts for September totaled \$34,340. Capital campaign expenditures totaled \$17,847 resulting in a net income of \$16,493.

Motion by Patti Weichselbaum with second by Evan Collins to approve the financial report.  
Motion carried and approved.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Ed Treat

Biggest thing to report is successful completion of a major conference on addiction. There was news coverage from the Star Tribune, Channel 5 news, and MPR. More than 200 clergy, church leaders, and health care workers converged in Bloomington from across the country and Canada to learn about addiction and how congregations can faithfully respond. The conference was a great success and all those involved and those who attended from TLC and the FRLC felt strongly that the Holy Spirit was moving powerfully in this event. I am grateful to have been a part of this and TLC has received letters of appreciation from the Northern Conference of churches and from the FRLC.

I met with the group of concerned members along with Beth Mercer, Pastor Arthur, Carol Hill, Jerry Olson, and Assistant to the Bishop Craig Pederson. Their list of concerns was addressed but they are not satisfied and want more conversation. We are continuing to work with the synod and with a church consultant on ways to best handle their issues. I'm very concerned the approach they are using is being harmful to the church. Meetings are set for later this week with a consultant recommended by the synod.

Continue to work with the transition of staff responsibilities: Michelle Reber with finances, Brad Nolte with communications, Marilyn Erickson weekly bulletins. The job description for a new entry level office assistant position is being finalized with the help of Michelle Reber and the personnel team.

I am currently developing my goals as pastor and will be working with the executive team to evaluate my job performance in the coming month. Staff will also be developing their goals in conjunction with my goals and in alignment with the goals of the strategic plan with performance evaluations to follow by years' end.

I continue working with Bob Riley and Eric Pommeranz, Pastor Arthur and a growing team on Stephen Ministry. Stephen ministers are actively being recruited and interviewed at this time. Training will begin in January.

Stewardship has been meeting since March and is actively putting together the fall campaign. Letters will go out this week. Two dinners are planned to celebrate and thank those who support this church and pledge cards will be given and returned at these dinners. The challenge is great as I have said and have been saying for the last three years. TLC continues to need answers to its ongoing financial challenges. In order to have a balanced budget going into 2019 and not need a special appeal, we will need to realize a 25 percent increase in pledges over last year. Along with stewardship, a financial development team made up of the pastors, council president and representatives from the stewardship committee, the foundation, gifts and memorials, and the capital campaign team are meeting to help brainstorm possible solutions. We will be working to carefully reduce expenses as much as possible and are adding an element of planned giving to the stewardship campaign. Projections for our budget are on target for this year, but we are still faced with the same challenge we have faced for the last three years running and will likely end the year with some difficult choices again for going forward.

Along with a great number of TLC members I attended the funeral services for Pastor Stephanie in September. It was a heavy, sad, yet powerful service and a great witness to her service to God. This loss has had a deep impact on the TLC staff and community. We continue to pray for her family.

The strategic planning process continues and as team leaders are being trained, we will begin the process of communicating the plan to the congregation and seeing greater involvement through upcoming communications.

Pastoral care is ongoing. We had funeral services for Carolyn Neilsen and currently caring for one long time member in hospice care, Corrine Lund, and the passing of Merlaine Johnson. Please keep these families in your prayers along with council member Laurel Riippa who returned to the hospital due to complications following her surgery.

I am currently counseling three couples toward marriage.

### **Old Business**

- Open council position: Dick Haugen nominated Sandy Stooke as a replacement for Gary Lewis. Second by Patti Weichselbaum. Motion carried and approved.
- Concerned member meeting recap October 2: Beth Mercer distributed copies of the agenda for the meeting and summarized the meeting in a letter she read to council. The Executive Committee believes it has fulfilled its commitment in meeting with the group and that continuing to meet with this group seems neither purposeful nor an efficient use of our time.
- Strategic Plan Update: Town Hall meeting proposal. Pastor Arthur: The Strategic Planning Team Update for September 2018 and the Project Status Update (September 10, 2018) were distributed. Pastor Arthur stated that rather than develop Town Hall meetings, every key area in the Strategic Plan would be asked to provide a detailed report by the end of the month.
- Personnel: See Pastor's report

### **New Business**

- Pastor Arthur: housing allowance adjustment. Evan Collins moved with second by Patti Weichselbaum that \$43,926 of Pastor Arthur's 2018 be designated as housing allowance. Motion carried and approved.
- Holy Cow Congregational Assessment Tool proposal. It has been suggested by synod that we might utilize this tool to assess concerns of the congregation. Beth Mercer distributed information about the tool. Evan Collins moved with second by Patti Weichselbaum that we proceed. Motion carried and approved.

**Next Meeting Date:** November 13, 2018—6 p.m. dinner, 6:30 p.m. meeting

Devotions: Beth Mercer

Dinner: Evan Collins

**Closing Prayer:** Pastor Arthur led the council in a closing prayer.

**Adjournment:** Motion to adjourn the meeting by Dick Haugen with second by Zac Schnedler. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.