

Annual Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2021

The 2021 Annual Meeting was called to order at 10:00am by Vision Team Chair, Amy Haack. With a quorum of 138 present via Zoom, we may continue with the agenda as printed.

Since this meeting is via Zoom, we will not be voting as usual.

Voting will be opposition to the motion only as these votes will be easier to count. All motions are brought to the floor by the Vision Team.

Prayer – Pastor Kari

Approval of the February 9, 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes

MSC

Endowment Fund – Bruce Wiitanen

Bruce shared the purpose of the Endowment Fund. There was a generous donation given to the Endowment Fund 2020. Plans are being made to promote the fund more this next year. The Endowment Fund gave \$12,100.00 this year, distributed to charities in and around Alexandria, and tuition for a seminary student.

Annual Audit – Greg Tvrdek

The annual audit was done on January 21, 2021. Four people from the congregation with financial backgrounds provided the audit. Dave Holtz, Karen Johnson, Carol Thalman, and Bruce Wiitanen found everything to be in agreement. The group made two suggestions, which were put into action in January of 2021. One of their suggestions was to get insurance bids to ensure we have the best rate possible. This has been done, and we will continue to be insured by Church Mutual. The other suggestion was we remove some duplicated accounts to better state our income and expenses on our profit and loss statement.

Treasurer's Report – Joanne Bliese

We are a healthy church, and this year shows how invested in the ministry we are. We ended 2020 in the black + \$50,630.00.

Our expenses were	\$1,139,381
Our income was	<u>\$1,190,011</u> – Congregational Support
	\$ 50,630 – 2020 Excess Congregational Support

We had a 1.2% decrease in expenses, and a 6.2% increase in income. Expenses came in below 9.2% the 2020 budget.

2020 Grants Received

Paycheck protection program – CARES Act

Received \$168,200 to cover April and May expenses (payroll, utilities, mortgage interest)

ALP Bright Energy Solutions

Received \$7237 for the use and installation of energy efficient lighting and equipment

Northwest Regional Development Commission

Received \$2745 for sanitizing equipment/PPE purchases/outreach

Mission Development of the ELCA

Received \$11,500 for mission development

With the grants, decrease in expense, and tremendous congregational support, we end 2020 with a usable cash balance of \$233,906. THANK YOU! We are blessed and thank you for your support of our missions!

Building and Financial Report – Greg Tvrdek



We are a healthy, vital congregation. A healthy congregation designs a strategy based on not only what has happened in the past, but also what is projected for the future. The Vision Team has put in place a strategy to start 2021 in a solid financial position. This strategy gives us a cash reserve and money to increase our ministry and outreach to the community in 2021.

At the end of the year, we had \$233,906 cash in the bank. Of this amount, the Vision Team put a balance of \$50,603 into the general fund to begin the new year. Of this \$50,000, we will tithe \$5000 of this in a special project or two as outreach to the community. We tithe 10% of our entire budget every year to benevolence and outreach.

The Vision and Finance Teams are proposing a zero percent increase to our budget this year. Staff will not receive the usual 2% cost-of-living increases for 2021, as the budget remains the same. In a time of job loss and hardships that this pandemic has caused, we felt that we should not do that at this time. We have set aside the 2% cost of living increase dollars, which totals almost \$15,000.00 and will use these dollars for operations if needed during the year. If we end the year in a good financial position, the staff will be paid the cost-of-living increase at the end of the year.

We have put \$144,000 in the bank as a cash reserve. This amount is 6 weeks of our budgeted expenses. This account will be used if the need arises for any short-term dollars needed to pay operating costs and will eliminate the need to draw a line of credit to pay operational expenses.

That leaves \$24,000 to reinvest in ministry in 2021. These dollars will be used to grow current ministry and launch new ministry opportunities and outreach throughout the next year.

Our Stewardship Campaign called “Believing Together” has increased pledges by 56 household in 2020. That is over \$102,000 of increased pledges to the general fund. Pledges to the general fund are \$706,000 given by 298 households. We have about 650 giving households in total. The difference is given by those who give to the general fund without making a pledge.

Around April of 2020, many members reached out and asked what they could do to help those in need. We encouraged giving to our Project Neighbor Fund. There was over \$21,000 donated to that fund in 2020. We spent about \$13,000 to help those in need purchase groceries, helped a family who didn’t have heat get their heating bill current, assisted in rent payments, and helped with other needs.

In May of 2020, we ended the three-year Capital Campaign “From the Ground Up” with 329 households completing their pledges totaling \$2.5 million dollars. There was another \$614,000 donated to the building fund in non-pledged gifts and memorials. We have yet to receive a couple of commitments that were pledged to this campaign totaling \$900,000.

Updates on the mortgage that is held with the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA:

We borrowed \$4,150,000 and began payments in November of 2019. Our current outstanding balance is \$3,821,000. We were able to pay down our principal in 2020 by \$284,283 or 6.93%. We completed a refinance of our mortgage in October to lower the interest rate from 4.875% to 4%. This reduces our payment from \$27,000 to \$25,000. After receiving proposals from local banks and Thrivent, we stayed with the Mission Investment fund.

The Building Fund is in great shape and we have 14.4 months of mortgage payments in various savings and money market accounts. The Capital Campaign that was to begin in May 2020 was put on hold as we have been in a worldwide pandemic. A year-long interim plan was put into place called “Continuing in Faith”. We asked the congregation to donate to this unpledged campaign for the next year at their current rate of giving to the building fund. We have 260 households contributing to this fund on a regular basis totaling over \$268,000. We thank you for your generous support of the building fund this past year!

Capital Campaign – Larry Ortloff

Our next Capital Campaign is called “Beyond the Building” and is set to kick off on May 2, 2021. Commitment Sunday is May 23, and we will commemorate this day with worship on the lawn and lunch. The Beyond the Building Capital

Campaign is seeking to raise \$2.9 million to eliminate the debt we carry, and this campaign will close the chapter of the entire building campaign. We invite you to pray for our campaign and the leaders as they get set to embark on this journey. Thank you for your continued support!

Pastor Reflection – Pastor Greg

Thank you to Greg Tvrdik for getting this Annual Meeting ready via Zoom – this was no small task!

There is so much we don't know these days. I'd like to focus on what I do know.

- We have weathered storms through the years, and we have learned navigational skills.
- We have been intentional about “keeping it simple”. We focused on our mission to worship, learn, and serve.
- We have trusted God and each other. To the best of our ability, we have lived out being brothers and sisters in Christ.
- As we have looked back at our online worship, we realize we've come a long way. Hats off to everyone who makes worship happen – musicians, sound techs, readers, online monitors.
- Who would've guessed that our outreach would be as wide as it is? An obstacle has become an opportunity.
- We have 138 new members who joined us during the pandemic, many have never even been in the building!
- We are proud of how you have reached out to your neighbors with cards and phone calls during this pandemic. You have been the church!

What I know absolutely is that your faithfulness is not something a lot of congregations are experiencing. This year has been a team effort: every gift, every person, every donation. Thank you for placing your trust in us, and in this mission that we share.

I am so grateful for our staff members as they have kept us going forward.

We are grateful for Pastor Ben. We all have benefitted from our time together. Please continue to pray for Ben and Alyssa and Finn, and our church family as we make this transition. We are grateful to Marilee Bergerson, John Martinson, Sharon Bridges, and Katie Hassler who will help with pastoral ministry in the interim. We thank them for stepping up and being partners in ministry. Please pray for us as we seek guidance.

Where we are headed:

- In person worship begins on Sunday, February 21. We are easing in with one service and hope that we can expand in the future.
- Outdoor worship at the Legacy of the Lakes Gardens begins on Memorial Day weekend.
- We are going to be more intentional about small group ministry in 2021.
- We are challenging our youth ministry as we continue to build and adapt during the pandemic. We are excited to see where this will lead us.
- We will continue to grow in how we serve. Our mission is synonymous with our congregation, and people need the church more now than ever.

For the Spirit of FLC Recognition, this year we recognize the members of the VT who have completed their terms of service with a gift of a FLC zippered pullover. Amy Haack, Loretta Lundy, Jim Mages, Jim Haugen, Margaret Schroeder, and Coty Lund have helped us navigate through so much.

A special thank you goes to our VT chair, Amy Haack. She has been on the VT for 8 years and has kept her sanity and good humor through it all!

Please make an effort to thank them for their service.

Incoming Vision Team Chair – Dick Geiselhart

Thank you to those who are going off of VT. You have the true spirit of FLC. A personal thank you to Amy- you set the bar pretty high. Excited to be the new chair of the VT. Excited that we will begin in person worship and our budget is strong.

Welcome to the new VT members:

Jen Sundby – Vice Chair

Darla Harstad – Learning Board

Del Mari Runck – Financial/Facility Board

Lucas Kusters – Worship Board

Bruce Belseth – Serving Board

Neal Larson – Communication Board

Joanne Kensinger – Secretary (non-voting member)

Joanne Bliese – Treasurer (non-voting member)

Installation of New Vision Team Members – Pastor Kari

VT Chair Reflection/Plan for Mission 2021 – Amy Haack, VT Chair

During this past year it would be easy to focus on the obstacles – it is an easy trap to fall into. We would hate for that to be the way we remember 2020. When we stop to be grateful for what we have we can remember 2020 year in a better way.

In process we grew our faith, we grew together, we grew in numbers, and we grew in our commitment to our mission.

We have experienced new things beyond online worship:

- Project Neighbor Fund
- Drive thru blessings
- Neighbor to Neighbor contact
- Parking lot worship
- DMS Foodshelf
- Weekly meal deliveries
- Convoy of Joy for our graduating seniors
- First Communion service
- Confirmation service

We showed up. Thank you for your outrageous commitment!

Vision Team conducted meetings by Zoom and we were able to accomplish a great deal. We prioritized and simplified how we worship, learn, and serve by restructuring the ministry. The old way duplicated processes. We restructured from 9 boards to 5 boards including:

Worship

Learning

Serving

Communications

Finance and Facilities

Each of these boards consists of 2-3 members and a VT rep and either a pastor or staff member. With this new structure we can make better use of our resources and improve communication.

Our financial plans center around our core values. We have a \$1.24 million budget. As you look over the budget, it does not include pay increases. As Greg T. stated earlier, \$15,000 has been set aside, and if we don't use it for operations during 2021, the cost-of-living increases will be paid to staff at the end of the year.

The Vision Team makes a motion and seconds it to accept this plan for mission for 2021. MSC

Old/New Business

Question: Where did the balance of \$50,000 come from?

Answer: Our actual expenses minus our income = \$50,000 extra Congregational Support.

Election of Delegates motion made and seconded by the VT

Comment by John Martinson: Retired clergy can always vote during a synod assembly, thereby making Marilee Bergerson ineligible to be elected.

Motion was restated that we would replace Marilee Bergerson with another delegate.

MSC

The meeting adjourned at 11:02 am.

Pat Kalina and Randy Morken shared the closing blessing with the song "May the Road Rise Up to Meet You".

Recorded by Karen Brazel

Administrative Assistant

Submitted by Greg Tvrdik

Director of Church Administration