

Lutheran Church of the Reformation
September 2021 Council Meeting
Meeting Agenda and Notes

Present: Molly Higgins, Elizabeth Hann, Pastor Mike Wilker, Pastor Ben Hogue, Emily Andre, Judith Mangubat, Andy Weaver, Ivy Finkenstadt, Karen Carlson, Laura Swanson, Lyndon Smith, Evan Benoit, Suzanne Hazard, Chari Voss, Megan Quirk-Herrera

Agenda:

September 21, 2021

6:45 PM Social time

7:04 PM Call to Order – Molly

- Devotions, Prayer Judith

****Announcement:** Budget season is coming! Please hold Tuesday, October 26, 7-9 PM for a special Council meeting totally devoted to the budget.**

7:09 PM Secretary's Report – Approval of August minutes

- Judith moved to approve; Andy seconded. The motion was passed by all.

7:11 PM Financial report – Suzanne Hazard

- We are on target with receipts through the end of August. Giving statements were recently sent out.
- Engagement and communication asked the finance committee to discuss alternatives to giving that are more convenient for the giver (i.e. paypal, venmo). This is currently under discussion. They are gathering more information about how this will affect the financial committee/secretary which may be more complicated.

7:18 PM Update on church staffing- Pastor Ben and Pastor Mike

- Administrative Assistant position had 3 interviews, Elizabeth and Pr. Ben helped Pr. Mike with the interviews.
- An offer was made today and was accepted by Julie Miller. She has been a music teacher and substitute church secretary and has led other ministries within previous church positions. She will start on Oct 4th.
- We will try to start the Director of Operations on the same day as the Administrative Assistant. This is a good opportunity to restart staff culture (file storage, how we do certain tasks) since both will be new.
- Director of Operations position had 4 interviews, and Pastor Mike is checking the references for the top two candidates. Molly and Dina Finkel have been helping with the interviews.
- Pastor Ben is formally resigning to accept a position with the churchwide office (ELCA) in the Advancement and Development office. His last day will be October 24th. A formal

resignation letter will be submitted to Molly tonight. A letter and an email will be sent to the congregation tomorrow morning.

- We will consider extending the parsonage to Pr. Ben and Marshall for up to 3 months.
- Pr. Erin Reinhold is an assistant to the bishop. She will meet with the Executive Committee the first week of October. The Executive committee, in consultation with the Personnel Committee, will work to secure interim assistance (perhaps a deacon, lay leader or an interim pastor).
- A motion was made by Karen, seconded by Andy and approved by all:
 - o The Council authorizes the Executive Committee, in communication with the Personnel Committee, to pursue an interim deacon, pastor or lay person to serve at Lutheran Church of the Reformation, between Pastor Ben's departure and the hiring of a permanent staff person.
- We also need to start thinking about how we say thank you and goodbye to Pastor Ben.

7:49 PM Visit from Spiritual Growth – Megan Quirk-Herrera (See attached document for additional details)

- Very young kids have not come back much yet. These parents may be waiting until they can wear masks better and social distance better.
- How do we incorporate new kids and babies better into the church? Could we specify spaces that are designated to the children better?
- National Youth Gathering is still on the table but we will need to understand what its going to take to get us there. With Augustana and St Paul's we probably have 6-10 kids who would be interested in going.
- Youth group will do an annual harvest festival/pumpkin carving soon. Pr. Lisa at St. Paul's has started seminary and cannot commit as much time to youth events. Perhaps what we can do is participate more with the Synod events.
- We need to get more non-parents interested in supporting Sunday School.
- Ivy asked what our policy is for screening new volunteers (including background checks), Jessica Snowden and Megan would be responsible for this in the future. There should always be 2 adults in the classroom. Director of Operations can also provide support for this role.
- We can be in discernment about any ways we want to change or enhance Spiritual Growth.

8:18 PM Update on property repairs

- Background: At last month's Council meeting, Pastor Ben brought to our attention several property issues that need immediate attention. Council discussed these with the property committee and decided to move forward with the repairs.
- The estimated cost of the repairs is \$45,743. The scope of work includes tuckpointing the north and northwest office building walls, patching the roof, repairing and replacing gutters and downspouts and window sills, and painting the exterior and interior walls.
- The finance committee discussed several options for paying for the repairs, and has come to the conclusion that we can fund these repairs with our currently available funds, without borrowing money from the line of credit.

- The resolution: The Council authorizes the staff and Property Committee to contract Bruno Clay to make emergency repairs on the office building up to \$50,000. The funds can be drawn from current sources of income and, if need be, from the Undesignated Bequests. The scope of work includes tuckpointing the north and northwest office building walls, patching the roof, repairing and replacing gutters and downspouts and window sills, and painting the exterior and interior walls.
- Andy made the motion for the above resolution, Chari seconded and the motion was passed by all.

8:29 PM Ministry Area Committee Action Items and Reports

Worship, Music and the Arts – Ivy

- The budget is being discussed to understand how to fund continued payment of the section leaders. Their current funding sources have transitioned or been used so we will need to figure out how to fund these positions in the future.
- They've also discussed how to expand music offerings at both services.
- Choir rehearsal has begun with masks and social distancing.
- The 8:30 service is well attended (~25 people), and several are new members.

Spiritual Growth – Evan

- No additional updates.

Fellowship and Caring Ministries – Chari

- We need more coffee hour hosts. Kim Benoit is struggling to find volunteers. We plan to continue this outside through the end of October. We will reassess at this point if we can continue.
- The committee is also concerned about who will provide fellowship for the 8:30 service.
- College care packages will be made soon.

Engagement and Communication – Pr. Ben

- New members were welcomed last week virtually and in person.
- Blessing of the beasts will be held on October 3rd.
- The new website is wrapping up! All of the copy is completed. It will likely be launched before or shortly after Pr. Ben leaves.
- The online directory went dormant in June. The updated online directory will be worked on once the new Administrative Assistant starts. Pr. Ben is recommending that we update the print directory in house and perhaps hire a local photographer.

Stewardship, Property and Finance – Pr. Ben and Pr. Mike

- The stewardship campaign will kick off after Pr. Ben departs. The theme will be looking toward a future with hope.
- Committees are working on their 2022 budget requests which will be sent to the finance committee to create the budget for 2022.

- Additional property updates include repairing solar panels, removing a water heater, and refinishing the big wooden sanctuary doors. Part of the roof on the sanctuary was blowing off from some of the windy storms we've seen. Thankfully it's a minor and inexpensive repair.
- We had Blaine window come out to repair windows in both parsonages and the community host apartment.

Service and Justice - Karen and Lyndon

- The food pantry is continuing at very low levels.
- Good neighbors Capitol Hill has found a temporary storage unit which sits where the van used to be parked. Any Good Neighbors members can open and store furniture in the unit. It costs \$200/month and they have plenty of funds to cover this. There are two additional sites at other congregations which have also been found recently.
- WIN is gearing back up this fall. A large group clergy gathering will happen in October.
- Southeast ministry is working with the Boston Consulting group to focus on what they can be doing and how to partner with other ministries to do what they can due to COVID and funding losses in the past few years.

Personnel – Pr. Mike

- No additional updates.

Archives & History – Emily,

- Phillip Moller has an old Reformation Cook book that could be preserved and/or updated. Elizabeth Hann will follow up with him to get this.

8:47 PM Staff Reports – Pr. Mike and Pr. Ben

- Pr. Ben expressed his thanks to the Council and Congregation for supporting his wedding this past month. Please see attachment for Pr. Ben's September report.
- Pr. Mike just wanted to check in and let us know that he is feeling good and pleased to be part of the congregation. There is no senior pastor report for this month.

9:12 PM Closing Prayer – Judith

9:14 PM Adjourn

September Spiritual Growth Updates

2021 Council Update with Meghan and Pastor Ben (9-21-2021)

([Our 2019-2021 Agendas](#) // [2020 Spiritual Growth Committee Report](#) to Council Feb 2020)

- Introduction of Spiritual Growth
 - Who we are: Committee Members
 - Meghan Quirk-Herrera (Chair)
 - Liz Tuckermanty
 - Sarah Guthrie
 - Jessica Snowden
 - Evan Benoit (2020 and 2021 Council Liaison)
 - Ivy Finkenstadt
 - Elizabeth Hann
 - Pastor Ben
 - What we do:
 - Our committee is driven by Reformation's 'Spiritual Growth' Value which states, *"We inspire and empower people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. At every step of life's journey, we challenge and support one another as we grow in faith together as individuals and as a community."*
 - How we do it:
 - Try to meet every other month, especially when decisions need to be made. Sometimes 'meetings' are done via email.
 - We come together to set goals and then strategize about accomplishing those goals. We also dream of Spiritual Growth possibilities for the congregation and field suggestions from members.
 - We support the Pastors in their work (helping interview Sunday School teachers or nursery workers, finding editors/editing FATE, helping to put together Summer Prayer Bags, etc.) and implement committee member's work (small group facilitation like Reformation Reads, etc.)
- Recap of Goals from 2020/2021: **(Meghan)**
 - Sunday School Support (and expansion?)
 - Create Sunday School Superintendent position to support SS teachers and Pastor Ben -> Jessica Snowden has taken this role on!
 - Small Groups with regional Bible Study focus
 - Despite virtual climate, many small groups including the Navy Yard Bible study and Reformation reads continued to meet
 - Reformation Reads followed thematic updates set by Pastor Mike/Pastor Ben
 - January/February - Antiracism and Dialogues on Race
 - Lent - Spiritual and Congregational Discernment

- Easter - Gender, Sex & Sexuality
 - Retired Men's Fellowship Group met in the Spring and paused for Summer. May meet up virtually or in-person depending on restrictions/comfort level.
 - Strategizing about how to measure the spiritual growth of the congregation -> on pause but in the back of our minds
 - As ever, Pastor Ben creatively provided at-home spiritual growth opportunities for both adults and you within the congregation through devotionals, prayerbags, and candygrams
 - We expanded this focus into thinking of the physical space at Reformation, and how to make spaces more inclusive for youth and teens, hope to expand on this next year as well
 - Jessica Snowden has done fantastic work and has more ideas for Sunday School classrooms
 - Jessica and Pastor Ben would love to get a dedicated Youth Room for teens. Something for the younger students to "look forward to".
- Sunday School Update & Curriculum
 - Jessica Snowden is our wonderfully creative Sunday School Superintendent and has been very intentional and deliberate in thinking about Sunday school logistics this fall
 - Understanding of our congregation:
 - Per Jessica: Thank you for your support of Reformation's youngest members. As life-long Reformation member Deborah Mennuti used to say, "if your Church isn't crying, it's dying." If you attend service in person, you'll note that we've got kids of all ages making joyful noises. And we are truly blessed for that. Reformation continues to welcome new families and recommits to the spiritual growth of our kids with every new school year.
 - Logistics:
 - Jessica sent out a note to Families (9/16) with a great overview of what themes and lessons will be covered in Sunday school, which Sunday School teachers are teaching which classes, calendar with dates in which there won't be Sunday school, as well as information about how to address COVID precautions:
 - If child exposed in SS, will notify everyone and take a two week break for all grades (virtual instead)
 - If child exposed outside of SS, notify Jessica so we can act accordingly to the date of exposure
 - Extra KN95s have been purchased
 - Bring bottle of water - no snacks for now
 - Welcoming and dismissing kids from the Children's Chapel

- Working on getting all family cell phone numbers programmed in the right teacher's phone so you don't have to sign in each time
 - Won't release kids until we see the parents - if something keeps you, will bring child to the Nursery or to Worship with one of the teachers (depending on age)
 - Jessica will send another update in a couple of weeks with a contact list of teachers and any parents
- Thematically:
 - This Fall - the Season of Pentecost and "de-mystifying" the Worship service
 - Significance of the colors on the atler, the holidays, words used in worship, prayers
 - For 3rd & 4th graders: taught by Ivy Finkenstadt and Jessica Snowden
 - Life of the Church and Growing in Faith
 - All lessons taken from the New Testament Gospels covering themes of "taming the tongue" and the power of words, prayer for ordinary times (not just special occasions), divorce, loving treatment of women, children, and marginalized, to show the importance of community
 - Additional lessons:
 - the Camel through the Needle lesson to talk about possessions,
 - James & John to learn about service and discipleship
 - Jesus Heals Bartimaeus to talk about how faith can heal & make us well
 - the Widow's Offering to talk about motivations for our action
 - the First Commandment helps kids think of Christian love as different from the popular (romantic) description.
 - And end the year with talk about new beginnings and endings (lesson of Jesus rebuilding the temple in three days)
 - For 1st and 2nd graders: taught by Kiri Nicholson, Will Anderson, and Helene Sherburne
 - Presenting known bible stories in a way they can understand and retain with lessons reinforced with crafts and activities:
 - Noah's Ark: God wants us to love and obey
 - Abram's Call: We can say thanks to God.
 - Abraham & Sarah's Visitors: God has a big plan.
 - Issac's Blessing: God helps us get along.
 - Free from Slavery: God wants people to be free.

- The Red Sea: God makes miracle happen.
 - The 10 Commandments: God's rules teach us how to live.
 - The Battle of Jericho: When we obey, we'll be okay.
 - Naomi & Ruth: God stays close to us.
 - David & Goliath: God is always by my side.
 - Elijah & the Widow: We can feed others.
 - Jonah and the Big Fish: We can't hide from God.
 - PreK - Kindergarten: taught by Denisse Oskam (we still need a back-up for her!)
 - same as for 1st & 2nd graders with more focus on relating to characters
 - Ages 0-3 : first steps in faith - parents and caregivers will take turns leading the group in simple activities or songs that have connection to a bible story
- A conversation about the priority of Spiritual Growth
 - Working on ways to integrate themes into additional intergenerational spiritual growth opportunities both inside and outside of the congregation.
 - One of the committees major priorities for 2021, is to support a positive opportunity for our high schoolers in the summer of 2021 since the Youth Gathering was cancelled in 2020.
 - Additionally, we hope to equip Jessica Snowden and our Sunday School teachers with any support they need for Sunday School logistics as we continue to map out our congregational needs moving forward.
 - This includes more Sunday School teachers!
 - Questions and Direction from Council

September 2021

Leadership

- Staff Lead for Administrative Assistant hiring process
 - Co-Lead initial Zoom interviews with Elizabeth Hann (*Thank you, Madam VP!*)
 - Pastor Mike joined Elizabeth and me for in-person final round interviews and offering position
- Staff Support for DOO hiring process
 - Helped to interview candidates in-person with President Higgins, Dina Finkel (member of Personnel Committee) and Pastor Mike (staff lead for DOO)
- Finance Team Meeting
 - Will work with committees to give our budget proposals
- Chaired Metro DC Candidacy Committee Meeting Sept 1
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Spiritual Growth

- Recruited Sunday School teachers and held Zoom Info Session with Jessica Snowden
- Sunday School has started
 - In need of teachers and classroom support
 - Lack of interest mixed with some trepidation about returning (*both understandable!*)
 - Confirmation will begin with Matt Aviles 9/26
 - We have one 6th grader and one 7th grader
- Support Nursery Workers - recording, submitting hours,

Engagement and Communication

- Website is almost complete. To take a sneak peek, click here:
<https://chloetempco.wixsite.com/reformation2b>
- No Barrack's Row Fall Fest
- Blessing of the Beasts - October 3
- Held New Member Welcome Zoom/Info Session & Sunday Building Tour
- Welcomed New Members on Sunday, Sept 19
 - 11 Adults, 1 child (two were recently baptized adult members)

Worship, Music, and Art

- Presided over many baptisms recently (Thanks be to God!)

Stewardship

- Quarterly Statements were mailed at the end of August
 - Helped to invite folks to September 12 Gather Sunday

- A Future with Hope resource

Caring Ministries

- Ongoing support for members with established Pastoral Care relationships and youth
- Connecting newcomers with Reformation members/friends
 - Many new young adults moving to the area for work/school
- Officiated an outdoor wedding on 8/28

Service and Justice

- Plan to gather Food Pantry working group to discuss fall/winter plans
 - Still slower than pre-pandemic years

Personal/Parsonage

- A big THANK YOU for your love and support that surrounded our wedding
- Took off 2 days after wedding to recharge
- Planned travel
 - Colorado Sept 23-28 - See grandfather, attend friend's wedding at camp
 - Grandmother's Funeral - Oct 15-18