

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
**CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**January 11, 2021**

**Council Members**

Susan Ryder, president	Patty Rohde, Secretary	Susan Dickinson, treasurer
Pastor Cover	Tom Blackburn, Vice President	Tom Zimmerman
Sue Gasswint	Randy Hamme	Karen Hubbard
Rick Keen	Marti Bert	Barb Schell
Nevin Shenck	Jesse Woodrow, guest	Bryan Weber, guest

\*Denotes absent

**Call to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 7:08 PM

**Approval of Agenda** – Pastor Cover asked to add a personnel matter and action regarding a donation received at the end of 2020 to the agenda. Motion by Nevin Shenck and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rick Keen to approve the amended agenda. Motion carried.

**Opening prayer** – The meeting was opened with a prayer led by Pastor Cover

**Mission Moment** - Deferred this month

**Action Items:**

- A. Switching Banks – Bryan Weber is invited to the meeting to share information. Bryan reviewed the pros and cons of switching from M & T Bank to MidPenn Bank. Bryan suggested trying MidPenn in small increments of business to see if we like MidPenn better. Bryan pointed out that the transition would take a long time anyway as it takes a while to switch banks. MidPenn has no branches nearby which is not convenient, but they do allow the church to process its own donation checks which is a convenience. The check scanner offers more protection of donations than manual check management does. There needs to be some IT set up. Motion by Nevin Shenck, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Marti Bert to set up a trial account at MidPenn Bank to pay payroll. Following discussion, the motion is then amended as follows: Motion to set up a trial account at MidPenn Bank using funds to be transferred from M & T Bank into a MidPenn account from Fund I. Motion carried. Susan Dickinson will contact MidPenn to set up the account.
- B. PPP Loans are available again through the government due to the Dec 21, 2020 legislation. Bryan Weber is willing to spearhead obtaining any monies we wish to apply for. Bryan reports that the application process is not open yet. Bryan can apply and Council would need to vote to approve taking the loan if we are approved for the loan.
- C. Bryan also reports that he would like to transition out of his current position and asks Council to start considering his replacement. This person needs finance/accounting experience and an understanding of debit/credit info. He would like a replacement

by the end of June so that he has time to train that person. Susan Ryder thanks Bryan for his service.

- D. Budget Discussion –The budget forums will be via Zoom. Susan Dickinson presented the 2021 Budget. See attached. There was ongoing discussion about line items. There was also discussion about using Memorial money to fund some of the unanticipated expenses incurred as a result of COVID-19 which are not regular budget expenses. There will be a line item added to the budget to that effect and money can be transferred into it from Memorials as needed. Motion by Marti Bert, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Karen Hubbard to approve the 2021 Budget. Motion carried.
- E. 1604 rental vs. sell – There are some electrical issues that need to be addressed at the property. We need to table this discussion as more info is needed. Linda Lippert is looking into different management companies to see what they offer or how much they cost. Jesse offered to assist with this process as he has experience with managing property rental. He will get in touch with Linda Lippert. There is also more work being done to get an appraisal to establish a figure on a possible sale of the property. Barb Schell expresses that if we let the property go, we might not have the resources to buy it back if we would want to do that in the future. Susan Ryder also suggested that we consider selling 1604 in order to invest in Kentland to make it a more useful property for the Congregation and community. Marti Bert expressed concerns that since the property is aging it may need some extensive repairs to the infrastructure that may be more costly than is worth keeping the property. There was a suggestion to talk with Kyle Flook as he may have some knowledge of the situation. There was discussion that before we make any decisions, we need to have a better long-range plan. Perhaps we rent to property until we create a clear long-term plan.
- F. Congregational meeting – We need 48 people present to make a quorum. There was discussion and practice with Zoom functions to figure out how people can vote for any motions.
- G. The initial Congregational meeting agenda is attached. The agenda was amended to update Council member information and presentation of Congregational minutes and correct typos. Motion by Tom Blackburn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sue Gasswint to approve the amended agenda for the January Congregational meeting. Motion carried.
- H. Open Council seat – There are no candidates currently. We will try to find a candidate to present for a vote before the Congregational meeting.
- I. Capital Campaign update – Barb Schell has an update. As of today, there is \$5040 in pledges still owed which is very promising to meet the pledge goal. There was one family who defaulted on the pledge part way through. Another family made a pledge who had the pledge realigned to meet their financial position. There is 1 pledge still outstanding for 2020. \$337,822.70 was collected so far. There is about \$1,500 that is not accounted for and may have been placed in the wrong in the church accounts. Barb is working with Diane Deppen to find that money. The whole project cost about \$405,000. The outstanding debt on the difference is about \$36,000.
- J. Pastor Cover and Grace Church assisted a family who are not church members with a funeral for a family member early in the pandemic when other churches were not open. That family contributed \$50,000 to Grace in thanks for the assistance. The

donation was directed to the Community Meal and the kitchen that helps serve it. A motion was proposed by Nevin Shenck to use the necessary funds from this \$50,000 donation from the Community Meal Fund plus the balance in the Capital Campaign account to pay off the Capital Campaign loan with future pledge money to go into the Community Meal fund. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Patty Rohde. This motion is tabled to an Evote to give the Schells time to contact the remaining pledge families and notify them of this change. Don Schell will make this announcement at the Congregational meeting in January.

- K. LifeTouch just sent Julie Flook an Email that the church directory should be ready, so we might get a directory after all. We have the directory in a PDF file that we can print it ourselves if needed. We will update the Congregation.
- L. Wendy Smith has submitted her resignation but will stay to train a new person. The Personnel committee met to recommend Chris Jury as a temporary hire as the Administrative Assistant to help keep the office open. That gives us time to go through the whole process of hiring a new assistant. Chris knows this is a temporary position and he can still perform his job without a conflict of interest between the 2 positions. Nevin Shenck serves on Personnel Committee and reports that we have done this before, and it might take a few months to fill the position permanently. Motion by Pastor Cover, 2<sup>nd</sup> Nevin Shenck by to hire Chris Jury in the temporary position as Administrative Assistant at a rate of \$12.36/hr. Motion by Pastor cover and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rick Keen to accept the resignation of Wendy Smith as of January 21. Motion carried. There was a decision to recognize her service at the Congregational meeting and give her a gift card in thanks. See resignation letter attached.

## Reports

### A. President's Report

### B. Secretary's Report

- a. Evote: Motion by Tom Blackburn, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Marti Bert to approve the December minutes. Motion carried.
- b. Minutes from Exec committee meeting were distributed.

### C. Vice-president's Report

### D. Treasurer's Report – See attached. Motion by Barb Schell, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Rick Keen to approve the Treasurer's report. Motion carried.

### E. Pastor's Report - There were about 100 connections each Sunday and 300 on Christmas Eve through Livestream Services.

### F. Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministry Report – Jesse reports that Youth group are still meeting regularly by way of a combination of use of Kentland, Zoom meetings, and outdoor meetings.

### G. Director of Music Report

## **H. Committee/Task Force Reports**

- a. Kitchen (Audrey Egley/ Marti Bert)
- b. Children, Youth & Family Ministry (Melinda Bechtel/ Sue Gasswint)
- c. Endowment (Linda Lippert/ Barb Schell)
- d. Faith Connection (Julie Flook/ ??)

e. Fellowship and Arts (Hope Pankake/ Tom Zimmerman) - We usually do a game night in the social hall in the beginning of February, but we are not doing it this year. Our next event will be for Easter so we will have a meeting in early March. I think it's too early to say what that event will look like.

- f. Finance & Budget (Susan Dickinson)

g. Personnel (John Gabler/ Nevin Shenck) -See action items above

h. Property (??/Randy Hamme) - It is my understanding that Cody Fickes resigned from Property Board so his name can be removed from the rolls. I recruited and organized our first zoom meeting for Property Board, and we have addressed a variety of issues that have laid dormant for several years and need immediate attention. Accordingly, a task force has been assigned to do a walk through the property and create a punch list, prioritize it and get estimates as to cost. This information will be shared at the February meeting.

- i. Social Ministry (??/ Karen Hubbard)

- j. Stewardship (Brigitte Storey/ Rick Keen)

- k. Worship & Music (Beth Jury/ ??)

- l. 1604 Task Force (Terry Snyder)

- m. Advice on financial matters (Tracey Alfano-Douty)

## **Other Business**

**Adjournment** – Motion by Karen Hubbard, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Blackburn to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting was closed with a word of prayer led by Susan Ryder. Meeting adjourns at 9:33 PM.