

Faith Lutheran Congregational Meeting Minutes

May 21, 2023

Meeting called to order at 10:07am. Executive Committee Members were introduced, and a preview of the meeting agenda was given. – Jim Sheldon

Opening Prayer – Pastor Derek Harkins

Secretary's Report – Mark Schneider

Call for corrections or additions to the December 11, 2022, Congregational Meeting Minutes was made. None were heard.

Ray Utter made a motion to approve the Congregational Meeting Minutes as distributed.

Motion was seconded by Amy Groce. **Motion approved.**

Pastor's Report – Pastor Derek Harkins

Pastor's Report – Pastor Sylvia

Ditto to Pastor Derek's gratitude for our executive committee, task group leaders and staff - it is a joy to share in ministry together. The Bible verse that came to mind as I was thinking about the past year is from Philippians chapter 4: "Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near." I have to say that the last year has been one of the most joyful here serving at Faith Lutheran. It has been so fun to re-engage in ministry together in this post-COVID world. We've had a lot of really exciting and joyful work to do together - time to be in fellowship with one another, opportunities to try some new things. That's been really energizing and joyful for me. First and foremost, probably, among those would be the work that worship and music task group did in setting up worship teams. It has been so, so fun to serve in worship leadership with all of you who are on those teams and to see people getting to know each other more and to learn to do new things and to make mistakes together and to lead all of us together in worship, praise, and thanksgiving of our wonderful God. So that has been so fun and joyful for me. I have also been working a lot with the mission task group to have a clearer mission focus each month. We did our first blood drive in many years, so thank you to all of you who came and participated in that. We had a few first-time donors, which was awesome. Our confirmation students have been such a joy to work with these past couple of years. And it was so good to be able to get back to engaging with our youth in some of our in-person retreats and lock-ins. We are actually getting ready to go on retreat with our 7th and 8th graders next week, so please pray for me and Pastor Derek and Brooke Sundvor - it's going to be a great time, but we covet your prayers as we grow in faith together - us alongside those young people. So, I'm really grateful for all of that. We've done a lot of studying together this year: book studies on *The God Who Sees: Immigration, the Bible, and the Journey to Belong*, a biography of Luther called *Resilient Reformer*, and the gospels of Luke and Matthew 0 extended studies of those, as well as many other topics. I was able to

share about my trip to the Holy Land in a great event that many of you attended that again was just so fun and joyful. And so, I thank you. I think I saw an increased gentleness with each other over the past year, going back to that Philippians verse, and the care you have shown for each other has been really moving to see for me as your pastor. With all that to say, the big thing coming up for me, looking ahead over the summer and preparing for next year is the remaining two months of my sabbatical. So, I want to let you know that I will be on sabbatical leave from June 14 through August 13. My plan for this time is to do a lot of reading because we get interrupted a lot here at the office - it's very difficult to do that. So, I'll be doing some reading in preparation to use at different studies and events at church. I'll be spending some time at home and then Seth and I will be spending some time traveling as well. So, during that time, from June 14 to August 13, I am not going to answer any phone calls on my cell phone from any of you - sorry! I'm not going to respond to any text messages, and I'm not going to look at my email. And I'm going to delete all those emails when I get back, so email me after August 13th if you want me to look at it. This is a really great gift from the congregation, and so I thank you for that. It's an opportunity to have some time away to nurture ourselves spiritually, to have a break from the constant demands of being on call all the time, which, normally those being on call times is when hard stuff is happening. So, it's very weighty to have to carry that pastoral care burden at times; it's good and it's a meaningful part of our work, but it can get heavy. So, I'll have a break from that. Just so you know - Pastor Derek will be here! He's great! You all know that, so he's going to do great stuff. Pastor Sharon Korsmo will also be providing some support for the congregation as well with preaching and on-call coverage and other things like that. So again, from June 14 through August 13 I'll be off on sabbatical, and I thank you for that gift. Just a note: If you worship on Wednesday nights, my last Wednesday with you will be June 7th for worship. If you worship on Sundays, my last Sunday with you will actually be this next Sunday (May 28th), because we have Synod Assembly (June 4th) and then I will be taking a vacation Sunday (June 11th) to attend a friend's wedding. I will miss you, and I will be very excited to be back with you in worship in the middle of August. So, thank you!

Blessings,
Pastor Sylvia

Treasurer's Report – Matthew Nygard

Matthew explained that the church is now using ICON financial software and that both he and Cheryl have been receiving in-person training for it. In summary of this year's giving, Matthew stated that we are up from last year and truly believes that we are a "mission minded" congregation.

Tracy Schneider made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion was seconded by Ray Utter. **Motion approved.**

Mission Statement Review – Jim Sheldon

Jim read our mission statement, "We are building a welcoming, nurturing faith community that is guided by Jesus and shares the Gospel." Merton Johnsrud suggested that we could add the

words “so that...” to the end of the statement for additional purpose and clarification. This idea will be considered by the congregation for further action at the next congregational meeting.

Norbert Mayer made a motion to approve the Mission Statement as it currently reads with future discussion about the suggested “so that...” addition. Motion was seconded by Allen Dockter. **Motion approved.**

Program Accomplishments – Jim Sheldon

Jim gave a summary of all the accomplishments at our church this year including the creation of a Staff Evolution Committee, hosting Vacation Bible School, the Growth in Giving Campaign, the Dream Board, the Worship Team’s success, and our Renewed Monthly Mission Focus.

Review of Goals– Jim Sheldon

Short-term goals included the individual goals of the task and compass groups, continuing events with other churches, updating our membership directory, and enhancing the ministry of visitation and connection. Long-term goals remained the same as the last congregational meeting including evaluation of the upgrades to the building and property, leadership development training, and developing a youth ministry plan.

A motion was made by Avis Pedersen to accept the short and long-term goals, seconded by Allen Pedersen, and **approved by vote.**

Approve Delegates for the Western ND Synod Assembly– Jim Sheldon

Jim read the names of members nominated to serve as delegates for the Western ND Synod Assembly including Lyla Timm, Matt McCleary, Caitlin Angermeyer, Amy Steiner, and Jim Sheldon.

A motion was made by Jenell Loftesnes to accept the nominated delegates, seconded by Allen Pedersen, and **approved by vote.**

Elect Members to the Nominating Committee– Jim Sheldon

Out of a possible six-member Nominating Committee, only Aaron Isaak and Erin Kuntz have committed.

A motion was made by Ray Utter to accept the nominated delegates, seconded by Norbert Mayer, and **approved by vote.**

New Business – Congregation

Allen Dockter asked about the upcoming parking project, the contract has been signed, and sometime this summer is the timeframe for completion. The handicap parking along 14th Street doesn’t meet code; however, other handicap parking will be provided. New security for church entrance doors will be installed this Tuesday. Allen Pedersen asked about sidewalk section

replacement, and this will be paid for by special assessments and likely cost close to \$100,000. Norbert Mayer asked about our visitation program and Pastor Sylvia explained that there is an ongoing need and people are being matched on a one-by-one basis. We currently have 10 volunteers for the visitation, but there is a need for approximately 40 volunteers.

Closing Prayer – Pastor Sylvia

Meeting Adjourn – There was a motion by Ray Utter and seconded by Avis Pedersen to adjourn the meeting, adjourned by Jim Sheldon at 10:48am.