

Tree of Life Council Meeting Minutes September 16, 2019

Members present: President Jack Zimmer, Vice-President Larry Klotz, Treasurer Jim Voelz, Secretary Susie Rust, Kirk Helberg, Richard Schaper, Kevin Solberg, George Timmins, Pastor Chris Lake

Members absent: Linda Baumgartner, Heidi Beckham

Visitors: David & Linda Fischer, Jim Lemaux

I. The meeting was called to order by President Jack Zimmer at 6:33 pm.

II. Consent Agenda

A. Motion: Adoption of agenda

B. Motion: Approval of minutes (August 26, 2019)

C. Motion: Ratify new members: Larry & Ann Corley, Bill & Becky Abbott, Ruth King and her granddaughter, Ellie

George Timmins moved to **accept the Consent Agenda**; Vice-President Larry Klotz seconded the motion. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

III. Discussion Agenda

Jim Lemaux, Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, reported on plans for the fall Stewardship Campaign. The emphasis is on the second part of our TOL Mission statement to “invite, **inspire**, and include all people in Christ’s love”. The worship schedule includes Sundays, September 29 -October 20. Themes center on giving: as inspired by people, by acts of love, by worship and song, and, by Scriptures. The weekly Temple Talks will include videos for both services, featuring conversations with President Jack Zimmer, Vicar Carrie Petersen, Daphne Cox and a youth member. Pledge cards will be available and can be turned in any time during the campaign. There will be individual follow up for those who do not turn in a card. There will also be a fellowship event October 5 at Jimmy & Vicky Rogers home in Walden. The list of invitees is being finalized. A question followed regarding reminding congregation of giving online through Realm; this will be done through Temple Talks. President Jack Zimmer and Council recognize and thank Jim Lemaux for his good work.

IV. Financial Report

A. Treasurer Jim Voelz reported on the August Statement; finances generally continued as the previous month, again with Building usage revenues down. Our expenditures are more than our present income and to date \$13,000 has been borrowed from Seeds. **ACTION ITEM:** Jim Lemaux and Treasurer Jim Voelz will discuss income forecast for 2020, with the goal of a pledge number by November 1.

George Timmins moved to **accept the Treasurer’s Report**; Pastor Chris Lake seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed**.

B. First 2020 Budget Draft

Treasurer Jim Voelz reviewed the first draft of the 2020 Budget. It included the 2019 Budget numbers and the projected 2020 Budget numbers. There are 3 columns for possible 2020 Budget: #1 which is largest, with requested increase in Youth expenses, #2 with some line item cutbacks, and #3 with the leanest budget. If the pledges come in well, we could spend more.

Discussion followed. Electricity costs have gone down. We have money reserved for car seats so no monies needed to be allocated for that. Training for Stephen Ministries is now in-house, reducing those expenses. Treasurer Jim Voelz will check on that number as well as the "Worship Planning" line item. Question: As far as youth expense, is there a way to help kids who might not be able to afford the mission trip (out-of-state this year)? Answer: the youth-sponsored Mystery Dinner and the Prayer card donations supplement the Garage Sale Funds for mission trips and camp. President Jack Zimmer asked about COL raises for staff and asked that the next draft include numbers for a 4% raise (column #1), 2% raise (column #2), and 0% raise (column #3) for consideration. The Synod convention was less than \$600 for last one (in Galveston); the next one is in New Orleans and will probably be more costly. Our mortgage costs rose with an interest percentage raise in June; the higher interest will affect higher 2020 mortgage costs.

Question: what is "Synod benevolence"? Answer: the \$24,000 is a percentage of our budget, a tithe to church-wide ministries of ELCA, which does not benefit TOL directly. Within TOL, we have encouraged online giving through Realm to help smooth out the highs and lows of monthly revenues. Discussion followed as to how to encourage giving. Recognition and thanks was given to Treasurer Jim Voelz by President Jack Zimmer for all the good work. **ACTION ITEM:** Office Manager Megan Dillon is to generate a list of TOL members aged 65 and older to receive an informational letter about QCD (Qualified Charitable Deductions) for income tax purposes, as drafted by Treasurer Jim Voelz.

V.. Pastoral Report

Pastor Chris Lake reported the Staff busy with the usual fall schedule. We are gearing up for Stewardship Campaign. Vicar Carrie and Pastor Chris Lake will attend her first Internship Retreat late this month. Wednesday Fellowship Night was well attended, including the first adult Confirmation Bible Study. The summer VBS free will offering bought 6 cases of Spanish Bibles, successfully delivered to a local refugee detention facility. We have had 3 cases of vandalism or robbery in the last year. The most recent was the robbery of the main supplies for "Muck and Gut" activities. Pastor Chris Lake hosted a successful Facebook appeal for replacements, including monies to be used to upgrade security. The Blood Drive at TOL will be every 4 months, instead of quarterly. Pastor Chris Lake thanked Richard Schaper for the additional cleaning of the Narthex carpet.

VI. Old Business

A. Matt Petersen has finished checking the **Employee Policy Manual Update** for adherence to current state laws. Pastor Chris Lake and President Jack Zimmer will meet to make a final review.

B. Vice-President Larry Klotz reported on slow progress with Stone Creation for the **Memorial Walk/Prayer Path**. Stone Creation is the only local company to come out to the site to engrave the bricks and is now asking for \$125 to get started. They do good work, but are slow as they are busy..

C. The **Nomination Committee for 2020 Council elections** will set a date to meet.

D. Adopt-a-Project Status

The Joan Bliese estate and Russ & Linda Bliese have given monies to replace an air conditioner in the Fellowship Hall. The Ice Maker has been bought and installed. Two of the five outside parking lot lights have been paid for.

ACTION ITEM: President Jack Zimmer raised a question about considering a memorial stone for large donations. Due to time restraints, this item was tabled.

E. Ministry Team Leaders for Care and for Fellowship are still needed.

VII. New Business

A. President Jack Zimmer has received a resignation letter from Annie Lindemann. **ACTION ITEM:** Pastor Chris Lake will contact her in follow up response.

B.The issue of a TOL **Gun Policy** was discussed. What is Texas law? Does Synod have a policy? Is it better not to have “gun-free” or “concealed carry/open carry zone” signs which make this an issue? We are currently in compliance with Texas State Law with no signs. Those leading the service have the best perspective to see trouble. Pastor Chris Lake suggested the Ushers are our greatest source of security during services. This can be added to Usher training. We all, including Staff, should pay attention to what is normal and what is not. The Council will continue this conversation. **ACTION ITEM:** George Timmins will research general church preparation or training as it pertains to gun policy.

VIII. The next **Congregational meeting is on Sunday, October 6 at 9:15 am.** Agenda items may include the early 2020 Budget Draft, Stewardship Campaign, the Adopt a Project Campaign Update, and the 2020 Council Election Process.

XI. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm and Pastor Chris Lake led us in the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Rust, Secretary

NOTES: Congregational January 2019 Meeting: Susie Rust confirmed as Secretary (replace Linda B.) Congregational Meeting 2018: Jack Zimmer. President 2 yr. term, Jim Voelz(Treasurer), Linda Baumgartner(Secretary), Kirk Helberg, George Timmons, Heidi Beckham (Financial Secretary); elected for 3 yr. terms: Susie Rust, Annie Lindemann, Richard Schaper, Kevin Solberg, Larry Klotz (VP). Congreg.Mtg 2017: Jim Voelz (Trea), Linda Baumgartner (Sec.), Kirk Helberg, George Timmins, Jack Zimmer (3Yr. terms), Dennis McConnell President (term expires in 2017). 2016 Congreg. Mtg: Susan Blough (Sec.) Elected 2015 - Heidi Beckham, Matt Hannes (2nd term), Chuck Will, Lawrence Zuelke, Elected 2014 - Linda Baumgartner, Alicia Macha (resigned position January, 2015), Jim Voelz. (2nd term), John Nye (2nd term), Julie Weeks. (2nd term)

