

Tree of Life Church Council Minutes
Monday, October 19, 2020 6:30PM ZOOM Meeting

Members Present: President Jack Zimmer, Vice-President Kevin Solberg, Treasurer Jim Lemaux, Financial Secretary Heidi Beckham, Secretary Susie Rust, Russell Bliese, Tom Gros, Larry Klotz, Peggy Little, Richard Schaper, Julie Timmins, Pastor Chris Lake

Visitors: Office Manager Jill Waldrop, Sandy McCarthy, Pat Rowe

A. President Zimmer called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM. Zimmer welcomed two nominees for 2021-23 Council members at large, Sandy McCarthy and Pat Rowe. Pastor Chris gave a devotion focusing on All Saints, a Day of Remembrance for the “cloud of witnesses” who can inspire us to “run the race set before us.” (Romans 12:1). Council members shared stories of loved ones who have passed away and their witness of strength during tough times. Pastor Chris led the Council in an opening prayer.

B. Consent agenda

I. **Motion:** Adoption of agenda *

II. **Motion:** Approval of minutes (September 21, 2020)

MOTION: Solberg moved to accept Consent Agenda; Beckham seconded. All were in favor and the **motion passed.**

C. Discussion Agenda (when guest arrives): Pastor Liz Hanley from Lake Livingston Lutheran Church (see under New Business)

D. Financial reports

I. Lemaux reviewed the September monthly statement. We were a bit down on revenues but anticipate catching up with 5 Sundays in October. Expenses were on target, though some double-payments were made (trash and liability insurance) due to the timing of the bills. We borrowed \$10,000 in January 2020 from our Seeds account, and have repaid Seeds \$25,000 over the last 5 months. Ted Dinklage continues to pay down the loan to Operating Funds from Seeds; the New Seeds for Growth balance is \$120,350. Our checking account reflects a legacy gift donated by Jim Voelz.

The financial reports were temporarily suspended with Pastor Liz Hanley’s arrival (see notes under New Business).

Resuming his report, Lemaux commented on a slight reorganization of the Comparative Balance Sheet. Divided among the New Seeds Dedicated Funds are four line items: Checking Account, Flexible Certificate of Deposit, Certificates of Deposit, and Endowment Fund (set up thru the Southwest Foundation).

Lemaux asked for Council feedback on what should be done with the \$40,000 that Jim Voelz left to TOL. Discussion followed. Should we move this to the Endowment Fund? Should we use this to pay down our loan from the Seeds account? Lemaux suggested perhaps we could do both by paying down our loan and then moving those monies to the Endowment Fund.

Zimmer suggested we consult Pat Voelz as we make our plans.

ACTION ITEM: Pastor Chris will talk with her.

Beckham asked about using some of the Voelz donation for the Melissa Dockery Scholarship Fund, to support our Youth and Family Ministry Director Bunny Stoutes in her Seminary studies. The Fund was created in memory of Melissa Dockery, who passed away as her son, now Pastor Ryan Dockery, was in Seminary. The Funds were intended to be used to help support TOL Seminary students. Discussion followed as to what monies remain there. Lemaux will

check on this, as we have a separate Internship fund in the budget (\$2300 remaining) created for Carrie Petersen last year.

MOTION: Lemaux moved that we take \$30,000 of the original \$40,000 Voelz donation (\$10,000 has already been moved to Seeds) to pay back Seeds and move the monies into the Endowment Fund, subject to input from Pat Voelz; Bliese seconded. Discussion continued. Beckham suggested that we use some of the money for the Melissa Dockery Scholarship Fund, as Jim Voelz always endorsed growing up pastors at TOL. The Council will research the exact money amount needed for Stoutes' continuing studies and will revisit this suggestion. The vote was taken on the motion as stated; all were in favor and the **MOTION PASSED**.

MOTION: Timmins moved to accept the Treasurer's report; Schaper seconded. All were in favor and the **MOTION PASSED**.

II. Lemaux gave an update on the Stimulus Package PPP loan. He and Waldrop will work to submit the appropriate federal form with First National Bank to replace the current PPP Loan status with a Grant status. Waldrop would like to draft a single letter to add or drop persons authorized to sign checks. Discussion followed as to who is currently authorized with the bank to sign TOL checks. President Zimmer, Treasurer Lemaux, Larry Klotz, and Larry Finke are already signers; Vice-President Solberg should be added. Previous signers, Linda Baumgartner, Dennis McConnell and Jim Voelz, should be removed from authorization.

MOTION: Lemaux moved to add Solberg to the authorized list and to remove Baumgartner, McConnell, and Voelz from that list; Schaper seconded. All were in favor and the **MOTION PASSED**.

Discussion continued on the current process of signing checks. Schaper asked if there is any written description of the role as authorized check-signer. With no clear answer, Klotz offered that he always looks at the invoice before signing the check. There is no official form to say who approves the check. When Waldrop receives a bill, she pays it. There is a check request form and a staff person signs off on it. As the 2019 Audit Report states, there is backup for all checks going out. Schaper and Zimmer suggested that there should be someone to approve the expense. Zimmer recommended the President and Vice-President and other designated TOL members could have the authority to do this. At this time there are no checks-and-balances on who is authorized to spend money for the various line items, though spending is reviewed by the Council every month with the Treasurer's report. Discussion on these questions will continue next month.

III. 2019 Audit Update: Timmins has completed the 2019 Audit. Zimmer will send a copy to the Council members for review next month.

IV. Budget 2021: Little presented the preliminary numbers for four different possible budgets. When we get more accurate revenue numbers following the Stewardship campaign, we will be able to study the proposed budget in depth.

V. Stewardship Campaign 2021: Lemaux and Gros reported that we are nearing the end of the campaign and to date have only \$101,000 in pledged donations. Beckham suggested that we reach out to the congregation via mailer as well as announcements via emails and slides at worship service (streamed). Some folks may be missed as they are not connecting to TOL communications online.

E. Pastoral report

Pastor Chris began his report with the news of Stoutes moving to Iowa in January 2021 to attend Wartburg Seminary in person. She will be sorely missed for her loving and technical contributions to TOL over the last 8 years. Zimmer asked about plans for her send-off as her last official tasks will cover Christmas Eve worship services. Solberg is Council liaison with the Youth Team and can help facilitate those decisions. Discussions followed about 2021 plans for the traditional spring Garage Sale and Easter worship services. Pastor Chris will be on the

look-out for a new Youth Pastor. Pastor Chris is going to take some vacation time following the Stewardship Campaign. Pastor Tracey Bashears-Schultz will be a guest pastor on November 15.

In order to help the TOL congregation reconnect following the interruption of in-person worship services due to the pandemic, Zimmer has asked the Council to participate in calling our families. He will divide the 146 families in the directory among Council members (about 13 each) to call and touch base. Any needs or prayer concerns can be shared with Pastor Chris or President Zimmer.

F. Old Business

I. Covid Task Force Update: Solberg reported that TOL will keep in-person Sunday worship reservations at 20 families for the next two weeks.

II. Memorial Walk/prayer path update: Klotz agreed to table the presentation and review of the TOL brochure.

G. New Business

I. Nomination Committee for 2021 Elections: Zimmer and Solberg will review this next month.

II Annual Congregational meeting for January 2021 will be reviewed next month.

III. Pastor Chris invited Pastor Liz Hanley from Lake Livingston Lutheran to meet the TOL Council and share some ideas they had been discussing. The pastors had both served in Nebraska and Pastor Liz has recently accepted the opportunity to serve Lake Livingston Lutheran. Zimmer welcomed her and the Council members introduced themselves. Pastor Liz has been in parish ministry 21 years and was a mission developer outside Austin for 5 years with a Lutheran faith community, now a stand alone congregation. The Missions office requested a redevelopment of the existing church in Lake Livingston, begun in the 1980's with the help of Huntsville. The pastors are exploring ways to build up outreach and connection between TOL and Lake Livingston. We might begin by sharing our streamed worship services with them. Feedback from the Council is generally positive. As this relationship between churches is exploratory, no Council action is needed. Zimmer thanked Pastor Liz for coming.

H. President Zimmer adjourned the meeting at 9:06 pm and Pastor Chris led us in The Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Susie Rust
Council Secretary

NOTES: **2020:** Jack Zimmer President (second 2 yr. term), Kevin Solberg VP, Jim Voelz, Treasurer (Peggy Little appt. to fill 2020 Council term), Susie Rust, Secretary, Heidi Beckham, Financial Secretary, Larry Klotz, George Timmons, Richard Schaper; and elected for 3yr. term in 2020: Jim Lemaux, David Fischer (Russ Bliese appt to fill term), Tom Gros. **2018:** Jack Zimmer. President 2yr. term, Jim Voelz (Treasurer), Linda Baumgartner (Sec 2018), Kirk Helberg, George Timmons, Heidi Beckham (Financial Secretary); elected for 3 yr. terms: Susie Rust (Secretary 2019), Richard Schaper, Kevin Solberg, Larry Klotz (VP). **2017:** Jim Voelz (Trea), Linda Baumgartner (Sec.), Kirk Helberg, George Timmins, Jack Zimmer (3Yr. terms) **2015** - Heidi Beckham, Elected 2014 - Jim Voelz. (2nd term),