

Ascension Lutheran Church – Council Meeting Minutes

Littleton, Colorado

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

In attendance:

Council Members: Linda Achziger, Collin Brinkman, Allen Brookshire, Sherry Hitztaler, Kathy Johnson, Roger Koester, Pastor John Larson, Dennis Lord, Joyce Lord, Tim McClaren, Arvin Michel, Carol Stamp, Brian Wilson, Marion Wilson, Rev. Michael Zehnder

Call to Order: President Arvin Michel called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm.

Opening Prayer: Pastor John Larson offered an opening prayer.

Opening Devotion: Roger Koester presented a devotion titled *Repent and Believe in the Gospel* which is based on John 1. Martin Luther wrote about repentance being about contrition and sorrow. The question is "How much sorrow is enough to merit God's forgiveness?" The great message of the gospel is that it is not dependent on us and how much contrition and sorrow we show, but God alone. We confess that grace comes through Christ in order to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Approval of Meeting Agenda

- The current meeting agenda of January 14, 2020 was presented.
- The Council members *approved* the agenda without revision.

Approval of Previous Council Meeting Minutes

- Arvin Michel asked for corrections or additions to the December 10, 2019 Council meeting minutes.
- The Council members *approved* the meeting minutes without correction.

Miscellaneous

Board of the Month Schedule

- Arvin Michel referenced the board of the month schedule that was previously emailed to all Council members. As there were no requests for revisions to the proposed schedule, it was accepted as presented.

Lenten Season Dinners

- As the Lent season begins on Ash Wednesday, February 26, 2020, we will be offering Wednesday evening worship services and a meal. There is a need for Wednesday meal preparation volunteers each week during Lent. The sponsor will be responsible to set up, serve, and clean up after a meal that will feed 60 to 70 people (except for Ash Wednesday where there are usually 100-120 people). There is a freewill offering collected at each meal and it will likely cover the meal expenses. Ladies Guild agrees to sponsor the Ash Wednesday meal. A volunteer signup sheet was passed around for Council members to sign up for the balance of the meals.

Council Contact List

- Arvin Michel passed around a list containing Council membership contact information (i.e. email, phone numbers). Council members were asked to verify and make corrections to the list. Arvin agreed to send the updated membership list to all Council members via email.

Ongoing Business

Annual Reports – Arvin Michel

- Arvin Michel reminded the Council that the end of the year reports are due right away. To date, he has received 10 of the expected 19 reports. Please email the reports to Arvin in a MS Word document format, as soon as possible.

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Hospital Ministry Update – Pastor John Larson

- Pastor John Larson reminded Council that following approval by the Voter's Assembly, Cliff Michaelsen has helped develop a volunteer Chaplain program. He has created a partnership between Ascension Lutheran Church (ALC) and Swedish Medical Center (SMC). SMC is in need of volunteer Chaplains and Pastor Larson could use some help making calls on shut-ins and hospitalized members of ALC. So, the training is scheduled one day per month for the next 12 months. The first session was January 9, 2020 at SMC and it was led by Head Chaplain Rev. Gina Graves. ALC volunteers include Cindy Fowler, Linda Marqued, Tricia McCulley and Tim McClaren. After the first training, Tricia McCulley has decided not to continue. Also, news was received that Cliff Michealsen will be moving to Florida in April to start a full time job in the Chaplain ministry. Funds that were received from the Diakonos Foundation to start the Hospital Ministry at ALC will likely be released to Cliff.
- As a board will need to be assigned to oversee the hospital ministry, it was decided that the Social Ministry will be assigned the responsibility.

Council Minutes on ALC Website – Arvin Michel

- Arvin Michel questioned the status of posting the Council Meeting Minutes on the ALC webpage.
- Dennis Lord reminded everyone that there was much discussion earlier in 2019 on what could and could not be included in the postings. One item of concern was to exclude financial information. In addition, Ian Kirschner was consulted on maybe setting up password protection on the site in order to access the minutes. But, Ian believed this approach would require a full time person to administer and he did not want that responsibility.
- After some discussion, it was decided that Dennis would contact Ian to begin posting the Church Council meeting minutes. Tim McClaren would forward the minutes to Ian in a PDF format and redact any reference to financial information.

Constitution and By Laws Committee Update – Arvin Michel

- Arvin Michel reported that after several weeks of posting a request for volunteers to help with revision to the constitution and by-laws there has been no response.
- Arvin reminded the Council that he is also a member of the Rocky Mountain District Constitutional Committee. The committee reviews all new and revised constitutions in the District. Once any necessary revisions are worked out with the congregation in question, the new constitution is submitted to the Board of Directors for final approval.
- After reviewing the ALC Constitution and By-Laws, Arvin has noticed a number of issues that need updated and changes. For example:
 - There needs to be wording that requires ALC to be a member of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS).
 - Currently there is no requirement that the Pastor be a member of LCMS.
 - Transfers to and from ALC must be from and to LCMS or sister congregations.
 - Amendments to the constitution should go through LCMS, but ALC constitution does not stipulate such.
 - There has been discussion on the possibility of creating Associate membership for those that are only in the area part of the year.
 - These are only a few of the reasons to revise the constitution.
- It was suggested to make a presentation to the Voters on the needs for constitutional revision and maybe volunteers will come forth.
- Further, it was suggested for each board to review and submit changes to their portion of the constitution and by-laws. But, Arvin said that the sections that address each board are in pretty good shape. It seems to be other areas of these documents that are in need for review, as mentioned earlier.
- Another suggestion was to have Elders work on the section of the constitution that addresses the addition of Associate membership.

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New Business

Enabling Resolution for 2020 – Arvin Michel

- Prior to the Council meeting, Arvin Michel sent the proposed 2020 budget spending enabling resolution to all members. There was some discussion and a couple changes were requested.
 - Under Trustees section there is a note that reads “*Line items may be over \$500 but require a Check Request from the Trustee’s Board Chair.” The amount should be \$1,000 instead of \$500.
 - Durwin Schmitt requested to be removed as Assistant Treasurer.
- After making these corrections, the Council unanimously **approved** the Enabling Resolution for 2020 via voice vote.
- Arvin will send a corrected Enabling Resolution to all Council members.

Proposed Amendment to Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) Constitution – Arvin Michel

- During the LCMS national convention this past summer, there were a number of proposed changes to the LCMS constitution.
- In order for the changes to take effect, a vote by all LCMS congregations must total 2/3 in favor of the changes.
- Arvin notified Council that at the Voters’ meeting on January 26, 2020, we will be voting on a Synod Constitution change. Amendments to the Constitution of the Synod are submitted directly to each voting congregation of the Synod for their affirmative or negative vote. This change addresses accumulated unclear language and contradictions resulting from piecemeal amendment of the Constitution over many years, while maintaining the essential substance of the Constitution. The amendment is primarily a clean-up operation to take care of problems created over previous years. A summary of the Constitutional change will be provided for the voters.
- There is a deadline to respond to LCMS by March 16, 2020.

Council Member Reports

Pastor John Larson

- Pastor Larson passed around the February church calendar of events to solicit corrections or revisions. Using figures provided by Kathy Harvey, there has been a decline in average attendance during the past year. The comparison is shown here:

<i>Year</i>	<i># of People</i>	<i>Description</i>
2018	298	Average Per Sunday
2019	290	Average Per Sunday
2018	606	Total Baptized Members
2019	601	Total Baptized Members
2018	532	Total Communicant Members
2019	525	Total Communicant Members

- Question/Comment: “Is the decline a function of our society or an issue of ALC?”
Pastor Larson stated, “The number of people living within a 20 minutes radius of ALC who are unchurched is astronomical.” He added that ALC has so much in its ministry that reaches out so many people that it seems puzzling that our attendance should be down.
- Question: Is there an update on the previously discussed use of a congregational survey?
Answer: Due to a very busy schedule the past month, no additional work has been put into the survey.

Treasurer – Allen Brookshire

- Allen provided a handout detailing the financial situation of the congregation. It was also noted that the figures on the report are provisional, because the 2019 year end financials have not officially been closed. He verbally read the following highlights from his printed report:

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- The Treasurer’s report was accepted as presented.

Director of Music Ministry- Rev Michael Zehnder

- Although Rev Michael Zehnder provided a handout and read through it (see below):
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SPECIAL SERVICES IN DECEMBER

All our musical groups worked hard to provide special music for our Festival of Lessons and Carols and the Christmas Eve services. This included work by the Ascension Chorale, Gloria Dei Handbell Ringers, WNL Children’s Choir, Sunday School choir and our two praise bands as well as special percussionists Eli Faulk, Ann Westra, Bob Shiflet, saxophone by Derek Zehnder and oboe by Kristen Zehnder.

NEW DIGITAL MIXER

Special funds were donated to enable us to purchase a new digital mixer for the front of house for use by the praise bands. This will enable each group/choir/or soloists to have its own settings with just a push of a button, greatly enhancing ease of use. Larry Boeding and I are talking about possibly swapping the upstairs mixer with the current one downstairs. The upstairs mixer, even though we had it recently cleaned, has dust and connection issues.



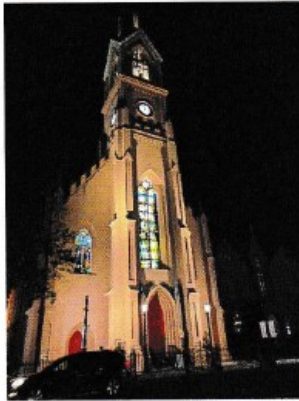
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RECORDING IN BALCONY

SoundTown completed its installation of 4 microphones in the balcony and a recording system to record our special music. We began using it on December 15, 2019.



NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SACRED MUSIC

I recently returned from a conference at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Charleston, SC. One of the main presenters was David Cherwien (right), who is the successor to Paul Manz at Mt Olive Lutheran in Minneapolis, MN and composer in residence. It was a good conference and I got a lot of ideas for adult and children's choirs, handbells, instruments and organ music. Thank you for allowing me to attend this event.



HIS LITTLE FEET (REPEAT)

An International Children's Choir will be singing at Ascension at both services on Pentecost Sunday, May 31. There are 18 children in the group from Haiti, Rwanda and India. We will need 7 host homes for two Nights. LES will be sponsoring this event.

Vice President – Dennis Lord

- Dennis Lord had nothing to report.

Community Outreach – Joyce Lord

- Joyce Lord reported that she has met with Pastor Larson about her new position. She will plan a rebuilding of the board with need for some board members.

Parish Education – Sherry Hitztaler

- Sherry Hitztaler reported that next meeting of the board of Parish Education is January 22, 2020.

Stewardship – Linda Achziger

- Linda Achziger stated there was nothing specific to report other than ALC ended the year very well financially.

Ladies Guild – Carol Stamp

- Carol Stamp provided and read through a handout as shown below:
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From the Executive Board Meeting:

Distribution of funds from the Craft/Bake Sale in November, 2019- -

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Lutheran High, Denver	\$500
University Lutheran Assembly, Boulder	\$500
Mesa University, Lutheran Assembly, Grand Junction	\$500
Orphan Grain Train	\$500
Am. Bible Society	\$200
LCMS Chaplains	\$200
Lutheran Braille Workers	\$300
Unity Lutheran School, East St. Louis	\$300
Ysleta, El Paso, TX	\$200
Creation Research, Denver	\$200

Total: \$3400.

Motion, made, seconded and passed to change the Guild calendar from January to January. The Treasurer's books will be closed and ready for audit. Elections will take place in January.

Motion made, seconded and passed to not allow individuals to sell items at the Craft Sale for their own profit. ^{outside}

Upcoming Events:

General Meeting: Brown bag lunch and Bible Study with Pastor John. Jan. 16. Circle 4.

Voters' Meeting, Circle 5 will serve lunch. Jan. 26

Ash Wednesday Supper, Feb. 26. Circle 3 organizes this.

Director of Education – Kathy Johnson

- Kathy Johnson reported the youth will be selling Breakfast Burritos for \$4.00 each on Super Bowl Sunday, February 2, 2020.
- The youth met Sunday, January 12, 2020 to discuss a possible mission trip. A trip to Wyoming was one option, but nothing was finalized.
- A girls night only (grades 6 -12) is scheduled for Friday, January 24th at 6:00PM.

Youth – Collin Brinkman

- Collin Brinkman provided a handout and read through the report as shown below:

Romans 8:28 And we know that for all those who love God all things work together for good, for all those who are called according to his purpose.

Thanks to all of you for your support as we proceed in the ministry of our youth. I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

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Board member update:

I have established the following positions to support the needs of our ministry. I have other positions under consideration; and as needs develop, other positions may be added.

Youth Parent Consultant: Jacy Erling.

Youth Student Consultant: Erik Schwerin

Youth Volunteer Coordinator: Open

Youth Communications Assistant: Open

Youth Social Media Consultant: Camryn Goff.

If any of you; or if any of you know someone, that is interested in supporting the ministry of our youth, please contact me.

Information line update:

An endeavor has been started between Kathy Johnson, Christa Kirschner and myself, to provide information, support, fellowship and mentoring to our church. We currently have 17 volunteers ready and willing to receive calls and texts in this effort. I hope to have a more comprehensive report in next month.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions, comments or suggestions. Prayers are always welcome.

We are the body of Christ.

Life Enrichment Series – Brian and Marion Wilson

- Marion Wilson indicated they had nothing to report from their board.

Trustees – Roger Koester

- Roger Koester provide a handout and read through it as shown below:
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Exit Signs: Existing Exit Signs have been replaced with new LED signs. The bulbs in some of the existing signs had burned out.

EDP – WIFI: The conduit and cables are in place to connect EDP to the Ascension modem. Some additional programing is required to get it fully operational.

Copier: The new copier has been installed.

Bell Tower: On December 27th we had a drone fly over the Bell Tower to get pictures of the top of the roof slab. About half of the exist roofing on the Bell Tower slab has peeled off and the exposed concrete is severely pitted. At a minimum the roof slab will need to be repaired and waterproofed and all exposed wood will need to be painted. The interior of the tower has not been inspected yet. John Rolling will be contacting contractors to get bids

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EDP Security: Bob Hea has been working with suppliers and contractors to assemble a total cost for the security improvements. For security purposes we want to use key pad lock system. There are two basic types: battery powered lock which engages the side door jamb when locked and an AC powered lock which engages the threshold and the header. The cost of the AC systems is about twice that of the battery system because AC and control wiring needs to be extended back to the office area. The battery-operated system will require steel framing for additional strength instead of aluminum which will require getting additional bids. The next West Wing meeting is this Thursday.

Elders – Arvin Michel

- As Don Loptien was unable to attend the meeting, Arvin Michel reported that the board of Elders is accepting suggestions for mission funding projects. They would like your ideas before their next meeting on January 28, 2020.

Announcements

- The next Regular Voter's meeting is January 26, 2020.
- The next Council meeting is February 11, 2020.
- Board of the Month
 - Stewardship is the board of the month for February 2020.
 - Council is board of the month for March 2020.
 - Life Enrichment is board of the month for April 2020.
- Board of the Month duties include the following: devotion for Council meeting, coffee clean up on Sunday and *Ascension Happenings* newsletter insert each week.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:37PM.

In closing, everyone said the Lord's Prayer.

---Respectfully Submitted by Tim McClaren, Secretary