

Ascension Lutheran Church – Council Meeting Minutes

Littleton, Colorado

Tuesday, November 10, 2020

In attendance:

Council Members: Linda Achziger, Norm Fringer, Roger Koester, Pastor John Larson, Don Loptien, Tim McClaren, Arvin Michel, Carol Stamp, Brian Wilson, Marion Wilson.

Other Attendees: Michael Zehnder, Bob Stamp

Call to Order

Arvin Michel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of Ascension Lutheran Church (ALC).

Opening Prayer

Pastor John Larson offered an opening prayer.

Opening Devotion

Linda Achziger shared an opening devotion. The discussion started by suggesting we look back at previous problems and how God provided for us. In the future, we need to acknowledge God as our provider, Jesus as our Savior and friend, and the Holy Spirit will lead us in this life.

Approval of Agenda

Arvin Michel asked for approval of the current November 10th meeting agenda as presented. There was a question about the due date for Board reports to be published in the Annual Report. Arvin requested that the reports be submitted to him by December 31st. Without any additional questions, the *Council approved the agenda.*

Approval of Previous Minutes

Arvin Michel asked for suggested adjustments to the Council meeting minutes of October 13, 2020. Without correction, the *Council approved the meeting minutes.*

New Business

- **Funds for SWSN for the 2020 - 2021 sheltering season - Pastor**
 - Pastor John Larson indicated that he has spoke to Bri Fort about funding issues for SWSN. She has asked that we wait and see what is needed. So, Pastor asked to table the item until the December 2020 Council meeting.
- **Nomination of representative for the January Circuit Forum and the District Convention (June 10-11, 2021)**
 - Ascension will be asked to send a representative to the LCMS local Circuit Forum in January 2021.
 - Also, a representative from Ascension will need to attend the LCMS Rocky Mountain District Convention in June 2021.
 - Arvin said his past experience to these conventions were very rewarding and enjoyable.
 - In addition, Arvin explained that the Denver Society of Creation plans to present two overtures for approval at these upcoming gatherings.
 - One item will address the young age of planet Earth.
 - Secondly, a request will be made to expand the education of children concerning Creation. (i.e. they will ask Concordia Publishing House to offer more material on Creation in opposition to the Evolution Theory.)

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Ongoing Business

- **2021 Board Budgets – Allen Brookshire and Dennis Lord**
 - As Allen Brookshire, Treasurer and Dennis Lord, VP were not in attendance, Arvin explained that a report from Allen had been emailed to Council members just today. More time will be needed to review the documents.
 - Question: On the presented Budget Worksheet for 2021, how can the 2020 budget income (\$615,718) be the same as 2021 budget income?
 - Answer: It appears that the 2021 income numbers were simply based on last years estimates. But it was also explained that Norm Hermsmeyer sent an email to say the income estimates from this year's pledge cards totaled \$609,000, so far.
 - Arvin plans to get questions answered before presenting the 2021 budget to the Voter's Meeting on November 22, 2020.

- **2021 Nominating Committee Report Update - Arvin Michel**
 - Arvin Michel reported that there are confirmed nominations for Vice President and Secretary, but no candidates for the President or Treasurer positions.
 - There are also vacancies for Life Enrichment and Youth boards.
 - The committee welcomes suggestions for filling these positions.
 - Arvin explained that prior to his serving as President, Terry Utecht was re-elected as president for more than two terms. But, with the loan pending with LCEF and they have copies of ALC By-Laws which explain officer term limits, we should not ask an officer to serve more than two terms.
 - It was decided to add an announcement in the *Happenings* Newsletter that we are in need of a President and Treasurer to serve in 2021.
 - Arvin further explained that he is on the District Constitution/By-Laws Review Committee. He reads many different governing models for congregations. So, Arvin would like feedback from Council on the possibility of hiring a Business Manager to do the Treasurer's job along with other administrative duties?
 - There was discussion on what the current Treasurer's duties include? It would be good to understand how much the Treasurer completes versus what Kathie Harvey is responsible for doing. Arvin will meet with Allen Brookshire, Margo Pasha, Durwin Schmitt, and Kathie Harvey to get a better understanding of the Treasurer's duties. He will report his findings to Council.

- **EDP Director Search Update – Pastor Larson**
 - Pastor Larson reported that an interview with an EDP Director candidate is scheduled for Friday. The candidate is Kelly Lafferty who is a Lutheran and she contacted us about the position. She lives in Highlands Ranch, CO and has a very good resume.
 - The position is 20 hours a week.
 - The EDP school continues to run well. Marla was going to move, but she has decided to stay in the area and has been a great help.
 - Question: Could we consider combining the positions of EDP Director with the Director of Education?
 - Answer: We have not discussed this option but, we might ask the candidate her thoughts on the idea.

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- **Director of Education Search Committee**

- The committee has a meeting coming up in the near future.
- There are currently no leads for the position.
- One person from the ALC congregation contacted Pastor to serve as an interim Sunday School Superintendent.
- Notice of our opening has been sent to Rocky Mountain District and other congregations.
- Also one person from Texas sent a resume for consideration.

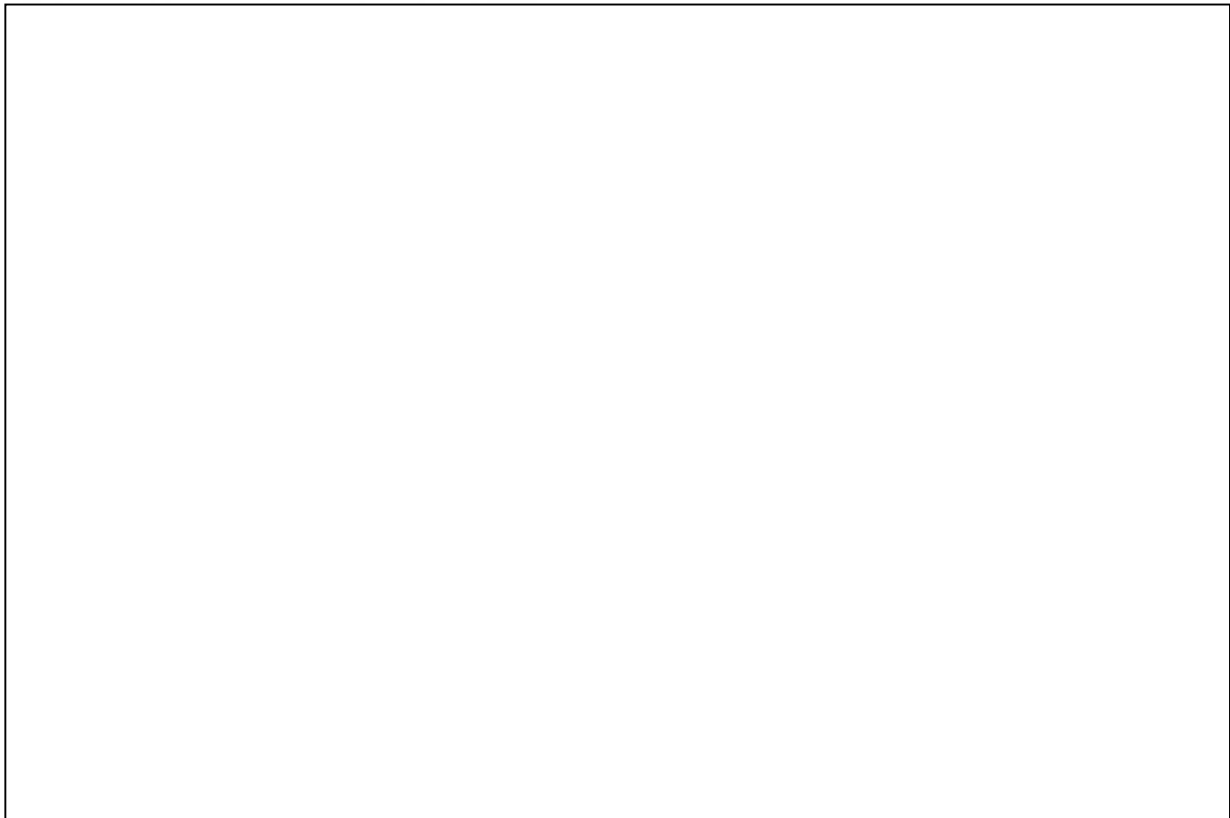
Council Reports

- **Pastor John Larson**

- Pastor received a letter from the Rocky Mountain District to inform us that we can submit nominations for District President, First Vice President, and Area Vice President. There is a form coming for us to submit nominations.
- Pastor Larson has been nominated for Circuit Visitor. Rev. Greg Zillinger is the current Circuit Visitor and he has served for 2 ½ terms. He would like a break.
- The Rocky Mountain District has sold their property in Aurora, Colorado. So, they are looking for a new property. Currently, the District employees are working from home.
- Question: What kind of space is the District looking for?
Answer: Now, they have 4 people who each need an office. Also, they would need a large meeting room.

- **Treasurer Report**

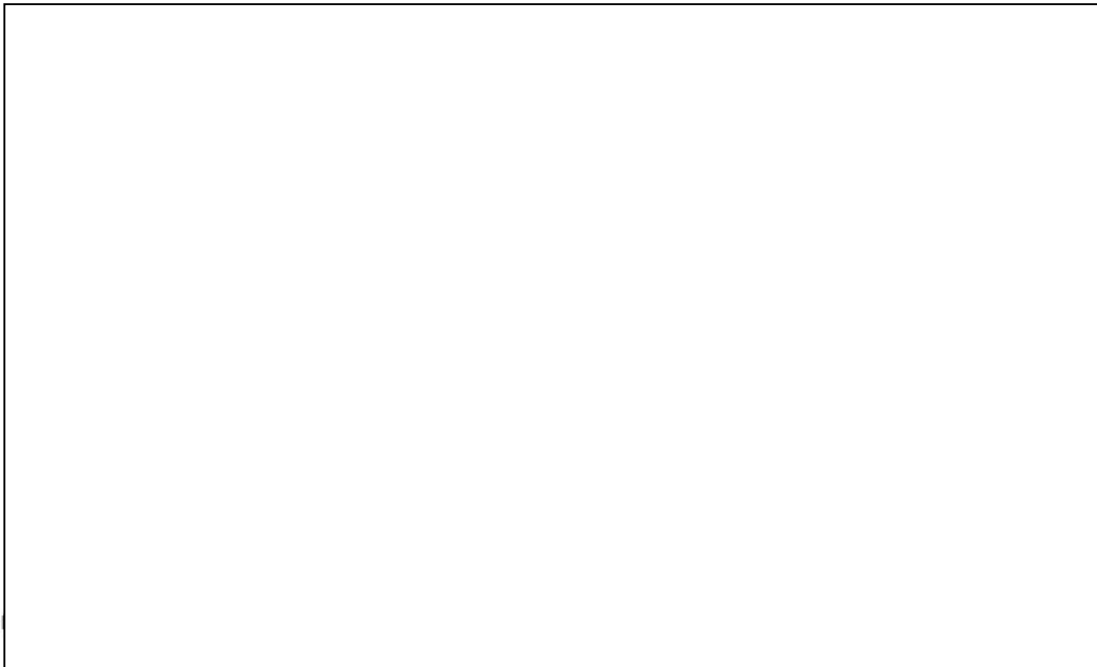
- Although not present, Allen Brookshire provided an October 2020 month end report:
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- The Treasurer's report was accepted without comment.
 - **Director of Music Ministry – Michael Zehnder**
 - Michael Zehnder read through the highlights of his printed report as shown below:
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His Little Feet

Because of the new capacity restrictions from Arapahoe County (50 people total) we have had to once again cancel the performance of the International Children's Choir known as "His Little Feet." The choir numbers about 20 children and with our average attendance of approximately 50 that would have put us over the line with 70 in attendance. Graciously, His Little Feet has agreed to apply our deposit (\$1,000) toward the next scheduled event. (This is the second time we've had to reschedule. First appearance was to be May 31 which was rescheduled for Nov 21/22). Because of uncertainties with Covid restrictions, no new date has been set, but I'm hoping it might be in the first or second quarter of 2021.

Michael Burkhardt Concert, Hymn Sing and Organist's workshop

In conjunction with the local chapter of the AGO (American Guild of Organists) on which I am a Board member, we were scheduled to host a hymn-sing and workshop in January 2021. This event was not only going to feature internationally renowned Michael Burkhardt on Ascension's pipe organ but also involve our Ascension Chorale and Gloria Dei Handbell Ringers and possibly the choirs of Littleton United Methodist Church. Once again, because of Covid, we have postponed this event to the following year. The new dates are:

- *Friday, January 28, 2022 Michael Burkhardt Hymn Festival with Organ, Choirs and Bells*
- *Saturday, January 29, 2022 Hymn Playing Workshop*

Lessons and Carols

In the past, we have had one large service for Lessons and Carols. This year, we will have Lessons and Carols at TWO services, both on Sunday December 13 at 8 and 10:30. Because choirs, bells and

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children's choirs cannot meet at this time, we are going to feature the work and singing of our two Praise Teams: Agape and the Youth Praise Team and they will also perform a piece together. The Saturday service that weekend will be a regular service.

Christmas Eve Services

This year there will be no special Children's Christmas Eve service and we will hold three nearly identical services at 3, 5 and 7 p.m. (Depending on soloists, the musical offerings may differ). I have been in contact with the Lamont School of Music and am working on making the music special by engaging a string quartet for these services but it is unclear at this time whether they can be present at all three. Stay tuned.

Youth Praise Team

If you have not had a chance yet to attend a 10:30 service on the first or third Sundays of the month, you should know that our youth praise team has been completely renovated with some new musicians. Besides keyboard, and a new drummer (Nikki Saiz) we now have seven singers: one senior in high school, four eighth graders, a sixth grader and me. The team sounds GREAT. If you get a chance to attend, please give them some verbal encouragement and appreciation. They'll sing again this coming weekend.

- Mike reported that the organ company that we use to repair our organ is going out of business. We will have to find another company to work on our instrument.
 - **Columbarium Memorial Garden – Norm Fringer**
 - Norm indicated that they had nothing to report.
 - **Board of Elders – Don Loptien**
 - Don Loptien reported that Scott Luethy has agreed to serve as Elder's Chair for the coming term.
 - As Ascension continues to hold multiple in-person worship services each week. Average weekly attendance for the past months are as follows:

Month	Average Weekly Attendance
August	143
September	162
October	144
 - Don explained that Immanuel Lutheran Church in Pensacola, Florida was originally built in 1885 and it is still open for worship. But, Hurricane Sally caused a lot of damage to both the church and parsonage. Don offered a handout to those who might be interested in contributing to repairs to the church and parsonage.
 - **Ladies Guild – Carol Stamp**
 - Carol provided a handout with the following information:
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The Executive Board met November 7. Reports as follows:

Altar Circle- - preparation of communion going well, as more committee members are helping now.

Library Circle- - Thanksgiving and Christmas cards are for sale. Good response from donations to Bethesda Auxiliary.

Kitchen Circle- - Will serve a light lunch for Voters' meeting, Nov. 22.

Circle 4- - preparing 30 Christmas gift bags for Ascension's homebound members. Calls will be made to get donations for this.

General meeting: November 12, 10:00 a.m. Judy Finnessy from Denver Creation Society will present a program on "The Flood".

The Guild will not be hosting an Advent supper, nor will it hold the Staff appreciation Breakfast this December.

Ladies were reminded to start writing their year-end reports.

- Additionally, Carol explained that since the bake sale was cancelled, there are folks who would still like to sell items. Maureen James has home canned goods to sell. So, she would welcome people to her house to buy the freshly canned treats. Maureen would donate the proceeds to the Ladies Guild. The contact information will be in the Happenings Newsletter.

- **Life Enrichment Series Board – Brian and Marion Wilson**

- As previously reported "His Little Feet" the International Children's Choir had to be cancelled due to COVID gathering restrictions.

- **Social Ministry Board – Pastor John Larson**

- Pastor Larson reported that Dana Niederbrach is coordinating the shopping for certain families this year around Christmas time. She is considering purchasing gift cards instead of the normal shopping for specific items. There is a concern that people will be able and/or willing to shop for the families and children.
- No one has volunteered to replace Bri Fort who has administered the Severe Weather Network for ALC the past 4 years.

- **Stewardship Board – Linda Achziger**

- Linda Achziger reported that usually 110 pledge cards are submitted, but as of today, only 86 have been received.
- A factor to consider is that only 50% of the congregation is attending in-person worship.

- **Trustees Board – Roger Koester**

- Roger Koester provided a handout and read through it as follows:
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Columbarium: Roses will be removed in anticipation of new plantings next spring.

West Wing: The contract with Himmelman Construction for \$743,493, not including permits, has been signed. Notice-to-Proceed (NTP) is contingent on a loan from LCEF. On November 3rd the building committee met with Himmelman Construction to discuss schedule and the project startup logistics.

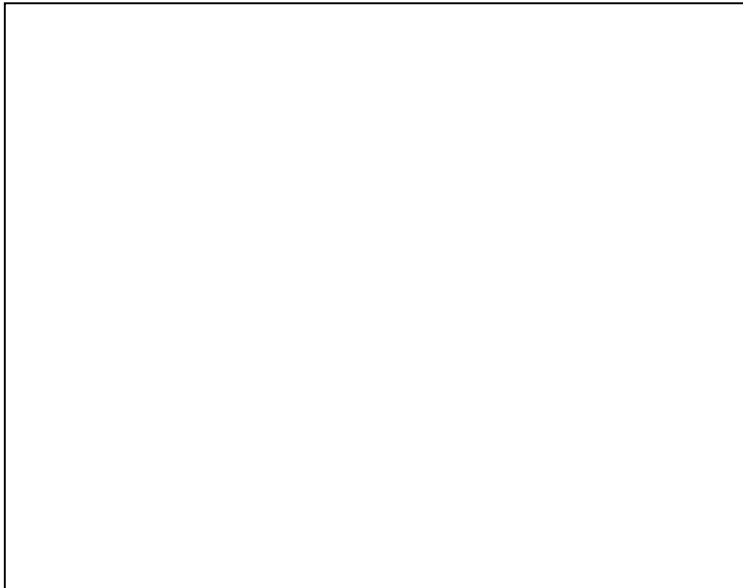
We anticipate a formal signing of the loan agreement with LCEF this coming Friday, contingent on completion of the title search. We expect to issue a NTP on Monday November 16. Himmelman will be picking up the approved permit plans from the City of Littleton as early as Tuesday.

The total cost of obtaining the approved permit plans is estimated at \$17,843 which includes: Permit Fee - \$4,922; Use Tax – \$11,971; and Arapahoe Open Space Tax (Use Tax) - \$950. We will be paying the total amount but are filing a letter of protest on the imposition of use tax. As a 501c3 organization the State of Colorado has recognized ALC as exempt from sales and use taxes as well as the City of Littleton which gives an exemption for religious organizations.

Transfer of Funds: LCEF will make all payments to the Contractors and the Architect. Once construction starts the work will draw down any funds ALC has deposited with the special account at LCEF. Any funds designated to Project Peter will be transferred to the special account. Invoices for amounts more the funds available will be covered by a construction loan from LCEF. LCEF will charge interest on the construction loan amounts as they are incurred. The Building Committee and the Trustees consider it in the best interest of the congregation to transfer some of the undedicated funds to Project Peter and thus to LCEF.

Presently ALC has \$145,316 (3-22 Prior Year Surplus) and \$26,294 (3-66 2019 Surplus) in unspent funds from previous years for total of \$171,610. Trustees propose transferring \$100,000 from 3-22 to Project Peter.

- Roger offered the following motion: ***For the benefit of the West Wing construction project the Board of Trustees proposes to transfer funds totaling \$138,314.08 from the various accounts listed below to Account 3-50 Project Peter (West Wing Renovation Construction):***



- Question: Have the families related to each memorial fund been contacted regarding the use of their funds for this purpose?

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Answer: Yes, they have been contacted and are in agreement to use the funds accordingly.

With no further questions, the motion **passed** with a unanimous voice vote in favor of the transfer of funds.

- Question: What is the plan for temporary storage once construction begins?
Answer: The Trustees have met with the contractor and they plan to put construction equipment and a storage trailer in the back corner of the parking lot.
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Announcements

- Next Regular Voter's Meeting - November 22, 2020
- Next Council Meeting – December 8, 2020
- Volunteers for Christmas Decorating – November 28, 2020 @ 8:30 AM
- Board of the Month (November 2020) – Stewardship
- Board of the Month (December 2020) – Council
- Board of the Month (January 2021) – Life Enrichment

Board of the Month duties includes:

Devotions for Council Meeting, Coffee Cleanup on Sunday, "Happenings" newsletter article each week.

Adjournment

- At 7:49 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.
- The Council said the Lord's Prayer together.

———— Respectfully Submitted by Tim McClaren, Secretary