

## HLC SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Minutes of September 18, 2022

Meeting was called to order at 10:22 am, with 65 people in attendance.

Pastor Beth opened with prayer and a devotion about the Israelites fleeing Egypt and having to trust God.

TOPIC #1—Future of HLC: Gary Gausmann started the meeting with comments about how we're short on funds, short of people needed in leadership, and short of people needed in ministries in the church. Pastor Beth shared a slide presentation about “How did we get here?”, “Where are we now?”, and “What can we do?” She stated our focus should be on what Goes wants us to do. The graphs shown on the overhead screen depicted General Fund Giving vs. Expenses, Current Financials, Number of Giving Households, and Attendance Trends. We are currently ahead of last year in giving, but our bills have increased. The number of households has decreased and we have fewer people giving more. We lost our cushion in the General Fund. Covid was a big factor in the attendance trends. Attendance was up the last 2 Sundays but not back to pre-covid levels. The disbursements recently were due to duct-cleaning, new blinds in Neemann Hall, an air purifier, and drywall.

Pastor Beth explained options given to her by the synod of what other churches have done. We could share a pastor, join another parish or cluster, close the church and emerge as a new congregation, or have a holy closure/living a legacy. Examples were given of each option.

The question was asked if designated funds can be redesignated. It was answered yes, but the committees would have to approve and bring to the Church Council to redesignate.

Gary brought up that we will need names for nominations before the next annual meeting of President, Secretary, Treasurer, Faith-in-Action, Youth Ministry Chair and Co-Chair, Stewardship, HLCW representative, and Endowment Committees. We now have 5-6 out of 13 positions open. A church document on Church Council duties can be emailed if requested. The Personnel Committee needs members by December. Other committees that need members are the Nominating Committee, Adult Ministry, and Youth Ministry. We will have to cut committees or services if we can't get more people to help.

Comments from the congregation: Rita Sawatzky said that we should make changes in our spending and prioritize, ex: possibly mow every other week. She also questioned about the radon. Maybe we should separate from ELCA, it seems to be a burden, not a benefit, and many churches are leaving. Shannon Morrison spoke about being progressive in the community and that we need to take care of the radon as soon as possible, due to it being a great health risk. Mary Ackerman said that years back there was a Spiritual Committee she was on that contacted people who hadn't attended or participated for some time. Many told her they weren't coming since it didn't seem to matter to anyone, and we should really be doing this again. Dan Harvey said the congregation needs to be more involved and should contact anyone in the Church Council for concerns in order to survive. Jim Timm stated that it's important for us to reach out to the old members and to reach out to the new members as well. Jeremy Loy said he's very concerned about the drop in membership and wants to help when and where he can, but it's been difficult for him lately due to family concerns. Dick Lande said he has been a member since 1959, been treasurer for Church Council and very active in the church. He stressed that communication and cooperation are important and we must have compassion and support and help each other. He made a suggestion that people can throw all their change in a jar for the week and bring it to church on Sunday as an extra offering. And then he thanked us all for everything we do.

Shannon Morrison asked how many people total are needed for the committees, Matt Kuehl estimated about 65. Holli Viken suggested cutting down on the number of committees. Shannon stated that she and Brooke Ecker will be happy to help as part of the Children's Ministry.

Dan Harvey made a motion that the church continue as is, Margie Moore seconded. Motion passed with 51 voting yes, and 11 voting no, and 2 that were indiscernible.

TOPIC #2—Financing Hope's Ministries: Gary explained that we have \$3,600 in General Funds and \$7,200 in bills with \$11,000 in payroll and benefits coming up in October. There was a question about Designated Funds, that the money should come in and then go out. Carol Duffy explained about Parish Life: that Cornerstone Cafe has money in it. Dan Harvey explained about the constitutionality of voting on the Designated Funds, that it has to be an agenda item for the Church Council. Mike Mood brought up how it seems pretty obvious to take money from one place and move to another to pay bills. Cathy Marty explained that money from the Endowment Fund cannot be used for General Funds. Carol Wendricks suggested that people attend the Church Council meetings and also that we should do Temple Talks to let others know what the committees are doing. Matt Duffy said there is leftover money in the Hope Arboretum Fund and he would like to see it go to help with the budget. Gary said that money is designated for that fund and cannot be used for general funds, but thanked him for it. Carol Duffy explained where the \$15,000 in the bus grant came from. Dick Lande said the money is there and we should use it. Jeremy Loy asked if we would have to pay it back and no, we do not have to pay it back since the organization that gave it has folded. Dan Harvey said that the youth wouldn't be using the funds in the near future. Matt Kuehl made a motion that HLC use the Designated Funds and Building Improvement to cover budgeted expenses, with the intention of documenting and paying back those funds. Carol Duffy seconded. Motion passed 54 voting yes and 3 voting no.

TOPIC #3—Building Updating: It was asked when was the roof last shingled? Gregg Burmeister was not sure, but the contractor saw some hail damage. An insurance claim was submitted for it, but there are other areas that need to be done before winter. Dick Lande made a motion to fund the repairs and Cathy Marty seconded. Motion passed with 45 voting yes and 2 no.

Gary explained about the radon levels and process of mitigating. Dan made a motion that we spend \$8,956.89, plus \$300 to remove debris in the crawl space, to mitigate the radon. Arrick Ecker seconded.

Gary explained about the radon levels under the sanctuary and Neemann Hall. Cathy Marty motioned to table the previous vote and see how the first radon mitigation goes before doing the sanctuary and Neemann Hall. Carol Duffy seconded. Motion passed with 40 voting yes and 14 voting no.

Gary brought up the issue of updating the tech booth, which should provide better quality sound and video in the sanctuary and in online broadcasting. The \$20,000 was just a very rough estimate and not based on any actual estimates since there wasn't time to get estimates before the meeting. Sue Ecker made a motion we table it, Cathy Marty seconded. Motion failed with 15 voting yes and 30 voting no.

Shane Reich made a motion to approve up to \$20,000 from the Endowment to upgrade the tech booth. Carol Duffy seconded. Motion passed with 34 voting yes, and 9 voting no.

Gregg Burmeister explained the reasoning for the security updates. There are many keys that were handed out to members that have left the church that have not been returned, despite requests to do so. Recently, there was an instance of members coming into the kitchen and finding 2 burners that were left on high flames with no apparent explanation of why or how. With the basement and other rooms being rented out, we need to re-key the locks for other areas of the church so it is not accessible to them. We will also need to install security cameras and signs to discourage traffic from cutting through our parking lot. Carol Duffy made a motion to

approve \$5,000 from the Endowment Fund to update HLC security. Wendy Tiede seconded. Motion passed with 41 voting yes and 2 voting no. Shane Reich volunteered to look into the tech booth.

Dan Harvey made a motion to adjourn, and everyone seconded. Motion passed.

Meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer at 1:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Donna Niesen-Campbell