

**FALL VOTERS MEETING
GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2020**

Ministry Management Board Chairman, Tim Nierman, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and reviewed details of the agenda.

Pastor Armstrong opened the meeting by reading verse 3 from Jude's Epistle, speaking of the certainty of our salvation and the doctrine that we hold dear.

He also read from a book entitled *Why I Am a Lutheran; Jesus at the Center* by Daniel Preus from which he had read to the congregation previously, quoting in part from it that "The teachings of the Lutheran Church placed Jesus at the center because the teachings of the scriptures placed Jesus at the center. No other confession demonstrates such fidelity to the truths of God's Word. No other confession so glorifies Christ by placing Him at the center of all that it confesses and teaches. Being a Lutheran is truly all about Jesus."

Pastor then led a prayer for opening a congregational meeting.

Determination of Quorum:

- Secretary David Wright announced that a count of attendees had been taken, that **32** members were present, and that a quorum was therefore present in accordance with the church's By-laws.

Receipt of New Members and Other Constitution Signatories:

- Tim Nierman invited any new members in attendance, as well as members who may not have previously signed, to come forward and sign the church's Constitution. Two members came forward to do so.

Review and Approval of July 16, 2020 ("Spring") Voters Meeting Minutes:

- Copies of the July 16, 2020 ("Spring") Voters Meeting Minutes had been placed in member mailboxes, emailed, and also made available at the meeting. Following time for review and opportunity for discussion, upon motion duly made by Paul Finke and seconded by Steve Meyer, minutes of the "Spring" 2020 Voters Meeting were approved, subject to correction under the Central Ave sign replacement decision caption that the proposal to simply refurbish the existing sign had been made by Columbus Sign Co., not Green Sign Co., the company that had finally been selected to completely replace the sign.

Introduction of Allen Hinkle as New Chairman-Elect:

- To assist in conducting portions of the meeting, Chairman Nierman introduced Allen Hinkle as having graciously accepted the role of 2020 Chairman-Elect, and as a result to serve as its Chairman for 2021.

Grace Foundation Update:

- Ed Probst, President of the Grace Lutheran Church Foundation reminded those present that all members of the Foundation are the voting members of Grace Lutheran Church, and elect 7 people to represent and do business for them on the Foundation Board. He also reminded everyone that 30 years ago that month the

congregation had voted to establish the Foundation, and mentioned 3 congregation members present who were also present at that establishment: Paul Finke, Lester Peters, and himself. Another congregation member who was then present, but absent from this meeting was Gladys Finke who was then 73 years old.

- He then listed current board members other than himself who are always available to answer questions: Candace Clancy, Paul Finke, Cindy Meyer, Tim Nierman, Jim Tibbetts and David Wright.
- Ed briefly discussed Foundation activities, including managing invested portfolio assets of \$570,000 current value, not including \$107,000 of unrealized gains, and having made grants of over \$168,000 to date, making specific reference to and describing grants made during 2019 and so far during 2020.
- In his comments, he briefly remarked that future federal fiscal and monetary policies to mitigate economic effects of Covid-19 and/or from recent federal election outcomes will likely affect asset management decisions.
- Foundation will be sending a year-end letter to members reminding them to consider making donations to the Foundation after first gifting in support of Grace's church budget, and to also remember the Foundation in their estate planning and beneficiary designation instructions.

Pastor's Report:

- He highlighted the privilege and joy he experiences when speaking with congregation in the sanctuary each week, and how much he learns as he prepares for that.
- He also expressed his appreciation for the support of Grace's staff personnel, who he said appreciates the support and generosity of the congregation.
- Alpha class, which has been totally online, has been going well. There are now 5 non-member students following one former non-member (Gary Smith) joining Grace. Next Tuesday will be final class.
- He reminded that the originally planned-for Lutheran Heritage speaker canceled largely due to Covid concerns, so he asked for thoughts about who congregation might like to hear as a speaker next year and possible topics.
- Theme of upcoming Advent evening services will be the birth of Jesus from Revelation, looking at Revelation 12.
- Rev. Josiah Fitch will be preaching, without reimbursement, at next Wednesday's Thanksgiving-eve worship in gratitude for Grace's support.
- There will be an Epiphany service on January 6th.
- Livestream service attendance has been good, and is an important virtual connection to the sanctuary and with other members of congregation for those actually unable to attend, but he stressed continued importance of in-person attendance.
- He highlighted there are 22-23 shut-ins, many who he currently cannot visit due to facility Covid shutdowns, which frustrates his love of interacting with all members, and thanked congregation for the privilege of serving and its continued support.
- Goal is to invite 10-11 more households to worship this year, so he encouraged use of the available invitation cards.

Family Life Ministry Update:

- Deaconess Julie reported that almost all of the money needed to purchase the Japanese Bibles she referenced during last meeting has been raised, which is a testament to the congregation's generosity.
- Fellowship activities and their planning are going well, including with Bingo on upcoming Sunday, and Secret Santa this year.
- Most children and youth ministry events have been placed on hold due to complications from potential need for Covid contact tracing in event of an infection.
- She and Jinhee Kim will need to be very creative regarding development of a children's Christmas program this year.
- "Caring cards" this month focus on students and teachers; next month's focus will be on area pastors.
- Birthday cards are also available to be signed for Gladys Finke, who will be 103 on Nov 24th.
- Julie is doing Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) on Mondays, and described details of the activity. There are 8 students, each from a different denomination; she is the only female; and throughout process appreciates Lutheranism even more, giving some examples of why.
- Julie predicted there will be many Angel Tree requests this year based upon her observation of financial effects of Covid stress on people and families.

Spiritual Leadership Update:

- In his presentation of Grace's membership roll status, Paul Finke referenced Gary Smith, as well as Brook and Sandy Gassaway as new members.
- He also referenced baptisms of Renna Marie Hinkle and Miles Shoultz since his last report, resulting in more overall member gains than losses, including with the loss of Stan Torwelle who had been called to Glory.
- His latest data indicated there are 414 baptized and 289 confirmed members.
- He then presented graphs of early and 2nd in-person services attendance since May (about ½ of pre-Covid attendance) including their positive trend lines; and online viewing (live and recorded) data by # of views and viewers by date since livestreaming began in March.
- He explained there have been 53 broadcasts so far, involving 5,334 views, and 1,673 unique viewers in 33 states (79% from Indiana) and 3 other countries.
- As an experiment, there will be 20-min long (3 per hour) communion "mini-services" on upcoming Saturday, 4 – 5 p.m., for those who are receiving the Word via livestreaming, but not receiving the Sacrament in person due to their continued broader Covid safety concerns. If successful, idea will be repeated.

Christian Education Assistance Policy:

- Chris Meyer had previously distributed copies of a proposed policy intended to better financially assist in attracting and retaining young families seeking Lutheran school education for their children, and explained in detail the history and activities of a team established in 2019 to explore (including through comprehensive survey) how to best minister to members' growing need for Grace's Christian Education Ministry. This topic had been introduced by the team at the Fall 2019 Voters Meeting with an update at the Spring 2020 meeting.

- In addition to conducting the needs assessment, he described the team’s goal of clarifying eligibility for assistance, formalizing the application process, disbursement of funds and funding of the ministry.
- As additional background, he explained mechanics of how Indiana’s school voucher and Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) programs work in support of private school tuition funding, and the effect amounts received from these can have on amounts needed from Grace’s program.
- Chris highlighted policy details, including that its main thrust included funding for a minimum of 50% of the cost of member student tuition and fees, which he explained would constitute 5% of a proposed 2021 Grace budget. He described certain other operational and administrative improvements to the program including assumed grade eligibility expansion, a growing # of currently knowable eligible students, and forecasted annual budget costs for the next three school years assuming a 3% per annum tuition increase (a St. Peter’s School benchmark).
- It was clarified that Chris’ financial analysis was “worse case” in the sense that it assumed no Indiana voucher or SGO funding support for parents.
- The policy also included well-defined communication and administrative deadlines for its proper operation which he described.
- Extensive discussion ensued, including need, if adopted, for congregation’s commitment to prioritize funding these policy changes as a ministry and willingness to reallocate funds from other budget areas, as necessary... and also parental understanding that future MMB leadership may need to make policy changes to increase parental cost sharing, if necessary, to maintain a robust commitment to this ministry.
- Also discussed were the many benefits, including cost avoidance and attractiveness to new young families, of supporting such a policy vs. establishing and operating a school of our own.
- Following discussion and upon motion duly made by Jim Tibbetts and seconded by Paul Finke, the Grace Lutheran Church Christian Education Assistance Policy as presented was approved and adopted.

Treasurer’s Report:

- Lester Moorman presented favorable year-to-date financial data through October, reflecting that contributions of prox. \$410,000 were prox. \$10,000 more than last year at this time.
- He provided details of reasons for favorable and unfavorable variables from 2019 in some of the operating expense accounts to-date, including Missions spending which he anticipated would increase during November and December resulting in a smaller positive variance.
- He also highlighted a \$20,631 positive variance in Outreach expenses due to timing difference in accounting for receipt of MOPS user fees as between the 2 years.
- Net operating results so far were prox. \$1,400, considerably better than prox. (\$31,000) at this time last year, so things have worked out well financially despite initial concerns due to Covid-19.
- Cash position is strong at prox. \$523,000 balance, including the PPP loan proceeds.

- We will be applying for forgiveness of that \$77,200 PPP loan received earlier in the year, and expect that it will be forgiven based on our qualifying use of the funds.
- Upon motion duly made by Steve Meyer and seconded by John Carr, the Treasurer’s report was accepted.

2021 Budget Presentation:

- Lester presented details of the proposed 2021 budget, focusing on any material differences, by line item, of expenses in the 2020 budget, as well as certain minor expense “accrual” adjustments that were made as between the 2 years.
- He reported the total 2021 budget amount as \$564,925 (prox. \$15,000 higher than last year), which, based on last year’s annual contributions, could more than be covered by them.
- Budgeted giving for Missions constitutes 6.7% of total; it was 6.5% in 2020, so is very consistent with Missions historical giving goals.
- Following opportunity for discussion, upon motion duly made by Dan Rumsey and seconded by Mark Stepper, the 2021 budget as presented by Lester was adopted.

Nominations for and Election of 2021-22 Leadership Positions:

- Chairman Nierman explained, and as a reminder, that at the beginning of 2020 the positions of Chairman-Elect and Personnel Director had been “open”, that MMB was authorized to fill those vacant positions, and that it had done so when Allen Hinkle and Elsa Miller, respectively, had agreed to serve in those roles.
- Darrah Franks, Chair of the Nominating Committee, then presented the slate of nominees for MMB and Elder leadership positions that needed to be filled for the 2021-22 period as follows:

Chairman-Elect.....	Still Open
Public Relations.....	Andrew Brunni
Treasurer.....	Lester Moorman
Facilities (Head Co-Trustees).....	Kyle McLeod & Bruce Otte
Youth & Education.....	Missy Snyder
Care.....	Barbara Davies
Elder.....	Rick Snyder
Elder.....	Rob Smalley
Elder.....	Andy Hatton

- Following opportunity for discussion and upon motion duly made by Darrah and seconded by Paul Finke, the slate of nominees as presented was approved and elected to their positions.

Old Business:

- Dan Rumsey, Sign Committee Chair, updated that contract with Green Sign Co. for new Central Ave sign had been executed and cash deposit had been paid. City of Columbus had also approved the size and design. Old sign should be removed by end of November and target date for installation of new sign is December 17th.

New Business:

- No new business was brought before the meeting.

Adjournment and Closing Prayer:

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m., including a closing prayer led by Pastor Armstrong.