

Council Meeting Minutes November 21 at 6 pm Via Zoom

Attending: Morgan Wright, Mary Ballard, Martha Kreszock, Wayne Powell, Alan Hauser, Kristie Evans, Emory Maiden, Carol Norris, Jordan Burkhart, Suzanne Wise, Vicar Spence, P. Steve

Absent: Jesse Lutabingwa, Jennifer Davis

1. **Call to Order** – Mary; 6:03
2. **Devotion** – Suzanne. Suzanne took 2 personality tests and had high scores on thinking and judging. She referenced Matthew 7: 1 - 5 which talks about judging others. She has concerns about perhaps being too critical of others. She said a prayer to help us be aware of our own shortcomings before being critical of others.
3. **Ground Rules** - Mary
 - Please raise your hand to indicate that you would like to speak.
 - Please give your name and state your views on the matter under discussion, including any questions or concerns you may have.
 - In order to allow others ample opportunity to join in the conversation, please keep any subsequent comments by you on the issue/motion succinct and to the point.
 - Please remain quiet when others have the floor so everyone can hear.
 - Please be respectful of those voicing differing opinions.
4. **Congregational Input** – Mary
 - a. Suzanne - during communion would it be possible to dip wafers into chalice instead of wasting plastic cups?
 - i. Mary dislikes common dipping, she has hygiene concerns.
 - ii. Carol - Could we recycle plastic cups? P. Steve said they are recycled and that the church had looked into biodegradable cups. There is a cost concern with biodegradable cups. Could we use glass? We could wash them. Carol and spouse said they'd be willing to help with the cost of biodegradable cups.
 - b. Lynn Mauney would like to commune at the rail. Should we.....
 - i. Poll the congregation?
 - ii. Wait til flu season is over??
 - iii. Could we do a combo? Let people come to the altar rail after communing to pray.
5. **Approval of Council Meeting Minutes**
 - a. Corrected Facility use by Home Builders Annual Meeting to App Builds
 - b. Mary asked for a meeting to accept minutes with above changes.
 - c. Alan made the motion. Carol seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. Strategic Visioning - Mary

- a. Review Organizational Chart and Liaison Assignments
 - i. Chart ready and adapted to be easily updated.
 - ii. Some liaison positions still need to be assigned.
- b. Council Goal-Setting Process; Intro and Chapter 1 of “The Holy and the Hybrid” to be reviewed in January 2023 Council meeting.

7. Policy – Mary; Wedding Policy Update in Process, expect review at Dec. or Jan. meeting.

8. Monitoring and Oversight

- a. Reports:
 - i. Senior Pastor Report
 - a. Been very busy, will slow down a little bit after Cantata.
 - b. Review of Engagement Report
 - ii. Campus Ministry Coordinator
 - iii. Vicar’s Report
 - iv. Office Manager Report
 - v. Music Ministry Report
 - vi. Facilities Manager Report
 - a. Not received from Jennifer; vacation.
 - b. Estimate from Moretz Paving received 11/21 for parking lot; only estimate received thus far
 - i. Estimate is \$52K
 - ii. Would add 28 parking spaces.
 - iii. Would add \$21K/year income at the current rate.
 - iv. Payoff cycle of 2 ½ years.
 - v. Need engineer drawing and TOB approval.
 - vi. Caveats: TOB will probably require stuff like an engineering drawing.
 - vii. Wayne Powell suggested getting another estimate.
 - 1. Moretz paving known to be the most expensive. Wayne suggested Shatley Paving.
 - 2. P. Steve thinks \$52K is about right.
 - viii. Have \$8K in paving fund. Touch base with St. Luke’s? P. Steve said he would.
 - vii. Treasurer Report
 - a. \$22K short in YTD budget.
 - b. \$25K received so far for November. Will probably meet or exceed November’s budgetary needs. Can help with previous months. Stock transfers coming. Did congregation get the message?
 - c. End of year giving for those folks who don’t contribute monthly but quarterly or yearly may come in.

b. Old Business :

- i. Property Task Force Update (Pastor Steve)
 - a. paving as per above.
 - b. No Council house update.
 - c. AT&T - P. Steve made contact with the correct person for deed negotiations. Has the cell phone number of the person who assists in deed transfer.
- ii. Updates on adjustments to schedule related to COVID-19
 - a. Moving between green and yellow.
 - b. Flu is bad in our area.
- iii. 100th Anniversary of Grace
 - a. P, Steve has most of the contacts to invitees.
 - b. Will increase activity in Jan next year.
 - c. Will be held on Memorial Weekend Sunday; May 28, 2023.
- iv. Circle of Welcome for Refugees
 - a. Work is going slow.
 - b. Is it possible to do training in the meantime?
- v. Columbarium
 - a. Current one is sold out of spots, we need to build a new one.
 - b. Company to come up and assess the garden for install, give price, etc.
 - c. We will pre-sell slots.
- vi. Security Protocol Group (Carol) - recent scammer incidence. Do we need more active security procedures?
 - a. Carol and Sandy were involved in this group. They need more participants.
 - b. Protocol improvements made - Ushers; locking doors throughout, one usher stays in Narthex, some members have active shooter training.
 - c. One congregant asked P. Steve if we've considered a uniformed officer on site during worship or not? Carol and Sandy discussed this previously.
 - d. If we had a fire alarm system installed we could have an alarm button installed in a couple of locations. If an issue arose, pressing such button would contact the police. This option is expensive.
 - e. Martha asked if we had a camera system? We do not.
 - f. Kristie commented that there was really nothing suspicious about this person until they interrupted the service and later brought up financial issues to congregation. There were no prior "red flags".
- vii. Fire Alarm System (Pastor Steve)
- viii. Sabbatical Update
 - a. Plans coming together.
 - b. P. Steve and Stacey booked flights. Used points from church credit card.

c. **New Business**

- i. Facility Use Request - we received a new round of dates for the Catholic services. This will be recurring.
- ii. Financial Conversation. What to do...
 - a. Over next 6 - 9 months?
 - i. Immediately Inform Congregation of the Current Financial picture
 - a. Pastor Steve updated the congregation through an E-News article on November 3rd.
 - b. Giving Statement continues to be printed in each week's bulletin.
 - c. Budget Summary was included in the e-news.
 - d. Send out "quarterly statements" with a note from the Treasurer around December 1st.
 - ii. Challenge the congregation to give a special offering to support the ministries of Grace. A congregation member, who wishes to remain anonymous, has offered a \$10,000 matching gift through the end of the year. Pastor Steve would like to launch this mini-drive on Wednesday, November 23.
 - iii. Increase the number of student parkers. We currently have more parkers than the number of spots available, because not all the parkers use the lot at the same time. We could increase the number of parkers.
 - iv. Bring in new members. A new member class will be received on November 20th and plans are underway for another new member class in January. One of new members is a financial guy. Probably 3 more households in January.
 - v. Wilkes County Property
 - a. Timbering – Pastor Steve contacted Casey and Associates, a timbering firm in Wilkesboro. Waiting for them to visit the property to provide an estimate of timber value.
 - b. Carbon Credits – Pastor Steve has researched the possibility of leasing the carbon credit from the property.
 - i. Lease out to NOTdevelop the property.
 - ii. Why? Government regulations, Paris Accord - some states are part of this. In order to cap carbon emissions, companies are given the opportunity to buy carbon reduction from other people (There is the "cap-and-trade market" which is regulated by the government and the voluntary market where a company desires to be net-zero or to cut carbon emissions.) It helps to protect land that otherwise would be developed.
 - iii. Leasing out property could possibly bring in \$65K/year

Even if this is inflated and we get ½ that, it's still a lot of money.

- iv. Is it ethical? Suzanne, Carol, Wayne say yes. Mary - are companies being unethical by not trying to meet emission requirements and thus are we contributing to this? Wayne - spoke to someone who said purchasing carbon credits is popular and acceptable.
 - v. P. Steve - talked to folks who would list our property on the carbon credit market (matchmaking type company) or we can lease land ourselves ("For Sale by Owner" type thing).
 - vi. Mary - could we choose the company if we went with "for sale by owner" option.
 - vii. Wayne suggested meeting a person in Wilkesboro who may be able to assist in the decision. Also knows someone in MD environmental society who we can share concerns with.
 - viii. Alan - agrees with Mary that we should investigate the company who wants to buy carbon credits. Are they ethical?
- b. Over next 1 - 2 years?
- i. Activate the Stewardship Team. Wayne has begun the process of building a Stewardship Team.
 - ii. Rent the Councill House to college interns and relocate LSA to the Main Church Building. Project \$25 - 30K/year in income.
 - a. Mary - less painful than adjusting staffing and pausing Internship Program.
 - iii. Extend the back parking lot. Jennifer is waiting on an estimate.
 - iv. Pause the Internship Program for 2023 - 2024 and Rent the Grace Place to College Interns. Similarly, consider sharing the intern (and costs) with other High Country Coalition Congregations. Cost savings would be \$50K/year.
 - v. Adjust the Staffing Model. Would most likely affect Jennifer Stamey's position
 - vi. Increase Student Parking Rate for 2023 - 2024.
- c. Over next 3-5 years+?
- i. Create a long-term plan for Wilkes Property or sell property.
 - ii. Develop robust Planned Giving Program to encourage members and friends of Grace to give estate gifts to the congregation in order to build out a set of endowments that will secure ministries and facilities upkeep in the future.
 - iii. Consider purchasing the small plot of land next to Grace Place and adding a small home (1 to 2 beds, 1-1.5 baths) which would

- become the new Vicarage. Opening the Grace Place to house renters or other staff members.
 - iv. Research adding solar panels to the main church roof to offset ongoing electricity costs of the congregation.
 - v. Consider the development of housing on the Council Property.
- d. Council comments/questions
 - i. Emory - Could we set a minimum amount for parking during fundraisers?
 - ii. Alan - we've lost members this year for various reasons. Could we lead more members to our church? Are there things we could do to generate more members?
 - a. Advertise special events to bring visitors. Might later come back and be members.
 - b. Have more community organizations and events take place (Kitchen funeral presider gave us free advertisement), VBS events, etc.
- iii. 2023 - 2024 Internship Site Application
 - a. Moved the target application process from the end of January to middle of December.
 - b. Keep internship program or not? Alan made a motion to keep the program. Seconded by Wayne. Motion passed unanimously.
- iv. 2021 - 2022 Surplus Designation
 - a. 3 options - All to NC Synod; 1/2 to NC Synod, 1/2 for Grace; All for Grace
 - b. If reserved for Grace, money could be used for:
 - i. Operational Cash Reserves
 - ii. Long-term Capital Repairs (roof, boiler, etc.)
 - iii. Sabbatical Funding
 - iv. Other?
 - c. Alan - do we have to make a decision this month?
 - i. Alan states to leave it in Operational Cash reserves.
 - ii. Mary, why option 2 split as above? Could we give SOME to NC Synod, keep the rest? P. Steve said a 50/50 split was arbitrarily chosen.
 - iii. Martha - How much money was given to the synod in the last 5 years?
 - a. Last year 6K. Had hoped to give 6K this year.
 - b. Synod hope is 29K (10% of church giving).
 - iv. Carol - a reminder about condition of the boiler.
 - d. Hold off until January to make decision. Synod fiscal year ends in January.

9. Next Meeting: December 19th

- Devotion: Alan

10. Meeting Adjourned with the Lord's Prayer - Suzanne

Devotion List:

January - Kristie
February - Morgan
March - Martha
April - Emory
May - Jesse
June - Jordan
July - Wayne
August - Jennifer