**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA**

**MINUTES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL**

**November 19, 2023**

**Members Present**: Mike Driskill, Debbie Hampstead, Jon Driskill, Rachel Rushworth-Hollander, Angela Kronau, Becky Breeden, Pastor Susan Thisell, Jack Wilder, Michele Wilson, Sharon Sweeney

**Members Absent**: none

1. Call to Order: Mike called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM following the farewell reception for Pastor Susan and Steve.
2. Devotion: Jack provided a devotion on Isaiah 43:19, sharing different versions.
3. Zoom Call: Future Council members, Cristall Mount and Carolyn Lawhorn, joined current Council members on a Zoom call with Pastor Mark Cerniglia. Pastor Mark has been chosen by Synod as the best Interim Pastor for Messiah. Pastor Mark described his past experience and that he was looking forward to helping Messiah with the Call Process. The Statement of Agreement for Intentional Interim Ministry requires Messiah to list three goals to be addressed during the interim period. Pastor Mark said the first one would be a review of the Constitution, the second one would be completing the Ministry Profile and we need to identify a third goal. Council also needs to identify 3 primary duties for the Interim. Mike explained what Messiah’s Constitution says about the membership of a Call Committee. Pastor Mark answered a few questions from Council members. Council members left the room to continue the meeting in the Fellowship Hall while Cristall stayed on the call to discuss housing options and needs with Pastor Mark.
4. Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Angela and seconded by Michele to approve the minutes of the October 2023 meeting. Motion carried.
5. December Meeting: The December meeting will be held at the home of Mike Driskill and Beth Ford following Sunday School on December 17th. Staff, Current and future Council members, and spouses are invited to bring a dish to share.
6. Boy Scout Troop 146: Troop 146 will not be meeting at Messiah. They will be sponsored by Sacred Heart and continue to meet at Middlebrook Pike Methodist.
7. Committee Reports: Provided in the meeting packet. A question was raised about the Parish Nurse Report. She claimed 8 hours of Holiday during October when there were no Holidays in October. Michele will ask Mary Sophia to modify the report.
8. Old Catholics: Old Catholic church wants to start a parish in Knoxville and inquired whether they could use Messiah’s worship space for a fee on Sundays in the late afternoon or evening. Pastor discussed their theology and said it is close to ours. Pastor will get more information.
9. Fee Structure: Mike will be meeting with Kristin to get a better idea of Messiah’s building use fee structure for future revision.
10. Last day: Pastor Susan’s last day is November 30. She is taking vacation now through the 30th however, if needed, she is available. Pastor Laura will preach through December and Pastor Steven Friedrich from Peace will be on call for Pastorial Care.
11. Finance: Steve Hess emailed the October Financial Report to Council. There are 3.8 weeks of unrestricted cash left for the year. Reducing spending was recommended. Estimated income for 2024 is $13,000 less than 2023 income.
12. 2024 Spending Guide: Compensation for the Interim Pastor was discussed. Synod chose Pastor Mark as the best fit for Messiah. He is a very experience Interim Pastor and can guide Messiah through the call process. The Statement of Agreement for Intentional Interim Ministry, received from Synod, details Pastor Mark’s compensation in addition to the expectations of the congregation and of the Interim Pastor. Compensation follows Synod’s Compensation Guidelines.

Base $53,353

Pension 10% 5,335

SS 3,307

Medicare Supplement 3,912

Study expenses 1,000

Professional expenses 500

Total **$67,000**

In addition, Messiah will cover expenses of a semi-furnished apartment with internet, and 62.5 cents per mile for travel. Cristall is working with Pastor Mark on housing options. She thinks $18,000 is a good estimate. Grand total is estimated at $85,407. 2024 Spending Guide budgeted $74,192. Shortfall is $11,215.

Options on how the budget could be reduced in order to present a balanced budget were discussed at length. It was also noted that Synod funding was cut in half and no funds were allocated for Tyson House, World Hunger or the Seminarian, currently Andrew Lauber. Options to increase income were discussed.

A motion was made by Michele, seconded by Mike to present an unbalanced Spending Guide for 2024 in order for the congregation to recognize our shortfall of funds. The benefit of this will show where we are falling short and how members can increase participation and/or giving. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Mike, seconded by Debbie, to approve the Interim Pastor’s compensation outlined in the Statement of Agreement for Intentional Interim Ministry as written with 10% of base salary for pension. Motion carried.

1. A motion was made by Rachel, seconded by Pastor, to reduce office supplies from $2,000 to $1,000, increase Synod support to $12,000, budget $540 for World Hunger, budget $600 for Tyson House and $1,000 for Seminarian Support. This would increase the 2024 Spending Guide by $13,200. Total increase to the Spending Guide would be $24,415. Motion carried. It is expected that by exploring ways to reduce our paper usage for bulletins, flyers and such we can cut office supply expenses in half.

Council will help Finance present the budget at the December 10 Congregational Meeting, with additional explanatory material for individual line items as needed.

1. Angela made a motion to adjourn at 3:00 PM, seconded by Jack. Motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Hampstead

Secretary

**First Post Meeting Update**: Following discussion with Pastor Mark, he revised the Interim Costs as follows:

Base Salary $48,000 (Monday through Friday working remotely)

SS 2,976

Pension 0

Medicare Supplement 3,912

Continuing Ed 1,000

Professional exp 500 (Reimbursement)n

**TOTAL $53,688**

Messiah responsible

Housing Estimated $18,000

Mileage ?

Grand Total **$71,688**

**Second Post Meeting Update**: Following the First Post Meeting Update there was a flurry of email communication on December 3, 2023 among Council members and Finance Team.

Michele submitted a spreadsheet that Steve has prepared, with all the updates and a final list of proposed changes (below) to the 2024 spending plan that includes reductions to the General Fund. These modifications allow us to move ahead with a balanced spending plan to present to the members at the Congregational meeting on Sunday, December 10th.

1.      Reduce office supplies by $200 to reflect less paper used (specifically on bulletins).

2.      Reduce usage of copier (office equipment by $500 copier per the contractual volume limits.

3.      Move $540 ELCA World Hunger support from the General Fund to the Mena Eckard fund.

4.      Move $600 Tyson House UT Campus Ministry support from the General Fund the Mena Eckard fund.

5.      Restructure our agreement with Avona Technologies so they no longer provide tech support to staff at a savings of $150 annually. They will continue to manage our computer network, our VOIP services [telephones] and manage SBC server [firewall/email protection/etc.]

6.      Reduce Building Maintenance by $2,000 from the General Fund and then utilize $1,000 from the Mena Eckard fund [to offset 2024 repairs]. This represents a $1,000 reduction to the Building Maintenance (Repairs Budget).

7.      Save approximately $1,500 by reducing fees to Vanco (our online giving platform). We currently lose a portion of the gift because of these fees. This will require that we have more tellers to process donations that are received by the church and make deposits.

8.      This revised plan matches the new agreement with the interim pastor that was shared earlier this week by Mike.

**Presented this as a motion for Council** to second, discuss and then vote on.

Angela seconded the motion. After additional email discussion an amendment to the motion was made to increase support of Tyson House and World Hunger to $1200 each. Funds to come from Mena Ekhard endowment fund.

Motion Carried