

Council Meeting

June 11, 2019

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Lynn called the meeting to order at 6 o'clock.

PRESENT: Teresa had been excused, Jason was on speakerphone and then arrived at the meeting. The rest of the council members were present: Lynn, Dave, Beth, Stacy, Frank, Deb, Jane, and Linda.

Congregational members: Pat, Ernie, Debby, Rusty, Myrna, Ginny, Renae, Marv, Larry, Sue, Julie, Lil, Gordy, Marnie, Bob, Cliff, Alice, Donald, Mary, Jackie, Jenny, Larry.

Synod representative: Deacon Brenda Tibbetts.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Motion to approve the agenda as printed Stacy/Beth MSC.

DEVOTION/TREATS: Jason -challenged the council to get to know more of the congregation members by choosing to sit in a different location at each Sunday service.

SYNOD INFORMATION:

Deacon Brenda Tibbetts (Brenda)

introduced herself and gave us some general information about congregations in transition and told us there are a number of options as to how we might fill our open position of Pastor.

There are some seminary students that are almost done with class and will be looking for internships by possibly the middle of August but would not be ready to be called until February. At this time most of them prefer the term of Vicar. This person would need to have a Pastor as their mentor. A Vicar usually receives some payment. This person would need to go through the full call process in February and would not necessarily be available for us to call to our congregation. We would need to discuss with the bishop whether or not this person will be able to do Holy Communion during their internship.

The Synod is no longer using a congregation's payment situation to suggest that they use a First Call Pastor. Someone just out of seminary usually brings new ideas so the congregation that they go to needs to be open to change.

Lynn mentioned that Pastor Chris and Pastor Karen are our emergency contacts through the end of June.

Brenda informed us that one of the things that needs to be in place in order to call a pastor is planned religious education. At this time we have this covered through our Faith Formation program that has been planned by CYFEd with input from the pastor.

She gave Lynn a letter that needs to be filled out by the council president and sent to the Synod. The letter covers some of the responsibilities that Pastor Mary met as our pastor. One of these is filling out statistic reports in a paper form as this becomes a legal document. Brenda referred to these reports being kept in a specific book.

Myrna stated that we have not been keeping all of those statistics in one book. Lynn mentioned we do have a fire safe for some of the church documents and will check to see if this information is being kept in that safe.

Myrna asked when the ELCA uses someone with the title of Synodical Minister.

Brenda – usually in very rural areas, at the appointment of the bishop for one year and then reviewed. They are only able serve that one site.

Myrna – how do we get communion elements blessed to be used by our Visitation Team?

Brenda- have them on the altar when we have pulpit supply that presided at communion.

Ginny wanted clarification regarding if we were to get an intern in August. Brenda - we would not be guaranteed that they would be able to be called to our church.

Lynn- how soon could we possibly be able to get an interim?

Brenda - possibly by the middle of August.

Lynn – how soon can we start the call process?

Brenda- discuss all the items of the last survey and see if we need to add or change anything for the information that we send to the Synod. This is used on the website to let possible candidates know our church's needs and our expectations of our pastor. It can raise a red flag if it shows that there has been no interim pastor since the Pastor left.

Stacy – it is hard to have an interim when there are so few available. Is it possible that in our paperwork we can state that a candidate needs to live close to our community?

Brenda – it is possible but it does limit the potential candidates.

Frank - felt distance was an issue with Pastor Mary.

Brenda stated medical Insurance is an issue at times.

Stacy and Jason -we tried to be fair with Pastor Mary regarding insurance.

Myrna – it is only possible to pay with what we have available.

Linda-when Council was working on the budget for this year we had a discussion about what the alternative was if we got to the point we could not pay for a full-time pastor. It is possible that Pastor Mary felt that our church would soon make the decision to no longer have a full-time pastor.

Stacy - we should've had more than a two week notice.

Lynn - Pastor Mary's time with us was like having a short term interim pastor.

Myrna- we should review the recent survey for information for the Call Committee.

Frank – we should start the call process sooner rather than later. Pastor Mary had tried to reconnect with people who had left the church recently but did not get replies back. It was hard for her to fit in community events due to the distance she had to drive.

Stacy – would like to have as part of the call that the Pastor live closer to us.

Brenda -

review last survey.

Ginny- what is the call process? Brenda- look at Bethesda's constitution and see how many need to be on the committee. It is best to have different ages represented.

Call process paperwork-including site profile and this should not be posted in the church. Members should inform the Council about any questions that they would like included. She will help us with any changes that need to be made when comparing this Call to the last one.

Council okays information, let's Brenda know, and then she puts it on the website. Any pastor that is interested contacts Brenda. No name is given to the Call Committee until the person says it is OK. It is given to the Call Committee in paper form and they are the only ones who know who the person is until they have interviewed the candidate. Candidates may be interviewing with a number of churches at one time. Churches can interview a number of candidates at one time.

Frank – when it is on the website what area does that cover?

Brenda – it includes the 67 Synods in the ELCA. The congregation pays for room and travel expenses if the candidate has to come in person. It is possible to do a Skype interview first.

If candidate accepts the call the Church cannot call anyone else. Council then meets with the candidate but they do not re-interview them. The Council needs to be very specific with the candidate as to what the Pastor's job and responsibility will be at Bethesda.

First week – Call. Second week – salary package. Third week – vote.

The Synod background check only covers sexual misconduct.

Candidates have to list all history including divorces ,traffic tickets, etc. and Call Committee would see this. Brenda sends reply to Call Committee if a candidate is interested.

Important at this time for the congregation to hold up in prayer all leadership.

Debby - does the Synod do a background check through the state?

Brenda – no but church insurance might pay to have that done.

Myrna –what does the Synod see for changes in churches?

Brenda – Master of Divinity is a pilot program at seminary. They do their internship at the same time that they're having classes so it is quite intense but they get done in less time.

The pastors who are getting ready to retire now went through seminary at a time when church congregations were able to help supplement their tuition. At this time most students have to pay all of their tuition themselves. As a result they come out of seminary with some concern about how to pay off the bills that they have acquired during the years of study. One of the new models for ministry that the Synod has discussed is going back to something similar to the old circuit riders

Myrna - can we have a minister who is not Lutheran?

Brenda – yes if okayed by the Synod. We are probably going to see more churches becoming partners with those of a different denomination.

Rusty – could we have a traveling minister and still be looking to call a minister?

Brenda – would depend on the contract. Not able to say at this time how long it would take to have anyone available in any position.

Ginny - in an interview do candidates need to disclose if they are LGBTQ?

(L-Lesbian, G-Gay, B- Bisexual, T- Transgender, Q-Questioning)

Brenda – no congregation can be forced to interview or call LGBTQ individuals. Candidates don't have to declare if they are LGBTQ but usually do so if they are in a committed relationship. The Synod has a team that can discuss this issue with the congregation.

Ginny - can we let people know if we would like them to apply?

Brenda – let the Call Committee know, they will let Brenda know and she will handle the matter.

Debby – how many hours per week is a full-time pastor is expected to work? When Vicar Dave was here he said the seminary told him that he would be working about 32 hours a week.

Brenda – the seminary is teaching their students that they need to put some limits on their work week and protect their family/private life. This is in response to some of the burn out that was happening in full-time pastors.

Bob- referred to an article he had read in Lutheran Life about congregations being able hire someone just out of seminary and help them continue their education.

Brenda- this would be one model of ministry.

Ginny- is there a special paperwork to call someone in partnership with another church?

Brenda- yes, Deacon Amy would help with this.

Rena- Pastor Mary was here for less than three years. Is this normal for a first time pastor?

Brenda- usually the first time pastor works for three years but a pastor can leave at any time they just need to give a 30 day notice.

Ginny- was there an exit interview?

Lynn- Yes. Some of the reasons for leaving were travel time, family changes, and some issue that she was discussing with someone at Synod.

Rena- The Presbyterian Churches in Carlton and Wrenshall have merged. Would it be possible to partner with someone like them?

Brenda- yes, they are recognized as communion partners by the ELCA. Bishop Tom is open to this type of arrangement.

Ernie- stated he is not a member but feels that this congregation has been very helpful to him. He has permission from Bishop Tom to do communion at Bethesda and he would be willing to help out as needed.

Some discussion changing seating in the fellowship hall to help us meet and get to know more members.

Brenda – reminded us that Synod means walking together.

Debby – what are Deacons of Service able to do?

Brenda- can't do baptisms or communion. Some are able to do marriages.

Encouraged us to talk to people in our congregation about going into the ministry.

Lynn- is the closing of so many traditional churches due to the new types of service being offered at some churches?

Brenda- probably.

It is important that we keep our church website up to date and put in all activities that are happening. Candidates look at this when considering a call to a church.

The Council and the congregation members present thanked Deacon Brenda for the information that she presented to us and her openness when answering our questions.

Debby- would like Council to put information regarding pulpit supply in bulletin and newsletter on a regular basis.

Debby was the only non-council member who remained for the rest of the meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PROPERTY- Dave

Still waiting for plumbing permit from state. Plumber was given permission from state to remove the sink.

Alice had questioned Dave about whether we should be having coffee after church being that we don't have a kitchen sink to clean the coffee pot. She stated that OSHA would not approve us using one of the bathrooms to clean it. It was decided that we will continue coffee time using paper products and instruct coffee hosts to use the sink in the sacristy to clean the coffee pot.

CYFEd- Linda

Debby had been at a meeting with Our Savior and Zion. It was decided to hold daycamp for three days: at Zion, July 29, 30, and 31, 9 til 12:00, no cost and will be using curriculum that was given to them by VLM. Debby has refunded money

that had been given as scholarships for the week long day camp. One person wanted the money to go to Endowment for other camperships.

Debby will make an announcement at church about the three day session and will have registration forms available.

WORSHIP-Lynn

Will have communion at least twice

in July. May be able to get an intern to do pulpit supply by the end of August. Will be discussing details at the Worship Team meeting on June 18.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Correspondence– none

APPROVAL : motioned made to accept the May meeting report as printed Frank/Jason MSC.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Frank had a question about the amount on the last page of expenses regarding the amount for the pastor's medical/pension. There should be a memo if it is for two months. Need clarification on total in April and May. It may be including housing.

Youth payable- what is this for?

Stacy will check with Nita regarding these two issues.

APPROVAL: Motion was made to accept report with the understanding that Stacy will check about the two issues listed above Frank/Deb MSC.

PASTOR'S REPORT: none

OLD BUSINESS: none

NEW BUSINESS:

Pulpit supply- will have communion at least twice in July.

The possibility of having a LGBTQ candidate was brought up during the discussion with Deacon Brenda. Should we ask the congregation if they would consider a LGBTQ candidate? Frank questioned whether they would do gay marriages.

Call Committee- would people who were on the last one be on it again? Two of them are now in college.

Survey- The last one which Pastor Mary did was basically on line. She has given us some of the responses but they are not tabulated at all. Debby /Linda will ask Colleen if she is familiar with the survey format that was used and if she could help us with the tabulation.

Lynn had reached out for pulpit supply as soon as we knew Pastor Mary was leaving. Pastor Hane is going to retire and was actually going to be gone the whole month of June but stated he might be able to help some in July or August. Pastor Terrio was busy June and July.

THANK YOU: none

DEVOTION/ TREATS: Linda

NEXT MEETING:

July 9 Lynn will do a group text to let us know if we have information to discuss.

Aug 13

EXECUTIVE MEETING:

July 2 depending on if there is information to discuss for a meeting on July 9. August 6 by email

ADJOURNMENT:

8:24 Motion to adjourn the meeting Jason/Dave MSC

LORD'S PRAYER

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Newlon, Council Secretary