



First Lutheran Church  
Congregation Annual Meeting Minutes  
January 30, 2022  
DRAFT

*Care - Grow - Serve - Proclaim*

**Meeting Room Open/Quorum Reached:**

The meeting room opened at 11:30 so that members could check in prior to the 12 noon start time. For those who had more than one person sharing meeting access, instructions were given on how to modify the “participant” name on Zoom so that first and last names were shown. This allowed all persons at each location to be identified and counted. A quorum was reached by 11:50 a.m. Information was then provided on how to use the new closed-captioning. At its highest point, there were 88 members in attendance.

**Call to Order:**

President Holly Batstone called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

**Devotions:**

Pastor Berg took the devotion from 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, where Paul wrote about what it means to bring the Word to the people. Pastor Berg asked how do we, in the modern world, deconstruct our faith? The word “deconstruction” isn’t a negative thing, but helps us break out of our preconceptions and misconceptions of the world so that we can see it with clear eyes. He stated that at First Lutheran Church (FLC) we have been doing that for a while – asking who we are and how we can be better in the world. Much of that involves embracing change. We constantly need to call on ourselves to break down who we are so that we can build up a better body of Christ. Each time we receive new members we become a new church and a more diverse and more precious body of Christ.

**Introduction of Current Council Members:**

President Holly Batstone introduced the current church council: Roger Wolter, Vice-President; Ho Brown, Secretary; Stephanie Almeida; Karey Coble; Lloyd Condra; Christy Freriks; Craig Lichtenstein; Andrea Peoples; Johannes Skjonsby and Randall Wampler. Holly thanked the entire council for their work this year and gave special thanks to Roger, Karey, Lloyd and Andrea for all of their years of service and support on the council. These four members stepped off council this year because their terms have expired and/or because they have other commitments.

**Google Docs Voting Procedures:**

Holly explained how the voting would be accomplished. The process allowed multiple people sharing a single computer to vote independently. Christy Freriks took the one voice vote cast by a member who was on the phone.

**Standing Rules of Order:**

Holly reviewed the Standing Rules of Order for congregational meetings as specified in the 2021 Annual Report.

**Initial Ballot:**

The first ballot included the following three questions: 1) approval of the meeting agenda; 2) approval of the January 31, 2021 annual meeting minutes and 3) approval of the Standing Rules of Order. The question was asked if there were any changes and/or corrections to the January 31, 2021 meeting minutes. None were identified and the voting proceeded, with Christy taking 1 voice vote. All 3 items on the first ballot were approved as follows:

1. Meeting Agenda: Total Responses – 75; Approved - 75; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 0
2. Annual Meeting Minutes for 1/31/21: Total Responses – 74; Approved - 73; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 1
3. Standing Rules of Order: Total Responses – 74; Approved - 73; Opposed – 0; Abstained – 1

**Annual Report:**

The question was asked if there were any changes to the annual report. Corrections to some items on page 17 of the report were requested. The 2021 Church Council Roster showed Johannes’s term expires in 1/21; it

should be 1/24. The note under nominees for the 2022 council stated 4 nominees will serve a 3-year term ending January 2024. Five positions were actually open and any 3-year terms will end in January, 2025.

### **President's Report:**

President Holly Batstone reported that the council met monthly on Zoom and had one extended meeting during which time the council was able to do a deeper dive on some subjects. It's anticipated that multiple extended meetings will also occur in 2022. Holly shared that a council liaison was assigned to each member of the congregation, communicating with the congregation through various methods. The goal was to provide the congregation with a direct connection to the council to whom questions and issues could be referred. This also provided an opportunity for each person to get to know the other. The council plans to continue this activity in 2022, although the liaison-to-members assignments may change.

Holly stated that COVID-19 was a constant topic of discussion during all of the council's meetings and commended the COVID-19 task force for doing an incredible job. The task force monitored the ever-changing situation throughout the year and continually updated and provided recommendations to the council.

Holly then congratulated the entire congregation for the amazing accomplishment of paying off the mortgage in 2021, commenting that this was probably the biggest highlight, financially, of the entire year. We now own our church! Holly thanked the congregation for their continued generosity and for the significance of such a celebratory achievement.

Last, Holly discussed how the council has revisited our Vision 2025 goals. She reminded the membership that those who created the vision had no idea that a pandemic would impact our world soon after the *Vision for Mission – 2025* was published. Holly described how the council is determined to move forward with this work, in spite of a pandemic, by being creative, thinking outside of the box and praising the Lord and doing good work in His name.

### **Pastor's Report:**

Pastor Berg reminded the congregation that his annual report is printed in FLC's *Annual Report*. It primarily focused on the pandemic, so he used the annual meeting as an opportunity to discuss other items. Pastor Berg noted that he will have been at FLC for 12 years as of June, 2022 and his sabbatical is coming up in 2 years.

Pastor Berg shared that he is just now realizing the scope of the struggle that he has had over these last 32 or so months. A lot of it has to do with the number of changes that have taken place, whether it's changes in worship or meeting habits, how we are connected and the biggest change - how we interact with our community, especially as clergy. He mentioned other events that impact the church, such as book bans and the rise of white fascism. We are a church that believes in freedom of self and freedom of communities. What is our reaction to this kind of authoritarian presence among us and how do we have a voice in this?

Pastor Berg stated he believes that revitalizing our effort on Vision 2025 will be a great propeller to move us into God's preferred future for us. He is looking forward to being more creative to find new ways to gather and to reconnect with each other as we come out of the pandemic. He then read the paraphrase from 1 Timothy 6:11-12 that he had written at the end of his annual report, asked that we continue to be the light in the world that it needs and thanked the congregation for allowing him to be its pastor.

### **COVID-19 Report:**

Johannes Skjonsby reported that the task force continues to meet regularly, and provided an updated presentation from the task force's last report that was presented in April, 2021. Statistics included current data for King County and vaccine statuses for both King and Snohomish counties. The task force uses recommendations from the health departments, King County, the CDC and state and federal information as well. The current recommendation is that large groups can continue to meet, assuming that everyone is fully vaccinated, including a booster shot for those who qualify. Masks are required for anyone 5 years of age and older, with proper coverage over the nose and mouth. The N95 and surgical-grade masks are more beneficial in lowering the transmission rate. If cloth masks are used, the recommendation is to wear two cloth masks.

Johannes then discussed the possibility of a new Omicron variant as well as some reporting that Omicron may be transitioning to an endemic stage. He ended the presentation by stating that if anyone has any questions or concerns, to please reach out to any member of the council or Pastor Berg or contact the task force directly. All questions do get passed to the task force. Christy Freriks provided the following link in chat for anyone who would like to order free at-home tests from the federal government: <https://www.covidtests.gov>

### **2022 First Lutheran Church Budget:**

Dan and Ann Bormann presented the proposed budget for the General Fund for 2022. Dan stated that although the mortgage was paid off in April 2021, we continue to collect funds for capital improvements to pay for existing building repairs such as the entryway beams, parking lot repairs, skylight repairs and to accumulate funding for a new roof in the future. Dan provided specifics on pledges for 2022 compared to 2021. He also mentioned that for those who give through an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), it is a very tax-efficient way of giving to the church.

Dan noted that there is an updated copy of the budget; the data did not change but some dates shown were incorrect. The 2021 year ended with income exceeding expenses by \$4,867. Ending the year in the black was due to strong financial support from the membership; in-person Christmas Eve services; and because expenses ran significantly below the budgeted amount, primarily due to the cancellation of several programs and in-church activities. The \$4,867 will be transferred to the Reserve Fund.

The proposed 2022 budget has a negative ending balance of \$28,084. Dan explained that we are allowed to approve a deficit budget as long as the church has reserves to cover it. The Reserve Fund balance for the beginning of 2022 is \$121,543, which is more than adequate to cover the proposed budget deficit. To achieve the proposed budget, some committee expense requests had to be reduced. For example, Social Ministries has a fund account with a balance of \$11,000 that can be used to support some of their requests. These funds came from the profits of Scrip sales, which shows the value of the Scrip program.

Dan stated that flower expenses were also increased because we are worshipping in-person again. This expense could be reduced if members who have a special occasion would like to fund the flowers for that week. Pink forms are available on the bulletin board near the children's corner in the inner narthex for that purpose. The Building & Property section of the budget had the most significant change: the committee requested \$60,000 to repair the beams in the entryway and \$10,000 for parking lot repairs. These expenses will be covered by the Capital Improvement Fund, which has a current balance of \$70,710. Accruals for the Building & Property reserve fund and the van replacement fund have been suspended for 2022.

Regarding Personnel, the budget provides for a 4% increase in all salaries and a 3% increase in the pension and benefit expenses for full-time employees. A new line, account 5.9055, was added under Personnel for \$780.00 to support the mileage expenses associated with the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary seminarian who was placed with FLC. This increase in expense was offset by a reduction in the mileage budgeted for other personnel.

Dan clarified how fund accounting works for churches. The budget for the General Fund is for the operation of the church and is the only budget for which the congregation can vote. The church has about \$300,000 worth of other funds that are restricted and can only be used for certain purposes. He then provided examples of some of these restricted funds and their current values.

All inquiries were responded to and a vote was taken to approve the proposed General Fund budget. There was a total of 79 responses. The 2022 budget was unanimously approved.

### **Washington Poor People's Campaign:**

Stephanie Almeida proposed a motion from the church council to support the Washington Poor People's Campaign (WAPPC), as follows:

*"Whereas First Lutheran Church of Bothell identifies itself publicly as a welcoming congregation and we, as a congregation, have an established Vision for Mission - 2025 which guides our council's decisions and future planning, therefore the FLC Church Council moves to align and join with the Washington Poor People's Campaign in order to leverage and support their cause and endeavors while furthering our own vision to "be partners with our community to promote the well-being of our neighbors" and to "care for all of God's creation."*

A discussion ensued, primarily around the church's financial obligations, if any. It was clarified that the motion is for FLC to show support and show that we are aligning ourselves with the WAPPC; there is no financial obligation. All questions that were asked were answered. A total of 81 votes were cast, including 1 voice vote. The motion was approved with results of the voting as follows: Approved – 76; Opposed – 3; Abstained – 2.

### **Council Elections:**

Kaaren Hatlen, chairperson of the Nominating Committee, stated that there are 5 open positions due to the departure of 4 members off of council plus 1 vacant seat that remained unfilled in 2021. Kaaren announced that Jean Peterson, Jess Faubion and Kristi Pyne have all agreed to run for council. Two additional members were needed and Kaaren asked for any self-nominations.

Holly explained that FLC's constitution requires a minimum of 12 members on the council (up to a maximum of 18). If all 3 of the current nominees were to be elected, the council would still not meet the minimum requirement. If the minimum requirement cannot be met, then the congregation would need to discuss going through the process to change and ratify the constitution to lower the minimum requirement.

Questions were addressed and Gary Curtis and Karen Johnson both volunteered from the floor. Pastor Berg asked Karen to fill Roger W.'s position, thereby serving a 1-year term as Roger had to leave council with 1 year remaining of his 3-year term. Karen agreed to do so. Including 1 voice vote, 82 responses were received. All proposed nominees were elected, as per the following results: Jess Faubion, Kristi Pyne, Jean Peterson and Gary Curtis each received 82 votes; Karen Johnson received 75 votes.

### **Changes in Constitution Provisions:**

Holly declared that we do not need to pursue any immediate changes to the constitution because the minimum required number of council members was fulfilled. The council has discussed some minor changes and may decide to pursue those this year. If council does move ahead with any recommendations, the congregation will be given at least 30 days' notice prior to presenting any changes to the congregation for a vote.

### **Nominating Committee Elections:**

First Lutheran Church's constitution dictates that the Nominating Committee has six voting members, each serving a one-year term. Committee members may be elected for two consecutive terms. In addition, the constitution recommends that two members of the committee are outgoing council members. Lloyd Condra has agreed to serve on the committee. Pastor Berg nominated Andrea Peoples as the second outgoing council member. With self-nominations from the floor, the slate of nominees included: Lloyd Condra; Pat Daane (2<sup>nd</sup> year); Andrea Peoples; Tom Payne; Derrick StaRosa and Carsten Thode. There were 77 votes cast, including 1 voice vote, and all 6 nominees were unanimously elected with 77 votes for each.

### **NW Washington Synod Assembly Meeting Lay Voting Members:**

Holly announced that the Synod Assembly meeting will be held on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynnwood. She requested 5 self-nominations, specifically: 1 woman; 2 men; 1 youth (under age 18) and 1 young adult (under age 30). These specifications were defined by the Synod so that the assembly has equal representation. Pastor Berg described the work of the assembly, including voting on the Senate budget; elections to leadership roles and working on resolutions that encourage the church to pursue certain areas, such as in areas of justice. Questions were answered and Jacky Schnarre and Paul Flatness volunteered. A total of 70 members, including 1 voice vote, cast their ballots in the NW Washington Synod Assembly Meeting lay voting members election. The two nominees were elected, with Paul Flatness receiving 69 votes and Jacky Schnarre receiving 70 votes. Pastor Berg stated that the remaining seats will be appointed by the council.

### **Closing Prayer:**

Pastor Berg led the congregation in a closing prayer.

### **Adjournment:**

Council President Holly Batstone adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ho Brown  
Congregation/Council Secretary