

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, Lansdale, PA  
December 17, 2024 - Council Governance Meeting

The December 17th Council Governance meeting was called to order by William Shimer, President, at 7:02 p.m., in Room 264 followed by devotion by Pastor Fowler and prayer by Pastor Steiner.

**In Attendance:** Sandy Cottrell, Curt Deardorff, David Freudig, Julie Kinzel, Susan Pashos, Jamie Price, William Shimer, Michael Voicheck, Pastor Steiner, and Pastor Fowler. Absent: none. Visitor: none.

The agenda with an amendment was approved by a motion made by Sandy Cottrell and second by Jamie Price. The minutes from the November 26<sup>th</sup> Council Governance Meeting were previously approved electronically and are posted on the web site. The Council Covenant was read responsively.

**Financial highlights:** At the end of November- revenue was up \$69,578 (\$1,345,496 vs. budget of \$1,275,918) and expenses were down \$25,977 (\$1,414,702 vs. budget of \$1,440,679), thus showing an actual net surplus of \$95,555 over budget. The Finance Committee is still forecasting the 2024 deficit to be approximately \$50,000 instead of the planned deficit of \$121,632. Questions were raised and discussion held regarding the now-expected deficit vs. initial deficit projection vs. the savings we now expect due to recent staff restructuring. Prior to the congregational meeting in February Jamie plans to do her usual congregational financial review in an effort to enhance the congregation's understanding. Jamie also reported that after the Finance Committee further discussed the handling of outside contracts, they decided to keep trying to fill the Business Manager position as the ultimate managing process for contracts.

**Lansdale Women's Code Blue shelter:** Because of financial implications potentially, Jamie Price took the lead to review and responded to questions regarding the start of the Lansdale Women's Code Blue shelter and how it will partner and interact with shared resources within Trinity and specifically with Trinity's Code Blue shelter for men. Council discussed and suggested Finance Committee use separate financial accounting for the two shelters and noted the need to request a copy of the insurance policy from Lansdale Borough especially in the context of managing liability risks. Additionally, the arrangement should be revisited at the end of this Code Blue season.

**Highlight:** A motion, made by Susan Pashos and seconded by Julie Kinzel, to approve using a separate Trinity flow-through Code Blue Fund account for the Lansdale Borough Women's shelter – passed.

**Follow up on Letters to Congregation Members:** Sandy Cottrell reported letters to three congregational members went out on December 10<sup>th</sup> who had outstanding questions and had not been at the last Congregational Meeting to hear more about staff restructuring.

**Worship Service Radio Broadcast:** Sandy Cottrell reported on the ongoing process to assess the listening audience for our Sunday morning service broadcasting. Various forms of surveying for these data have been done on the implications of continuing the radio broadcasting. Sandy summarized the efforts to date (contacting sponsors, asking Eucharistic Ministers about their homebound members visited; making announcements during the 10:45am service which is broadcast and presumably identifying people who are listeners) to make these determinations. Mike Voicheck offered to investigate the possibility of using North Penn High School district radio system. A decision should be made by end of January, with the potential to end-our broadcasting at the end of February, should that be the direction taken.

**Pending Constitution Amendment Process:** Bill Shimer gave an update on necessary letters to the congregation regarding the constitution amendment previously identified and approved by Council. The forms of notifying the congregation by US mail or e-mail were noted; the contact needs to go out no less than 30 days before the congregational meeting where a vote will be taken. Bill will draft the letter for review.

**Mutual Ministry Update:** Julie Kinzel gave an update on Mutual Ministry with slides showing their work to date (anticipating a three-pronged breakout to support ordained staff, employee staff, and the congregation). Copies of the slides will be sent to Council members for their reference and comments. The next Mutual Ministry Meeting will be January 21, and Julie expects to have a proposed policy at the January Council meeting.

**Endowment:** Julie Kinzel gave an update from the Endowment Committee and reported minutes from committee are on Google drive. There is \$0.00 balance at end of 2024, which is the “goal” annually, and the rolling average amount for 2025 will be voted on at the January Council meeting (estimated ~\$60,000 across all categories for distribution).

**Pastor’s Report:**

Staffing Adjustments: Pastor Fowler noted that Karen Brown agreed to postpone her retirement until the Connections Coordinator position is filled. Pr Ric’s last day serving Trinity in his pastor role is Dec. 31, 2024; he will be acknowledged on Jan. 12<sup>th</sup>. The kitchen inspection (Board of Health) on Dec. 13<sup>th</sup> had zero citations and was managed by our volunteers superbly. There is a candidate for an interim (mutual evaluation period of 90 days) Director of Building & Grounds, and Council discussed the reason for the use of ‘interim’.

A Council discussion was held regarding a proposed Strategic Design Task Force/Council debriefing to discuss lessons learned from the staffing restructuring process. It was felt a special meeting for discussions other than at a Council Governance meeting needs to be held to have adequate time to discuss this topic. Pastor Fowler will contact Task Force and Council members to get an available date in the first quarter for the meeting. (POST MEETING NOTE: The session will be held Jan. 22 at 7pm.)

Open House: There is a “cookies and cocoa” open house at the pastor’s home on Sunday.

**Miscellaneous Topics:** An added agenda item regarding a lead pastor’s evaluation was discussed. The Council President and Vice President have met in a preliminary meeting and would like to expand input to include Executive Committee at a minimum. During the last Congregational Meeting regarding staffing changes the topic was raised. A scenario to seek input from others in congregation was described as a potential opportunity called “360° feedback”. Sandy made the comment that to distance Council from being called “too corporate” the process should not be labeled as a 360° feedback regardless of the actual process. Discussion was then held regarding the lead pastor’s review process; any comments by the council were asked to be made to the Executive Committee within the next week by e-mail.

**Congregation Annual Meeting:** The meeting is February 9 (after the single 9:30am service on that day, with practice session on February 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.).

The Council meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm with the Lord’s Prayer. The next Council meeting will be January 28th.

Respectfully Submitted  
Dianne Kalb, Recording Secretary