

Holy Trinity Core Team via Zoom

Minutes: August 20, 2020

Mike Huss*, Rev. Chad Gilbertson*, Carol Ottoson*, Tina Chant, Darla Bauchle*, Don Oram, Jeff Erlandson*, Randi Erlandson, Rene Meyer, Karen Nau, Paula Green, Lynnette Dobberpuhl* (*denotes members of Core Team)

Finance: (Jeff) Finances appear pretty consistent over the summer. Giving continues to remain steady compared to last year, the slightly higher expenses of concern last month turned out to be due to a few bills that came in. Thanks go to Kelly for timely financial reporting and insights.

Years ago a part of the building fund was put in an account at US Bank which has been charged a monthly service fee. Finance proposes moving that fund of \$62,000 to avoid those monthly fees. Carol moved that we move that money into a special building account with Edward Jones, where the remaining \$212,000 from the building fund is invested in CDs. Darla seconded. Passed with all in agreement.

Jeff reported that Kelly noted Holy Trinity has another Edward Jones account containing two stocks that were donated some years ago. Finance proposes we divest and turn over the proceeds into the mutual fund account (separate from the building fund account.) Chad said that it is standard practice to do that immediately with donated stocks. Jeff was given the all-clear for Kelly to go ahead as recommended. Chad noted the annual conference has a service that assists with these transactions if needed.

Budgets for 2021 will be due in the next few months, which might be tricky considering planning is hampered by uncertainty. We must do the best we can. Leaders should be prayerfully thinking about needs/wants/ and aspirations.

(Chad): Holy Trinity is applying for forgiveness for our \$35,000 PPP loan, so it can be considered a grant. He and the Core Team express gratitude for our faithful friends who continue to care for the church even while worshipping apart.

Team Updates:

SPRT (Don Oram, chair reporting): team took July off but otherwise have been very successful meeting monthly on Zoom. They continue to support the decisions not to meet or worship indoors, and want to make sure the staff feel affirmed and appreciated in this time. There are frustrations, for instance it would be nice to have a choir together, but for now they feel this is the right path.

Trustees (Mike reporting on their behalf): they are not meeting regularly, but Jim has been tending to issues, and has assembled hand sanitizing stations. Routine maintenance on roof, cleaning and yard work is completed or continues to be done

weekly. Other new projects are on hold. Trustees may want to do more work on the parsonage when we return to some normalcy. The old sign has been put back up with solar powered lights in a new location. Sandy Hjemvick refreshed the paint also. They are considering getting a bid on the Fall Cleanup rather than have volunteers as usual, as they have not gotten any new volunteers for that in the last few years.

Hospitality (no report)

Music (Randi) Music continues for online worship. Normally this is the time of year that we would begin rehearsals for ensembles. As choir director, she feels that is not the right time to start singing together. She is watching best practices as they develop. She loves her choir and feels they are an important ministry, but doesn't want them at risk. Once we are able to worship in person will reconsider. As we prepare for outdoor worship, there is a set-up issue getting equipment and could use a team of volunteers for that, and also for song leading especially since Randi will be going back to school.

Congregational Care (Karen Nau): Holy Helpers and the Care Team have been busy this summer. Holy Helpers have been weeding, mowing and taking meals for two households, using youth and adult volunteers. The Care Team has been meeting with people in need of connection about once per month. Karen has taken over the card ministry for Gail Landor who has been dealing with the loss of her son. Karen is asking that people let her know when a card is needed for sympathy, get well, special birthdays or other needs, or if there is someone homebound who is in need of some other kind of care. The team will have a Zoom meeting at the end of August. Chad noted that we also had Shepherding groups which were assembled to have regular contact with members of the church, which have been helpful in continuing connection.

Bread Oven (Rene Meyer): Debbie, Linda and Rene have met a few times and feel it isn't safe to be baking right now due to difficulties in using kitchen safely, and distributing food safely, particularly pizza events. They are interested in taking the pulse of the congregation how they feel about it. Will probably need to start over with gearing up with volunteers when they are back at it. Please keep BOM informed as groups plan to start meeting, as they will probably need a few months lead time to get back up to speed. Less concerned about food safety and distancing, as they think they can figure that out well, but need to be sure that people really want to receive bread from our kitchen.

Missions (Paula): Monthly missions continue, needs to know if there are any ideas or needs we want to focus on in Oct Nov Dec. Tina suggested that people have trouble knowing what the monthly missions are, since they aren't getting the info during regular worship and seeing weekly bulletins or the basket passing. Could use better communication, such as a mass email, continue using the SAIL, mention monthly giving

in Trini-Ties, and in online and live worship (use visuals like a slide). Remind people that it is an option to use automatic giving to mission as well as to general church needs.

Children/Youth/Families: (Lynnette) Weekly Sunday school messages online resumed in August but have not yet started Zoom interactives for the age groups as we did last spring. The Zooms are fun and engaging for the kids who do well on that platform, but requires some extra setup and lead time to do well. We did an online VBS, which involved the setup of supplies for three days of activities, and the use of videos at home to lead kids through the activities, stories and music. The curriculum was very colorful and had a great message, but it was a totally different experience and with people doing it at their own pace there is no critical mass to help feel the power. Much better than nothing, and we had a youth volunteer help with setup. Nine other youth helped with yardwork, and two youth helped stack firewood for BOM. A number of children and youth have helped with the weekly Sunday school program, contributing pictures and videos for the weekly message. Figuring out Sunday school and youth gatherings going forward remains a challenge both for safety and for meeting needs/wants. Lynnette has been working primarily from home with quick trips into church as needed for supplies or video work.

Office: (Tina) Tina has been working from office one day a week and the rest from home, everything seems to be working well. Some tasks need to be done in the office, and Tina feels that is fine. She is able to check phone messages from home. Special words of affirmation for her work!

Garden: (Don) The geese ate the corn. The Peace Pole looks great (was covered until the dedication this Sunday.) Some crops are producing, but much thanks is due to people who have been donating from their home gardens. The weekly donations to the food shelf are greatly exceeding 100 lbs. Herbs are producing better than ever despite a setback due to wasps. A bench has arrived which will be installed in Otti's memory, secured on a concrete pad.

Outdoor Worship: (Randi) Starting this Sunday, August 23, we will be doing outdoor worship each week until weather does not permit. Will not be doing this in the rain/sleet/snow, or once the temps get too cold. Online worship will remain available weekly (a similar or parallel music/message as the in-person worship.) Pastor Chad is looking for one or two people who will serve as ushers for the outdoor worship service each week so we can greet and keep attendance (list and/or take photos)

Church Re-Opening update (Chad): We are hearing both a desire from church members to regroup, and also to stay safe. Currently in MN the number of confirmed cases, hospitalizations and death are on the rise again. The annual conference and task force feel like we are wise to continue to stay the course until at least November 1, meeting outdoors as we are able, but not gathering indoors. This is not by preference but out of seeking to do no harm. We have been

making a special effort to increase opportunities for small groups and worship (online and outdoors) to keep people connected in their preferred manner. The staff all feels that they are not hindered greatly by working primarily from home. Darla mentioned that she had not been aware of the Task Force decision of putting off until Nov 1 to decide about returning to indoor worship and felt that maybe the Core Team should have been informed of the details before they were released to the congregation. Mike said he has been hearing from members who wish they could at least come in and pray. Randi responded that the difficulty with anyone using the church building is the cleaning of the church between people, and Tina pointed out that tracking is also an issue in the event someone becomes sick, and contact tracing is needed. If people are allowed into the building, who does the cleaning, the management of visitors? Chad: we as a church need to be sure that the staff and volunteers who use the church for needed tasks like recording worship or newsletter and communications are safe. Le Sueur UMC has replaced the pews with metal chairs and are preparing to open up. (Carol pointed out Le Sueur county's numbers are very low, compared to Scott County, and that a large majority of UMC churches are not meeting in person.) It was suggested that before making decisions about worship indoors we should see how school goes first, (some are predicting that within a week or two, school will go back to online.) We want to respect people who are capable of making their own decisions, but providing worship involves requiring staff to lead. When we do return, it will look different than in the past, and what is provided may feel disappointing to people. Randi compared returning to indoor worship as a dimmer switch vs an on-off light switch. It will take longer than we want to get to feeling normal, no matter when we start indoor worship. Pastor Chad asked Mike if he thought that an outdoor prayer space would be able to meet some of the needs of the people asking, while also honoring the precautions needed for safety. Mike pointed out that grocery stores, and many other businesses have people coming and going and still surviving. He proposed that there be a couple of volunteers who meet people who come in make sure they are masked, and clean before and after and keep spaced. He told Core Team that people are also suggesting that the task force was handpicked for one perspective and that the side of people who want reopening now isn't represented. Tina pointed out that the conversation at the last Task Force meeting was very directed toward preparing to meet together indoors. The Task Force needs to prepare and communicate a benchmark of community transmission to open and a plan for cleaning and spacing, etc. so we are ready. The Task Force has a template that needs to be filled out and are working toward that.

The next Core Team meeting will be held on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. September 14, 2020.