

Holy Trinity Core Team via Zoom Minutes: November 16, 2020

Present: Mike Huss, Darla Bauchle, Carol Ottoson, Jeff Erlandson, Collan Zehnder, Lynnette Dobberpuhl, Pastor Chad Gilbertson, Deanna Hawkins,
Begun in prayer.

Finance:

(Review) Years ago, Holy Trinity had amassed a large reserve fund due to generous giving and conservative spending. In recent years, Holy Trinity has been expanding ministry, including hiring staff people, and as a result has been spending more than brought in, a decision deliberately made to use our resources to bless the community and hopefully draw more members interested in growing with us. We haven't seen a large increase in membership and giving that might have been expected a few years ago as Prior Lake was booming. We have new members in process of joining, but also have had at least two households transfer membership to other churches. Giving continues to trend slightly down. Expenses are about as low as they can be, in part due to the pandemic, and the only remaining area for budget reduction is staff salaries. Either a budget with deficit spending needs to be approved, or the Core Team needs to give SPRT a clear goal of how much cutting to salaries/positions needs to happen. No increases to payroll are being recommended by SPRT. One open music position (worship ensemble director) is being closed, which relieves the deficit somewhat.

It is ideal that a budget for 2021 be set, but it was decided to wait until the pledges for 2021 come in before big decisions are made. If a budget with deficit spending was approved, it could be amended at any point in 2021.

Looking at reserve accounts (unallocated or general, not labeled as Trust, Memorial, or Building) there is about \$107,000 remaining. There has been no policy set on how interest earned on these accounts are used, or how much of a reserve fund would be considered the minimum required. There are some stocks that were left to the church years ago, that the Core Team recommended cashing out. Carol moved that the policy going forward be that we cash out all stocks that are made as gifts immediately and that money be placed in funds as they are designated or in a general account if they not. (Deanna seconded, passed unanimously.)

Pastor Chad encouraged the team to have grace for the coming year. We are in the midst of a pandemic and the General Conference 2021 and its outcomes are a situation we have been grappling with, and will continue to do so for some time. We are in unprecedented flux, and next year we will have a better idea of where we are health wise, and church wise. At this time, rather than slashing budgets, let's dig into the reserves as reasonable. We will be welcoming a new member this week, and there are two others who would be joining this week but are experiencing health issues, and an additional family has expressed an interest in joining in 2021.

Mission giving is down, likely due to a lack of in-person communication and inconsistent outdoor gatherings due to weather. We need to keep communicating mission giving focus, and let people know they can sign up for automatic options for mission giving as well as regular giving.

Trustees have moved to only fixing things as needed, and there are no big projects planned for 2021. We pay \$1,000 a year in insurance for the van, but determined that changing to comprehensive would add another layer of technical difficulty when we are able to do group activities again.

Update on COVID 19 and Church Re-Opening: (Chad): There has been a surge of infection and hospitalizations, resulting in schools moving to distance learning. Several members and friends of Holy Trinity have been exposed, many are diagnosed and are so far recovering at home. The annual conference has resumed the highest restrictions on gathering, and have said now is not the time to begin meeting in person, even in small groups. We have in the past set goal dates for reopening, but have had to make adjustments every time, and now Pastor Chad is recommending we “wait and see” for future meeting in the building. In the meantime we are planning a number of outdoor and online experiences to inspire us and keep us connected through the Advent season.

Youth Education Update: (Lynnette) Online youth groups are getting off the ground, and I am reworking plans for Sunday school during Advent as well as the Children’s Christmas program. One new thing is a hopeful plan for two mission trips for youth in summer 2021, a new experience with YouthWorks missions for high school and up to SD June 27-July 2 and our tried and true STORM camp for kids entering 8th-grads of 2021. The YouthWorks team offers a Covid guarantee in case people have to drop or a destination is compromised. Pray for a vaccine!

Succession: Some new people have been invited to serve on Core Team. Pastor Chad has received two yes, one no, one maybe.

All Church Conference: Sunday Dec 6 via zoom 11:00 a.m.

The next Core Team meeting will be held on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. December 7, 2020.