



Approved Council Minutes December 9, 2024

Members Present: Pastor Hans Dahl, Katie Rentschler, Bruce Luehmann, Mark Christenson, Kathy Hungness, Brett Boyum, Mark Stromswold, Ann Stehn, Deb Dittberner, and Cheryl Whitchurch

Absent: Pastor Angie Larson and Jeff Rodel

The council meeting was called to order by Mark Christenson at 6:00 pm.

Mission Sightings:

- Carols & Cocktails on Thursday and Friday - Special thanks to all!
- Giving Tree
- Big Hearts MN – goal of 450 meals to be given
- Endowment Committee disbursed \$27,000, including \$6,000/year to Make Room
- Gift received from Newcomers group for their use of the Loft
- Volunteers and invitations this last week
- Kids & Carols
- Congregation support of week church was closed
- Calvary music ministry in the community

Pastor Hans led a reflection activity and discussion in preparation for future council work with consultants to identify and establish Calvary priorities for the next couple of years. Work with the consultants is tentatively set for March 2025.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Hans led the group in opening prayer.

Leadership: Council Priorities for 2024

- Sustaining Ministry: Appeal
- Facility: Improvement Study
- Engagement: Dashboard
- Staff: Sabbatical & Next Gen Minister Hiring
- Lead Pastor Review

Sustaining Ministry: Appeal: Katie reported that we have received just over \$2.1 million in Make Room commitments from 167 households. Monthly announcements will continue to be made. A significant principal payment on our mortgage was made, bringing the balance to just under \$3.2 million.

Facility: Improvement Study: Katie reported that we should have an estimate of costs by the end of the year for the basement abatement.

Engagement: Dashboard: There will be a dashboard update in January.

Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of November Meeting
- Staff Reports
- Fund Approvals

A motion to accept the consent agenda as presented was made by Mark S. and seconded by Deb. The motion was carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report:

November Financials: Bruce reported that revenue is down overall in 2024 from 2023 but we remain on budget. Expenses are 2% below budget and income is ahead of budget. It is projected that we will be slightly over break even at the end of the year.

Bruce reported that a principal payment of \$121,000 was made on our mortgage. Our monthly mortgage payments locked in at \$19,012.83 for the next 58 months. We currently have a \$190,000 mortgage reserve balance with a target level of \$200,000 in reserve. A Calvary Mortgage Reserve Strategy was highlighted.

Calvary Mortgage Reserve Strategy:

1. Maintain approximate \$200,000 target reserve level (about 10.5 months based on \$19,013 monthly payment)
 - Keep one-half in a liquid money market / checking account
 - Place up to one-half in a low-risk investment such as a 3 or 6 month Certificate of Deposit
2. Review reserve balance at least quarterly – Treasurer and Business Administrator
 - If trending above target level, take excess over target plus any interest earned on invested monies and pay against mortgage principal.
 - If trending low, consider reaching out to request early payment of campaign pledges, or other fund raising.

A motion to accept the Calvary Mortgage Reserve Strategy as policy was made by Deb and seconded by Mark S. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Brett and seconded by Kathy. Motion passed unanimously.

Old Business:

Financial Exploration: A stub year six month budget, January through June, will be presented for the congregation to approve at the Annual Congregational Meeting on February 2, 2025. We continue to work towards the concept of budgeting for margin in the future.

New Business:

Thriving Congregations Grant: 2025 will be the last year of the Partner Network Grant. The Thriving Congregations Grant is a noncompetitive grant opportunity for another 5 years of congregation-matched grant funds for partnership next steps. We have also applied for a \$15,000 grant to discern how to move forward with the Partner Network to maximize impact with the resources we have. Grant funds would allow for staff attendance at a faith and finance conference and a retreat for key partners to reflect on the long-term partnership.

Council Membership: Council member terms will shift to July-June, consistent with the business year. Kathy and Deb's terms are up in 2025. Pastor Hans will take next steps for Deb's replacement to be on the Annual Congregational Meeting ballot on February 2, 2025. Kathy will continue her term through June.

Annual Meeting Planning: Staff suggested a general theme for the meeting to celebrate who we are as a church - Not Normal. Items for approval on February 2nd include: change in the fiscal year, approval of the budget, approval of council membership.

Stub Year Approval: Katie and Bruce presented a proposed budget for January - June, 2025 for discussion and questions.

Top Three Takeaways:

- Financial Awareness
- Discussion on looking forward strategically
- Church building is gorgeous and welcoming for the season

A closed executive session was held following the council business.

A motion was made by Kathy and seconded by Brett to approve the 2025 stub year budget as presented with adjustments discussed. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned @ 8:20 pm.

The next council meeting will be held on **January 13 @ 6:00 p.m.**