

Trinity Lutheran Church

Church Council meeting, Tuesday, August 22, 2017

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by President Jeff Riddle.

Attendees: Jeff Riddle, Becky Liegl, Nancy Johnson, Pastor Bryan, Pastor Andy, Pastor Dione, Charlene Kuenzi, Marshall Lysne, Diane Opperman, Nancy Ross, Mark Harrington, and Don Morgan (special guest: Mike Steuerwald, building and grounds supervisor).

Prayer: Pastor Andy

Devotions: Diane Opperman, Education and the Bible

Secretary's Report: The report was distributed and reviewed. Motion to approve the secretary's report by Nancy Ross, seconded by Charlene Kuenzi, motion approved.

Treasurer's Report: The report was distributed and reviewed. Nancy Johnson sent \$10,000 from the Vanuato account to cover some of the costs of Dr. Robinson's orphanage in South America. The monthly mortgage payment is not currently being covered by the monthly giving. During the WOW service, there will be a presentation on electronic giving.

Pastors' Reports:

► Pastor Bryan:

Throughout the month of July, I did my normal work of preaching, pastoral care, leading worship, and visiting those of us in the hospital. I performed the committal service for a non-member, James Buehler, on July 21, and provided care for the family of Jake Peglow, who was killed in an accident on July 26.

I took some vacation time from July 13-18, including one Sunday, while I was hosting my sister from Virginia on a visit. I also took two days of continuing education, July 19-20, at a seminar led by Drs. Rolf Jacobson and Hans Wiersma on preaching and teaching the Reformation.

A great deal of my administrative time was spent communicating with applicants for our administrative assistant and building and property supervisor positions. Along with providing coordination for our interview processes, I was involved with developing our wage offers and relaying our job offers to the candidates who the committees recommended.

Of special interest was my involvement in exploring a gift from a local family to the church. The gift offered was in the form of land, and I have sought the aid of a parishioner, Steve Hansen, and his law office to make sure the land is not landlocked or encumbered by other legal claims.

On a personal note, I have been looking forward to Pr. Andy's return, hoping that his sabbatical was a time of refreshment, family, and growth.

Regards,

Pr. Bryan Robertson

Trinity Lutheran Church

► Pastor Andy:

Since I just returned from my sabbatical a week ago and since Trinity's Continuing Resolution No. 2 requires that I "submit a written report to the Council on the effectiveness of the [sabbatical] program including observations as to how well the original goals and benefits were realized," it only makes sense that I make this month's report my sabbatical report.

My family and I are deeply grateful to our congregation for the gift of the sabbatical leave, which I took from May 8 through Aug. 14. I thank God that, during that time, I had the opportunity to

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- Answer my younger son's request to take an afternoon nap in our parked car in the garage with, "Sure, Christian, and I'll take a nap here with you!"
- Answer my older son's request to attend one of his final days of preschool with him—a day I'll never forget—and then see Ben "graduate" from Tiny Treasures and Sunny Day's preschools.
- Attend a Brewers game at the gracious invitation of a church member.
- Join my family for my grandfather-in-law's 87th birthday party.
- Give blood.
- Take part in a Green Bay-area trivia contest benefitting the local Girl Scouts and in memory of my journalism colleague and mentor, Andy Nelesen.
- Perform in a night of comedy shows celebrating my Green Bay-area improv troupe's 30th anniversary.
- Re-watch the entire original "Twin Peaks" TV series just in time to watch the show's return 26 years later.
- Attend the commencement ceremonies for Trinity's graduates from Waupaca and Iola-Scandinavia high schools, as well as several graduation parties.
- Be evaluated and treated for some sleeping problems I've had in recent years, thanks especially to a Trinity member who offered to help.
- Travel to Indianapolis with Tracy to celebrate our 12th wedding anniversary and finally take her to see Huey Lewis and the News in concert.
- Jump in with Tracy as emergency Vacation Bible School teachers for Christian and other kids after the big storm in mid-June.
- Play golf on Father's Day weekend with my dad, uncle, and cousin; spend the next day with the rest of my Milwaukee-area family whom I hadn't seen for three years; and introduce my kids to their distant cousins.

- Cheer on Ben during his introductory season of T-ball games and bring him to and from the Waupaca Learning Center over four weeks of pre-kindergarten summer school.
- Take Tracy, Ben, and (especially) Christian to the Green Bay-area National Railroad Museum for a “Day Out With Thomas.”
- Visit my Minnesota family on three separate trips, the last of which to celebrate my grandmother’s 99th birthday.
- Start my study trip to Minnesota a few days early to attend the unforgettable funeral for my internship mentor, Pastor Chris Nelson, at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and commiserate with former colleagues and congregants from my internship site, Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.
- Attend weekend worship services at Bethlehem, Wooddale Church (Eden Prairie), Light of Christ Lutheran Church (Delano), and Lyndale Lutheran Church (Independence) while in Minnesota.
- Meet with six ministry professionals in and around the Twin Cities in pursuit of building a better family ministry (see below).
- Visit Trinity members Jim and Linda Stoltenberg while in Rochester for one of my meetings, coincidentally on the day after both their wedding anniversary and Jim’s stem-cell transplant.
- Spend four days with Tracy, the boys, and Tracy’s parents at my in-laws’ cabin on the Wisconsin-Upper Michigan border.
- Walk in downtown Waupaca’s July 4th parade, this time with Tracy and the boys to represent the Waupaca Historical Society.
- Get together with a handful of friends on several occasions.
- Join Terry Nellis and Marty Miller in accompanying a great group of eight young adults—Miranda Arndt, Jake Foss, Maddy Frank, Alex Gotto, Parker Kantos, Paige Kempf, Hannah Sprenger, and Ben Waitrovich—to Baton Rouge, La., and serve with Camp Restore on Trinity’s fourth annual Young Adults Service Trip (the presentation from which will be at worship services this weekend).
- Celebrate Tracy’s birthday—her 15th birthday since we started dating.
- Travel more than 2,000 miles with Tracy, Ben, and Christian over nine days on our first-ever long-distance road trip—Niagara Falls; Thomas Land at Edaville Family Amusement Park in Carver, Mass.; Plimoth Plantation in Plymouth, Mass.; and the New England Aquarium in Boston—one of the best experiences of my life, funded in part by a gracious Trinity member.
- Take Tracy, Ben, and Christian to Packers Family Night at Lambeau Field.
- Accomplish a satisfying degree of organization in my office, computer files, and garage while also whittling away at projects around my home.

- Send more than 100 overdue thank-you notes that had piled up in my office over the last few years, as promised, especially out of respect to Heidi Fischer, who started most of the unfinished notes while I embarrassingly got so far behind amid Trinity's transitions.
- Suffer no vertigo attacks and virtually no symptoms of my Meniere's disease.
- Advance two levels in Pokémon GO and, with the help of my kids and a group of local Waupaca players, catch more than 20 new Pokémon in the game.

I'm thankful beyond words for all these experiences and particularly grateful to Pastor Bryan, Pastor Dione, and Kim Miller, especially given the added workload with the departure of both Heidi Fischer and George Neubauer from our staff just after I left and the hiring of Lori Niemuth and Mike Steuerwald, who arrived the day before I returned. And I cannot thank Bryan, Dione, and Kim enough for the exceptional ministry they offered during my trip out East when our community was hit with the terrible tragedy of Jacob Peglow's death.

As noted in my sabbatical proposal, my major ministry goal was to identify methods and structures for successful family ministry at Trinity and seek holistic solutions to the quintessential question of how to involve parents of toddlers through teens in the workings of a congregation. As planned, especially since I was predictably unable to find any seminars on the topic of family ministry, I made my aforementioned independent-study trip to Minnesota in late June. And, although Pastor Chris Nelson's cancer and death obviously kept me from meeting with him and other pastors at Bethlehem Lutheran in Minneapolis whom I hoped to interview, I am grateful that I was able to have meetings, mostly over meals funded by my sabbatical budget, with six top-notch ministers whom I sought out for the study on family ministry:

- Brian Martin, family equipping pastor at Calvary Evangelical Free Church in Rochester, Minn. Brian, the son of Terry Martin (our interim youth coordinator two years ago), is the only pastor I know who focuses specifically on family. He explained what he has done to help his congregation make families—and, within them, parents in particular—a priority by ministering to the entire family at once. “If you want to reach the kids, you've got to reach the parents,” Brian told me. He presented me with key questions: “What does a family need?” (especially in terms of scheduling); and “How do we turn kids back to parents and parents back to kids?” Brian described Calvary's short-term series of parenting forums that are offered during child-education hours. He offered me a wealth of ideas for intergenerational ministry and also very graciously provided me with four books on family ministry while giving me an overview of different perspectives on the topic. Brian helped to broaden my mind immensely.
- Pastor Betsy Hoium, of Living Waters Lutheran Church in Lino Lakes, Minn. A member of Bethlehem Lutheran during my internship there before she herself attended seminary, Betsy described the activities for families offered by the churches she has served. A key take-away from the conversation was the value of using service activities as intergenerational ministry events.
- Steph Smith, director of faith integration at Bethlehem Lutheran in Minneapolis. I knew Steph to be an incredible generator and executor of ideas, especially having built an amazing moms'

ministry at Bethlehem prior to my internship. In our short conversation, Steph metaphorically took the fire that my conversation with Brian had started and poured gasoline all over it! Her thoughts were explosively enlightening. Part of her job focus is to get the church and its ministries out of “silos” and integrate people into different programs while integrating the church in the community. Fighting the typical trend of losing families along with a student after confirmation, Steph has developed compelling structures to involve parents more closely in confirmation through occasional, topical, shared experiences (similar to the confirmation presentations that Trinity already offers) and adapt the Minneapolis Public Schools’ program of Early Childhood Family Education into Bethlehem’s Teens Christian Family Education. Most exciting was her program of supportive conversations for parents fueled by participants’ own questions. I came away from my meeting with Steph already pretty resolved for how Trinity could implement similar programs.

- Pastor Mary Pechauer. Mary, my internship supervisor, kindly took time for me during a deeply difficult time at Bethlehem, where she had recently returned as an interim pastor before Pastor Chris Nelson’s death. Much of my conversation with Mary let me glean ideas that were beyond the specifics of family ministry. She offered me plenty of leads on follow-up education, and her expertise helped me think about ways to use biblical storytelling and mentoring— suggestions that were as helpful as Mary’s guidance always was during my internship.

- Heather Roth Johnson, pastoral intern and director of children and family ministry at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Edina, Minn. Heather offered me a wealth of ideas longer than I can list here, but the breakthrough she brought me was the idea of combining ministry resources with which I was already familiar—the Narrative Lectionary and “The Big Idea”—as family-ministry tools to connect an entire family on the same story and topic each week. Heather convinced me that sharing stories is key and that creating a community rather than a classroom is the ideal. I’m grateful for Heather’s expert focus on children and family ministry.

- Pastor Rob Norris-Weber, of St. Luke’s Lutheran Church in Bloomington, Minn. Rob, another pastor I was blessed to know during my internship, graciously allowed me to drop in and chat at his new church, where he showed off some physical ideas, most especially St. Luke’s new “Prayground” in the sanctuary for toddlers. He also offered me suggestions of resources for family faith formation and peer leadership, as well as the intergenerational idea of a “Seniors to Seniors” program that pairs high-schoolers with retirees. I’ve always valued Rob’s wisdom, and he was able to deliver more of that in really helpful ways.

I also gained some expertise on ministry to boys and men from Tim Wright’s book, *Searching for Tom Sawyer: How Parents and Congregations Can Stop the Exodus of Boys from Church*. And I began to investigate ways to pull individual ministries out of segregated silos and integrate them into the larger sphere of family life in the four books graciously gifted to me by Brian in Rochester. I also dug into several audio resources, the most helpful of which was Rob Bell’s *Launching Rockets: 17 Observations on Being a Parent*. Both Tiger McLuen, head of Youth Leadership, and Dr. Andy Root, associate professor, and Carrie Olson Baalson, chair of Youth and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary, were unfortunately unable to meet with me, but I picked up Traci Smith’s e-book, *Faithful Families: Creating Sacred Moments at Home*, which

Dr. Root suggested. The participants on the young adults' trip to Baton Rouge allowed me to poll them about how they managed to stay involved in our church and how their families were a part of that. Their responses were enlightening, as were some responses that Jake Foss helped me collect from his friend, who took the opposite course of departing from faith.

I have already constructed a list of recommendations for Trinity on moving forward with family ministry, but I'll hold off on presenting that list until after I discuss it with the Family & Youth Team next month.

Thanks again for a summer that I'll never forget and a pause for thought that will surely shape me in ministry for a long, long time!

► Pastor Dione:

When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy. – Psalm 94.19

The day after we last met as a council was a hard day as we learned of an accidental death of one of our youth, Jacob Peglow. In the report I gave the night before, I mentioned that God works in the midst of the whirlwind and didn't know how appropriate that would be for our days ahead as a community. In the midst of this great tragedy, I found myself struck all the more by the gift we have in the gospel. Because of the cross of Christ, we can call a thing for what it is – terrible and utterly heartbreaking – and God holds that pain fully with the promise of making all things new, solidified in the resurrection. It's hard to express how proud and humbled I was to see the Trinity community jump in to make sure that Jake's (incredibly large) funeral went exceptionally well in a time when nothing was right. It was the visible Body of Christ in action, and it truly brought me and many others Christ's consolation and joy in a time when anxiety and pain was within all of us. God is good indeed.

There have been many other instances of seeing the Body of Christ in action in the past month. I had the privilege of presiding at three baptisms and one wedding. I found myself sitting in a dunk tank (with anxiety great within me!), and looked out at tables filled with people laughing, eating, and enjoying a beautiful day together during our Polka Potluck. I shared meals with several members at their homes and had the joy of getting to know them more.

A group of eight of us found our way over to the Fox Valley Interfaith Association's annual Under the Tent interfaith event on a Sunday afternoon. We joined together with around 200 others of various faiths including representatives from Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Catholic, and Protestant Christian communities. This year's theme was "Faith and Poverty," which highlighted just one of the many ways our faiths overlap in our concern for the well-being of others. It was a great event that sparked exciting discussions. We all look forward to attending more in the future.

Looking ahead, it's easy to see many more instances of the mutually supportive Body of Christ in action. After hearing from several women that they wished there were more opportunities for small group gatherings and discerning a need to help form more opportunities for personal connections between members, in the middle of the month, I created and sent out an online survey to female members under age 50. The survey aimed to find out the best times, topics, and

general interest levels of women to form these groups. After getting a great response, I'm in the process of helping to coordinate the formation of those new groups that will roll out over the coming months, which I'm pretty excited about.

Another great point of excitement has been preparing for and welcoming two new members of our staff – Lori Niemuth, administrative assistant, and Mike Steuerwald, building and property supervisor. They have both been quick and eager learners, and it's really a joy to have them on board. I've spent quite a bit of time helping to train Lori, which has included first teaching myself how to do certain tasks, creating templates and procedures, and teaching her. It's been a bit labor intensive, but I enjoy that kind of work so it's also been gratifying.

Another equally exciting thing in the office has been Pastor Andy's return from sabbatical. It has been great to see him return rested, refreshed and reinvigorated. We've jumped into confirmation planning headfirst since he returned and haven't looked back. As we've planned for the upcoming confirmation year, the pastors and Kim have been intentional about focusing on how to form connections throughout the congregation so that we all – youth and adults alike – can fully participate and enjoy God's consolation and the joy the Body of Christ brings!

In Christ,

Pr. Dione

Committee Reports:

Buildings and Grounds: Don Morgan reported, the committee is thrilled to have successfully filled the position for building and grounds supervisor! Welcome to Trinity, Mike Steuerwald!

Personnel: Pastor Bryan suggested changes to the employee handbook in the area of vacation and an update of language to match the current practices.

Health: Jeff Riddle noted, there will be staff training on CPR and use of AED for all staff members. The committee will be readdressing the home visit list and looking at the possibility of doing a blood drive, providing Alzheimer's and dementia learning sessions once a month for six months, and possibly adding Al-Anon meetings at Trinity.

Mission Stewardship: Marshall Lysne noted there was no meeting this month, but there are some concerns with regard to contributions and paying the monthly expenses. Pastor Bryan is creating weekly segments on giving throughout October and November.

Parish education: Diane Opperman noted, the Lutherland group is putting the finishing touches on their presentation. They are still working on securing a speaker with regard to the Socio Political Luther. Pastor Bryan added, he ordered Reformation 500 materials.

Worship & Music: No meeting. Pastor Bryan noted, the choir directors are meeting to schedule for the year. Pam Lysne will be acting as interim adult choir director for the year. Nancy Ross added, members are encouraged to bring any Lutheran Heritage (especially Trinity) items to showcase.

Family & Youth Team: Pastor Andy noted, the team met last night for their annual cook out (in the basement due to the weather) and went through new confirmation plans which focus on integrating parents, prayer partners, and small group leaders more meaningfully. This new plan will maximize the impact of our guest speakers.

Information & Technology: No meeting, but Pastor Bryan has been in contact with Heartland in order to integrate new employees.

Old Business: Jeff Riddle discussed the plans for the audit committee, which will be in place by the end of October. The draft continuing resolutions for committees must be submitted to the executive committee by the next council meeting, in September. An email will be sent out this week as a reminder. These resolutions will be in the upcoming annual report. Then, by the end of October, a committee will be in place to select members for the new nominating committee. The nominating committee (of five members) will select candidates for available council positions. Finally, the gift of seven wooded acres is still being looked at and papers are being drawn up to complete the transfer.

New Business: Marshall Lysne suggested all council members be identified with nametags at each service and every official church event, so congregants know who represents them on council. Pastor Dione added that pictures of council members could be posted on the bulletin board. Marshall also added, the minutes of the council meetings should be added to the newsletter each month for transparency. The cost to print and mail the additional pages to members was discussed. He ended by stating member attendance and giving should be added to each weekly bulletin, so members can see how many attend and how much is given (without names). The more members know where the church is at financially, the more able Trinity will be to provide the services to members and the community. Discussion about the mission of the church was started and these items will be discussed at future council meetings. Finally, it was also noted that budgets need to be submitted in October and committees should be selective on what they wish to purchase.

Adjournment: Motion by Marshall Lysne, 2nd by Mark Harrington to adjourn. Motion Approved at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Liegl, Secretary