

**RICHLAND LUTHERAN CHURCH
CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 8, 2012**

Members Present: Ben Barr, Rob Barr, Scott Hardman, Mot Hedges, Kathy Killand, Dave Larkin, and Sandy Steele.

Members Absent/excused: Dave Brandes

Advisory Members Present: Pastor Steve Ernst and Rich Olsen

The Regular monthly meeting of the Richland Lutheran Church Congregation Council was held on Tuesday, May 8, 2012, at 7:03 p.m., President Mot Hedges being in the chair and the secretary being present. The meeting was opened with a devotional reading by Mot Hedges followed by prayer by Pastor Ernst.

Lead Pastor's Report - Pastor Ernst presented the Lead Pastor's Report:

1. Average church attendance through April 2012 was 367 compared to 408 through the same period in 2011.
 2. Planning on maintaining the two worship formats this summer; liturgical, hymn-based on Sunday's at 8:30 am and contemporary chorus-based on Saturdays at 5:00 pm and Sundays at 10:15 am.
 3. Pastor Hogan is meeting with Visitation/Eucharistic ministers on May 10th.
 4. Confirmation Sunday is scheduled for May 20th.
 5. Charter has rewired the church facilities for phone and internet upgrades by Elevate. The overall project cost is approximately \$12,000. Already saving \$400 a month in Frontier phone bills.
- **Council approved changing the time of the worship service to 4:00 pm on May 19, 2012.**
 - **Council approved the addition of the following new confirmed members on June 3, 2012: by Transfer, Clarice Ziner; by Confirmation of Faith, Lauren Crum, Thomas Griffin, Mary Ellen Thomas, Rob Crum, Brenda and Andy Hoyt, Patty and Pete Newton, Mary Riensche, Tammy and Allen Wahstrom, and Walker and Tom Miller.**

Financial Officer's Report – Rich Olsen presented the financial report showing that income through April for 2012, was \$282,021 as compared to \$250,160 through the comparable period in 2011 and was above the expected budget assumption of income of \$259,740. Expenditures to-date totaled \$233,344, below the budgeted \$246,132. The net cashflow for the year to-date is a positive \$48,677. The budget for 2012 is based on an assumed income of \$780,000.

Approval of Minutes

- **Council approved the minutes of the regular Council Meeting on April 10, 2012.**

Old Business

Staff Benefits Task Force Report – Task Force members Sandy Steele, Ken Meek, and Rich Olsen met three times. With help from Jon Putz and Debbie Stankovich they reviewed our current policies, other church's healthcare plans, and other healthcare provider plans. The Task Force report to Council recommended:

- To eliminate the 29% of base salary cap on total cost of benefits.
- For now retain existing Healthcare provider.
- For Medical/dental for RLC to pay 100% of all full time employee premium and 100% of the dependent premiums.
- Eliminate 10% retirement contribution for ordained staff.
- Instead all full time staff (ordained and non-ordained) will receive 5% of base salary for retirement plus a match to employee contributions up to 5%. (The total possible retirement contribution, RLC plus employee, would be 15% of base salary.)

After discussion, the Council requested the Task Force to consider whether payments by Richland Lutheran Church of Social Security taxes for non-ordained staff, but not ordained staff, affects the equity of the proposed revision in retirement benefit payments.

Bylaws/Constitution/Policy Reviews – Drafts of proposed revised Constitution and Bylaw Chapters 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, and 12 as well as revisions to the Council Self-Governance Policy were discussed and the following actions taken:

- **Council approved for recommendation to the Congregation a revision of Chapter 2; Statement of Faith that adds section C2.08 on marriage between one man and one woman.** (See attached approved Chapter 2)
- **Council approved for recommendation to the Congregation a revision of Chapter 3: Statement of Purpose that eliminates section C3.04 and all Bylaws under that section.** (This revision eliminates the requirements to show the organizational structure for ministry as Bylaws. See attached approved Chapter 3)
- **Council approved for recommendation to the Congregation the adoption of the Vision and Mission Statement as contained in the 2012 Ministry Plan:**

Vision – Richland Lutheran Church is a congregation of Christ Followers who are making Jesus Christ known to all people and advancing His Kingdom.

Mission – Richland Lutheran Church fulfills its vision and calling by entering and engaging the world as God himself did through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

- Chapter 7: Membership will be reviewed by the subcommittee (Steele, R Barr, and Ernst) for additional changes in the definition of classes of members.
- Chapter 10: Officers will be revised by changing the status of the Finance Officer to be in alignment with the other officers and returned for approval.

- Chapter 11: Congregation Council will be further revised to incorporate comments of the Council and returned for approval.
- **Council approved for recommendation to the Congregation a revision of Chapter 12: Congregation Committees.** (See attached approved Chapter 12.)
- **Council approved a revision of the Council Self-Governance Policy.** (See attached approved Council Self-Governance Policy.)

Associate Pastor Terms of Call – Following the approval of the Congregation to extend a Call to Corey J. Smith as an Associate Pastor the Council discussed the general terms of the Call including changes to Corey's base salary and benefits in Executive Session. Following the discussion the following action was taken.

- **Council approved including in the Terms of Call letter an increase in base salary of 10% with adjustments to other benefits in accordance with existing policies on benefits for called staff.**

The meeting was closed with praying the Lord's Prayer and adjourned at 9:41 pm.

Dave Larkin,
Secretary

Chapter 2: STATEMENT OF FAITH

- C2.01 We believe, teach, and confess the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- C2.02 We believe, teach, and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and the Gospel as the power of God for the salvation of all who believe in Him.
- a. Jesus Christ is the Word of God incarnate, through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection God fashions a new creation.
 - b. The proclamation of God's message to us as both law and Gospel is the Word of God, revealing judgment and mercy in the person and work of Jesus Christ through whom God was pleased to reconcile all things to himself.
 - c. The canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God. Inspired by God's Spirit speaking through their authors, they record and announce God's revelation centering in Jesus Christ. Through them God's Spirit speaks to us to create and sustain Christian faith and fellowship for service in the world.
- C2.03 We believe, teach, and accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the sole authoritative source and norm of our proclamation, faith, and life.
- C2.04 We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true declarations of the scriptural faith we believe, teach, and confess.
- C2.05 We believe, teach, and accept the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the Small Catechism as true witnesses to the Word of God, normative for our teaching and practice. We acknowledge that we are one in faith and doctrine with all churches that likewise accept the teachings of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.
- C2.06 We believe, teach, and confess the other confessional writings in the Book of Concord, namely, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Treatise, the Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, as further valid expositions of the Holy Scriptures.
- C2.07 We believe, teach, and confess the Gospel, recorded in the Holy Scriptures and confessed in the ecumenical creeds and Lutheran confessional writings, as the power of God to create and sustain the priesthood of all believers for God's mission in the world.
- C2.08 We believe that God created us male and female and that it is God's will and intention that human sexual expression and fulfillment take place only within the boundaries of marriage between one man and one woman.

Chapter 3: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- C3.01 The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world.
- C3.02 To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:
- a. Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
 - b. Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.
 - c. Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministries with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
 - d. Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, advocating dignity and justice for all people.
 - e. Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
 - f. Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.
- C3.03 To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:
- a. Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
 - b. Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
 - c. Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
 - d. Teach the Word of God.
 - e. Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
 - f. Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.

g. Motivate its members to provide financial support for ministry in and beyond this congregation.

h. Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with statements of faith of the denomination with which this congregation is affiliated.

C3.04 This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement which will provide specific direction for its programs.

Chapter 12: CONGREGATION COMMITTEES

C12.01 The officers of this congregation and the Lead Pastor (ex-officio) shall constitute the Executive Committee.

C12.01.01 a. The Executive Committee shall meet together regularly to pray for and encourage one another in mission and ministry as well as nurturing and encouraging teamwork amongst the Staff and Council.

b. The Executive Committee, with Staff and Council input, will draft the agenda for Congregation Council meetings.

c. The Executive Committee shall draft and recommend for the Congregation Council's approval terms of Calls including financial compensation as well as recommending salary actions to the Congregation Council for all other church staff.

d. The Executive Committee, along with the affected supervising Professional Staff, shall be responsible for seeking and recommending to the Congregation Council candidates to fill non-Called staff vacancies.

e. The Executive Committee shall review all member as well as staff disciplinary issues. The Executive Committee may approve staff disciplinary leave with pay for up to thirty days and may recommend to the Congregation Council for approval further staff disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

f. The Executive Committee shall review all staff annual evaluations and prepare a summary report of the review for the Congregation Council's approval.

C12.01.02 In the event of conflicts between staff members, the affected members should first seek to resolve their differences between themselves, and if that is unsuccessful, with the assistance of the Lead Pastor. Should resolution not be attained then any staff member may bring the conflict to the attention of the Executive Committee. If the conflict can not be resolved by the Executive Committee and the affected staff then the conflict is to be forwarded to the Congregation Council for final consideration. Unless the conflict is referred to the Congregation Council, confidentiality will be maintained on the details of the conflict though Council may be informed of the existence of the conflict, the staff involved, and the general nature of the conflict.

C12.01.03 The Executive Committee shall be available to the Staff for consultation on emerging issues that require consideration before the next scheduled Congregation Council meeting.

C12.02 A Nominating Committee of six voting members of this congregation shall be elected by the congregation as specified in the bylaws. Members of the Nominating Committee are not eligible for consecutive terms.

- C12.02.01**
- a. The Nominating Committee shall recommend voting members of this congregation for election at the annual meeting as officers and Congregation Council members.*
 - b. Staff members, members of their immediate families, and current members of the Congregation Council **and members of their immediate families** are not eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.*
 - c. The term of office shall be two years, with three members elected each successive year.*
 - d. Any voting member not affected by term limits shall be eligible for this position.*
 - e. The Nominating Committee shall actively solicit input from the congregation as part of the nominating process.*
 - f. **In considering members to nominate for Officers or Council members at-large, the Nominating Committee shall give consideration to the scriptural requirements that candidates shall be above reproach, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, gentle, not a new Christian, and having a good reputation with outsiders.***
 - g. **The Nominating Committee shall not nominate for Officers or Council members at-large, Congregational members when another member of the same immediate family would be serving on the Council concurrently.***
 - h. A list of nominees shall be announced three weeks before the annual congregation meeting.*

C12.03 An Audit Committee of three voting members shall be elected by the Congregation Council. Audit Committee members shall not be members of the Congregation Council. Members shall be eligible for reelection.

- C12.03.01**
- a. The Audit Committee shall evaluate the financial records of the congregation to ensure financial activity has been properly recorded in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the congregation's policies and procedures.*
 - b. The Audit Committee shall provide a written annual report to the Congregation Council by a date specified by the Congregation Council.*
 - c. Members of the Audit Committee shall serve three-year terms, with terms staggered so that one new member is elected each successive year.*
 - d. In case of a vacancy, the Congregation Council shall appoint a replacement to fulfill the remainder of the term.*

e. Staff members, members of their immediate families, current members of the Congregation Council and members of their immediate families are not eligible to serve on the Audit Committee.

- C12.04 When a pastoral vacancy occurs, a Call Committee of six voting members shall be elected by this congregation. Term of office will terminate upon installation of the newly-called pastor.
- C12.04.01 If a staff member through education and relevant experience achieves certification by the associated denomination, then upon recommendation of the Congregation Council, the Congregation may vote to extend a Call to the staff member as an Associate Pastor. If the duties of the Called position are substantially similar to the duties of the staff member's current position then a Call Committee would not be required as the staff member would not be filling a vacancy.
- C12.04.02 In the event of a vacancy in the Lead Pastor's position, then a Call Committee shall be required to seek and recommend the best candidate, even if an Associate Pastor on staff is under consideration for the position.
- C12.05 This congregation may form other committees, ministry teams, or Task Forces as the need arises, which aid in its mission and help it to implement its ministry plan, with concurrence of the Congregation Council.
- C12.06 Duties of ministry and standing committees of this congregation shall be specified in the continuing resolutions.

Council Self-Governance Policy

I. The congregation is represented by the Congregation Council acting as a body, and the Council's actions, pronouncements, and policies always come from the Council as a body, not from individual members. The Council deliberates in many voices but governs in one.

- A. Outside of Council meetings, individual members are morally bound to publicly uphold the decisions of the Council. Exceptions to this policy are allowed if the member believes that the decision is clearly immoral, clearly contrary to Scripture, or not in accordance with the RLC Constitution and Bylaws. The dissenting member who believes the exception applies to a decision shall notify the Council of their position in advance of speaking against the decision outside of the Council.
- B. Within Council meetings, individual members must feel free to engage in frank discussions and to openly express disagreements with one another. Therefore, the specific content of all Council discussions is deemed confidential.

II. The Congregation Council primarily serves the congregation by setting policy and engaging in strategic planning that is in keeping with the stated mission of the congregation "to help people build strong effective Christian lives with the resources of God's grace."

- A. The Congregation Council expects staff to attend to administrative detail under the direction of the Lead Pastor.
 - 1. The Council will establish basic policies to guide the Lead Pastor and staff in handling day-to-day operations, establishing priorities, and responding to requests.
 - 2. Individual Council members will not direct staff members in carrying out their duties (formally or informally).
 - 3. Individual Council members will not publicly express opinions on the performance or character of staff members.
 - 4. Individual Council members will not place themselves between staff members in their disputes or negotiations.
 - 5. Individual Council members will not interpret Council actions, statements, or policy to staff members unless specifically directed by the Council to do so.
- B. The Congregation Council will keep informed of the congregation's well-being, concerns, desires, and expectations.
 - 1. The Council will determine for the Lead Pastor what specific information it needs each month to remain appropriately informed.
 - 2. On an annual basis, the Council will formally solicit and evaluate input from the congregation regarding its concerns, desires, and expectations.

C. The Congregation Council will keep informed about national and local trends that will affect the quality of ministry the church offers.

D. The Council will cultivate a sense of group responsibility.

1. The Council, not the staff, will be responsible for excellence in governing.

2. The Council will initiate policy, not just react to requests.

3. The Council will use the expertise of individual members to enhance the ability of the Council to operate as a body, rather than substitute individual judgments for the Council's values.

III. The Congregation Council is most effective when all members participate in a proactive, future-oriented manner.

A. All members are expected to attend monthly meetings and come prepared for the meetings.

1. Minimum preparation includes reading minutes and agenda beforehand as well as objecting in a timely manner to any "Common Consent Agenda" request

2. If a Council member does not attend 4 meetings in a row (or 6 meetings during the course of one year), shows a pattern of not following through on commitments, or demonstrates inappropriate behavior, a representative of the Council shall discuss the situation with the member to see if the situation can be rectified or if the member would prefer to resign.

B. To maintain the Council's focus on planning and policy-setting, the Council and its members shall avoid taking on agenda items that have to do with day-to-day operations or other issues it has delegated to the Lead Pastor and the staff.

1. The Council may find that it has not been clear enough in its policy statements to give the Lead Pastor and staff sufficient direction in dealing with a particular issue. Should this be the case and the Council needs to address the issue, the Council shall at the same time clarify the policy so that the same kind of problem does not come up again.

2. In cases where Council approval is required for decisions ordinarily under the purview of the Lead Pastor and/or staff, it may be placed on the Common Consent Agenda.