

Congregational Meeting Minutes
October 29, 2023

Call to Order

President of the Governing Board, Craig Grundmeier called the meeting to order at 1:02pm. There were 95 members who attended the meeting and livestream was available for other households to join online.

Opening Prayer

Senior Pastor Joe Meyer opened with a prayer.

Approval of October 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes

Marvin Freund made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 2023 congregational meeting. Dwight Carlson seconded. The motion passed.

Senior Pastor's Annual Report

Pastor Joe's first sermon was 9 years ago on Reformation Sunday. And just like that, 9 years later...what he remembers most was that a young man (the grandson of a member) came to faith that day and was later baptized. Pastor loves this church and knows he needs to retire but the congregation makes it difficult to do so. His family will continue to pray for this church and he cannot fully express how much this church has blessed him and his family.

He will be under contract part -time through Easter 2024 to allow a smooth transition with the new Lead Pastor. He will not preach every weekend. The schedule that has been worked out with the Governing Board/Chris is Tuesday/Thursday and the weekend at no more than 20 hours a week. His plan is to stay local in Bondurant as his family and children are here. Pastor Joe is thankful to be able to continue to work with Gloria Dei.

2023 Budget: Chris Thomson

It has been a good year, God continues to bless our church, and our members continue to give generously. Thank you for your partnership!

2023 Highlights

- 2022 giving was 7.8% ahead of budget (\$158k) – 8.9% ahead of 2021 giving. Giving has exceeded the budgeted amount for the first three quarters of 2023.
 - o A year ago, giving was \$143k ahead of budget through September. This year we are \$150k ahead of budget, putting us at 10.2% ahead.
- Unrestricted cash is equal to 3.5 months of expenses
- 2023 has brought many blessings, including Heather Schmitz, our new Tiny Treasures Director as of February

Debt Comparison

- Original mortgage was paid off in December 2022. The Governing Board approved to put \$100k toward debt retirement. The first \$59k extinguished the bridge loan. The remaining \$41k and congregational generosity allowed to pay off the remaining mortgage.
- We have reduced the debt from the FLC renovation by \$96,023 in the last year. It carries a 4% interest rate and will reset on March 1, 2024. It will likely reset higher, maybe in the 4.5-5% range. But, because of generosity of our members, our early principal payments can offset interest rate increases. We add member gifts toward our debt to principal payments already being paid for by the church in order to accelerate payback.

- Our monthly principal payments are ~\$4,300/month and expected to be just over \$52k for 2024. We plan to fund our principal payments out of operational cash flow (and are not reflected in the budget).

Proposed 2024 Budget highlights – a bottoms up approach, speaking with each Pastor and Director to determine what God is calling/leading them to do in their ministry and then provide the necessary resources to make that a reality.

- Inflationary pressures affecting us in a variety of ways – prices for Connection Center and coffee supplies have increased. Many of our technology services and subscriptions have seen increases.
 - o But we have a staff that are good stewards of God’s resources.
 - Allison led the effort to change payroll providers, saving us money and a tighter integration with our benefits provider.
 - Asking for used iPads for CWAC, cheaper solution to see if members would donate
 - In July, we moved our property and general liability insurance back to Brotherhood Mutual, which resulted in cost savings even though coverage was nearly identical.
- Staff Search and Moving line (5820) in the amount of \$15k as we will have changes to pastoral staff in 2024.
- Preschool income 6.7% of the budget – higher enrollment trends out of the pandemic and more students are staying for the entire day, which carries a higher tuition rate.
- Wages and Benefits – 65% of budget in 2024 vs. 67.1% in 2023
 - o Staff raises are budgeted for 2024
 - o We remain with Concordia Health Plans as our benefits provided, with health plan premiums increasing by 4.5% next year.
 - o Yet, we only expect the Wages and Benefits line to increase 2.8%
 - Replaced Levi Hansen (full time) with Emma Griffiths (part time)
 - When Carly Hansen left, her publicity responsibilities were redistributed among existing staff.
- District Giving and Directed Missions
 - o Synod giving is \$6k/month and our Directed Missions support is \$45k. These funds are used to bless a variety of missions, such as Agape, Freedom for Youth, Dorothy’s House, Joppa, Many Hands Thrift, Hope Ministries, Journeymen and Shining City Foundation.
- Facility Budget
 - o This is forecasted to be up 24% from 2023 and accounts for more than a third of the overall budget growth.
 - o Inflation will affect our energy and water usage, snow removal and lawn services.
 - o A new line was created to better track Equipment rentals, which are often necessary when working on projects such as fencing or landscaping.
 - o Capital Improvements is now a \$100k, line, which is up 27%. The main reason for this is our FLC needs a new HVAC unit. We have a signed proposal with Excel Mechanical for \$186k and installation will likely occur in early spring.
 - This will be funded with a portion of next year’s Capital Improvements line, using dollars from the Building Fund on our balance sheet (currently in excess of \$20k) and funding the rest out of this year’s positive cash flow.

Net income – This is the revenue minus expenses

- When looking over the last 5 years, we had \$213k in net income in 2018. 2020 was a trough year as it was the first year of the pandemic. We had over \$171k of net income in 2022.
- This is not the same as positive cash flow (takes into account principal payments and changes in current liabilities)
- But, with unrestricted cash of \$650k on our balance sheet (3.5 months of operational expenses), it gives us a very helpful cushion.

2024 Budget Proposal

- \$2,428,150 vs. \$2,286,950 in 2023 – an increase of 6.2%
- Due to increase in preschool income, we need a 4.5% increase in giving to meet this budget total
- Budgeted offering total of \$2,227,650 (91% of budget)

Foundation Update (from Chris Thomson)

Chris is very encouraged by the process and progress of the Foundation Board, getting the building blocks in place to have a resurgence of the Foundation.

Matt Neutzman is the President, Jack Fries is the Vice, Liz Mathers is the Treasurer and they are looking for a secretary as this position was opened from a member resigning during the summer.

- By-laws were revised, Jim Schroeder was brought in from the District to help get our Foundation thriving. He helps to set the agenda and is at the meetings.
- LCMS Foundation began investing our assets in October 2022
- Building awareness – dinners and informational gathering
 - o First dinner was in the spring, invited ~40 members and went well. There will be another dinner in December.
 - o This summer, there was an informational gathering – from that event, Jim had 17 individuals/couples seeking help with estate planning.
- Assets at the end of September - \$108,905
- Hoping for year-end disbursements from majority of endowment accounts – a great way for the Foundation to build some awareness.
 - o Have 5 endowment accounts – not all will be disbursed at the end of the year.
- Expecting to have close to \$150k in assets by year-end

Governing Board Elections

Craig Grundmeier and Jessie James will be rolling off, with Nick Bass and Melissa Woodruff recommended by the Nominating Committee to replace them. While there were some invalid ballots, Nick had 120 votes and Melissa had 122 votes.

Results of Budget Voting

There were 137 signed ballots turned in (both prior and in person). There were 137 votes to approve the budget and no votes to disapprove the budget.

Closing Prayer

Pastor Joe offered a closing prayer.

Adjournment

The congregation meeting was adjourned at 1:44pm by Governing Board President Craig Grundmeier.

Respectfully submitted by Jacque Thole, Governing Board Secretary