

Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes
January 31st, 2016
FAIRBANKS LUTHERAN CHURCH

Member and Visitors Sign in.

Call to Order: 1:16pm.

Opening Devotion by Pastor John Van Haneghan from Colossians 1:9-12.

Quorum Determination by Vanessa Jackson, Council Secretary.

Approval of the Agenda: Motion to accept as amended by Sig Strandberg, 2nd by Millie Dufseth. Motion carries and agenda approved.

Minutes of Last Annual Meeting and Special Congregational Call Meeting, read and approved:

Motion to accept the minutes of the last annual meeting on February 8, 2015 by Sig Strandberg; 2nd by Jeremy Jackson. Motion carries and minutes were approved.

Motion to accept the minutes from the Special Congregational Call Meeting on June 7, 2015 by Sig Strandberg, 2nd by Kathy Alton. Motion carries and minutes were approved.

President's Report:

Mark's report started by reminiscing that he thought it was going to be an easy year because the call process was underway, the basement was being repaired, and an interim pastor was in place. The resulting challenges of losing our interim Pastor reinforced Mark's faith in God and his gratitude for a multitude of people including the Call Committee, Bishop Shelley Wickstrom, Sandy Mayfield, Cindy Olsen and the Congregational Church Council. Mark also thanks all those who so selflessly devoted themselves to our church when we were without a full time pastor so that we were always able to have a communion and a message, and that all the needs of the church were met during this time.

There were several events in the past year which bare note. One highlight from the past year includes the arrival of Pastor John and Pam in August to end a length call process and several months without a permanent pastor. Another was being able to attend the Alaska a Synod Assembly as a voting member for FLC in Wasilla in April. Another huge highlight was the rededication of our basement to the glory of God's work in April. Finally, the parsonage was updated and improved thanks to the expertise of our members, and it was all ready to go for the arrival of Pastor John and Pam.

Treasurer's Report:

Jim began with thanks for Millie Dufseth for her continued guidance in church financial matters. A review of last year's budget was presented and expenses were explained. The proposed budget was presented and explanations for some of the difficult choices in cutting areas of the budget. It was a highlight in the budget that we were able to meet all local and synod benevolences. Change in the membership has affected giving. Cathy Birkliid wants us to remember that there are fifteen more months to go in this pledge cycle for our building fund. The only reason our checking account stands in positive numbers is because of a bequest. Jim talked to the benefits of using Simply Giving and reminds is that when set up through the credit card, you can even earn airline miles! Jim reminded all of us to thank the 'church mice' of the church because without those wonderful volunteers the budget and wonderful church atmosphere would not be possible.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor John's report notes that he had felt drawn to our church and its mission and that he was praying for us even before he was called for an interview. Pastoral acts were listed in the report. His report speaks to the fact that he is still getting to know us. There are many thanks for those who work behind the scenes to include Martin's Moppers, the Monday morning people who pop up for food banks, the folks on the Stewardship Committee and Drive, the council, and especially Sandy. One of Pastor's goals for the future is to get the youth ministry going again.

Agenda Item One: The Nominating committee recommends the following slate:

President: Mark Huffington

Vice-President: Tom Alton

Secretary: (To be determined at the first meeting.)

Treasurer: Jim Lewandoski

Council –at-Large: David Ingram, Kathy Thomas, Vanessa Jackson and Jerry Zellmer, Mike Cook & Mark Huffington

Continuing their term: Ruth Carson, Skylar Holman, Tom Alton

Alaska Synod Voting Members: Evie Freeman, Pat Willson volunteers. Mikey Jackson agrees to serve as an alternate.

*A nominating committee was not selected at this time.

Move for vote: Vanessa Jackson moves to accept the slate as offered. Kim Huffington 2nd. Motion Carries. Ballot approved.

Ministry Reports- *An explanation of the why the word “Committee” has been replaced with “Ministry.” It more accurately reflects the work of the church.*

Memorial Ministry

A detailed accounting of funds was submitted by Elrita Magoffin, Sharon Cook, and Cathy Birkliid. It was noted that funds donated to the Memorial Fund for the express purpose of the building fund were transferred to the Building Fund Account. Jim clarified any questions.

Fairbanks Lutheran Church Women’s Report

A detailed accounting of income and disbursement was given.

Mutual Ministry:

Ruth presented beginning with an explanation of the function of this ministry. This ministry provides support for our pastor and goal-setting for our other paid personnel and serves as a go-between to the congregational council. This is a newly revived ministry and is just getting going.

Mortgage Retirement (GOOD) Committee

A review of the mission of the committee was given along with an overview of the accounting that occurred during the year. After our March 1, 2016 payment it is anticipated that our church officially owes under the million dollar mark! In memoriam, the counsel and work of Warrack Willson was acknowledged over any years of service. Finally, the interest rate was discussed. It will be up for negotiation in 2017, and we continue to benefit from the work of the late Jim Matthews in regards to our current rate.

Property:

It was a very busy year for our volunteers. The basement was completed and rededicated. We have had sufficient volunteers to cover spring clean-up, mowing and garden prep as well as shoveling, plowing and cleaning our church and parsonage. New counter tops and cabinets were installed in February. All damaged walls were restored and repainted. We have new, efficient light fixtures in many areas.

The parsonage got quite a bit of work too. Ceilings in the basement were replaced while many ceiling tiles in the basement bedroom were replaced. All basement walls and floors were repainted while carpet squares were installed in the basement rec room. The laundry room sink was replaced and a new laundry counter was built. The basement also received new lighting fixtures. New flooring was put into the kitchen, dining room and bathroom. The rugs were shampooed.

Next step ministries cleaned and stained both parsonage decks; they also scraped primed, and repainted the south side of the parsonage exterior wall.

Many thank you’s were shared.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

In 2015, there were 21 prayer shawls made and 21 prayer shawls distributed. There are ten shawls and eleven muffs on hand. Yarn is available through the church if needed and it is creator’s choice as to pattern and design. Creators are encouraged to ‘go where God leads them.’

Education:

It was a wonderful year for education at Fairbanks. During our times when we were without regular pastors, many people stepped up and made sure that education continued for our Confirmands and our adult class. Our Christmas Program this year, led by Sharon Lockwood, took us in a brand new direction. Attendance numbers were shared and a big thank you was given to all who have volunteered their time in this endeavor.

It was noted that it was difficult to find the appropriate number of volunteers and that we may need to look at different staffing options in order to fully staff all of our VBS rooms. Teachers and volunteers are still needed for youth education so that we do not run the risk of having Sundays without teachers.

Building Fund Pledge Report

Pledge Drive Three runs from May 2014 to April 2017. There were 52 pledges for this 3-year cycle totaling \$280,366. Pledge funds received in 2014 were \$99,166, which includes memorials. Our total collected in Pledge Drive 3 is \$183,494.

We are reminded of the convenience of the Simply Giving electronic transfer programs. People who are interested can contact Sandy in the church office or Cathy Birkliid.

Thank you's were given to all who support our beautiful church though the many; many dedicated volunteer hours as well as monetary support.

Financial Secretary's Report

Included in the annual report was a chart analysis of contributions for the building und through 12-31-2015. It was broken down by quarter and by the number of members contributing in a given category.

No other reports filed.

Approval of Reports:

Sig Strandberg moves to adopt the reports as presented. Mark Huffington 2nd, no discussion. Motion carries and reports approved.

Agenda Item Three: Presentation of the 2016 Budget

Jim Lewandoski went through the proposed budget and explained changes and cuts and how the council worked together to reach the decisions they did. Actual Budgets for 2013, 2014 and 2015 were there as a reference.

Questions and discussion:

1. Trish asked if our offerings go if our local benevolences can increase. Jerry states the garage sale in the past has designated a percentage of the proceeds to local benevolences. Council will look at giving quarterly to revisit our benevolences.
2. Kathy asks about doing an activity with funds going to local benevolences. Discussion about this. Jim reminds us that it takes volunteers and that we would have to make sure that it was giving above and beyond regular giving. There is the worry that if there is a "basket" of money towards a cause and a "basket" of money that goes towards things like lights and heat that people tend to pick one over the other.
3. Bob thanks the council for their work and understands how building projects can put a strain on operating budgets and that there are concerns about competing events taking away from operating budgets. He notes that this is the first 'real' budget he has seen and he likes the quarterly look. The tough decisions now will make things easier later.
4. Evie presents the possible earnings ideas of a "change dump" in collecting pennies to help earn towards benevolences and that it earned thousands at her previous church.
5. Sharon Lockwood brings up concerns about the Lutheran. It is nice to be connected to the Synod. Perhaps we could have a subscription week. She notes that things like "Portals of Prayer" are a passive way for us to share the Word with all those who pass through our building. Perhaps we can find a way to add it back.
6. Fred states that this is the best most realistic budget he's seen and he appreciates the council's hard decisions.

7. Jim notes that he wishes we could raise Sandy's pay, but that was one of the hard decisions.
8. Greg asks why insurance jumped so much. Pastor John and Jim helped to explain that it is related to rates raised in health insurance. Age is now factored in. New healthcare rules are also causing insurance rates to increase too. Jim notes that we spent a considerable amount of time without a pastor during 2015.
9. Jim gently reminds us that we still have a \$30,000 gap we need to close.
10. Arlene brought up a suggestion in our town hall about the Fred Meyer amount calculated. We have the idea to have a monthly sign up table for such things and how easy it is to do, but it just needs volunteers to man the table.

Approval of the Budget:

Tom Alton thanks Jim for his work on this budget and moves to accept the budget as presented. Bob Andresen 2nd. Motion carries and budget approved.

New Business:

It is put to the congregation members in attendance to consider a Resolution of Support for A Smoke-free Alaska to make all workplaces in Alaska free of smoke.

Clarification was sought in that the resolution was for outside. Discussion ensued regards the pros and cons of the situation including the pervasive nature of the smell and residue of smoke, and the fact that our church has invested a great deal in our community room to accommodate the oppressed so we do not want to marginalize them through the support of this measure.

Mark clarifies that it is for indoor work places on a statewide level and asks if we want to support this as a church.

Al states that he does not want it to affect the effectiveness of the community room.

Fred is against it because it takes away from individual business rights.

Verna reminds us that resolutions are not laws.

Evie points out that many states in the lower 48 have similar laws.

Bob does not think that the church should be political at all.

No action taken for lack of a motion.

Move for Adjournment: Kim Huffington moved for adjournment. Verna Henkel 2nd. Motion passes enthusiastically.

The congregation members in attendance close with the Lord's Prayer.

Meeting Adjourns at 3:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Vanessa Jackson