

LCOR Council Meeting: July 21, 2020

Present: Pastor Mike Wilker, Pastor Ben Hogue, Tegan Pederson

Bryan Anderson, Evan Benoit, Matt Fuehrmeyer, , Karen Carlson, Bonnie Franklin, Eleanor Grant, Craig Haas, Elizabeth Hann, Molly Higgins, Corey Petree, Chari Voss, and Andy Weaver; Suzanne Hazard,

Absent: Laura Swanson, Roger Mofatt,

7:00 PM Call to Order – President, Matt Fuehrmeyer
Devotions, Prayer – Elizabeth Hann, Eleanor Grant

Psalm 121: Preserved and looked after during this COVID pandemic

7:10 PM **Secretary's Report – Karen Carlson**

Discussion and VOTE on approval of the minutes for June's Council meeting

Craig - motion to approve minutes.

Corey - Seconded

All agreed

7:20 PM: **Financial Report - Suzanne Hazard**

Highlights - next meeting will be August 3 or 6 for the Finance Committee

Congregants are continuing to give at high levels even during this summer.

We currently have ~\$24K in funds from the loan.

We are applying the PPP loan to payroll though it can be applied to a mortgage but not a credit line – we have ~\$42K left in the PPP loan.

Perhaps we are in a position to pay down credit lines – will discuss with the Finance Committee.

Anniversary Campaign has ~\$83K surplus. The contractor has been paid. We can pay off tithing associated with the Campaign. Finance Committee will address this surplus at their next meeting.

Pastor Mike noted that utilities bills are very low and the surplus budgeted for utilities may be used for the Property Committee.

Suzanne noted that there is ~\$50K credit line for the parsonage that needs to be repaid, and maybe the extra utility money should be used for this credit line.

7:30 PM Updates and discussion on Reopening – Matt Fuehrmeyer

Matt noted that we are taking a cautious science approach to re-opening during this pandemic, noting that he/we are responsible not only to the congregation but to our pastors and staff.

Matt noted that only one ELCA congregation went back to the church in the region, while most have been studying the situation.

We have to think about how we will re-open in the fall.

For the August Council Meeting we want to have representatives from each ministry area to tell us how they are going to execute their ministry area in the fall. These plans should be sent in written form to council so that we can study their plans prior to the council meeting. We want to know their comfort level with opening and how they plan to implement.

Tegan noted that Hill Havurah wants to remain closed but the parents want the school open.

The Friday Morning Music Club and Capitol Hill Chorale are interested in returning to LCOR.

Evan asked what the thoughts of the DC Gov't is on churches reopening.

Pastor Mike said that we are in Phase 2 which is half capacity or 50 people, whichever is less. DC Gov't may have bent their rules for the churches, noting that movie theaters etc. remain closed. Pastor Mike saw in the papers that churches are "super spreaders" of the coronavirus.

The Episcopal church does not want to open, and if so any singing or talking such as creeds, etc. will not be allowed at the church

Pastor Mike will discuss these concerns with the WMA committee on July 28.

Matt noted that our pastors and WMA have worked very hard in the online services and the congregation appears to be happy and appreciative – noting that the giving is still going strong among the congregants.

7:50 PM Staff Reports - Pastor Mike, Pastor Ben, Tegan

Pastor Mike:

Leadership and Personnel

- ⊕ I was mostly on vacation July 29 through July 14. While away, I finalized plans for the July 5th worship, led the Wednesday forum on July 1, and participated in the WIN Action July 2.
- ⊕ Upon returning, Tegan reminded me that we need to come back to addressing her permanent job description and title. We also need to pick up the work we had started on Paul's job description. I'll work with the Personnel Committee, led by Larry King, to get these tasks going.
- ⊕ Pastor Ben and I will speak this week to envision his work and plans for the fall. He has given tremendously to the congregation by becoming our on-line worship producer since March. As we move to Livestreaming in September, we all want Pastor Ben's ministries to shift back to other areas of responsibility and to grow in new ways.
- ⊕ Mutual Ministry will meet on August 10. Its members continue to be very helpful to us—even between meetings.
- ⊕ I'm participating in four-part Synod series, *Imago Dei: Embracing the Image of God: A Racial Equity Series* on Thursday evenings. For more information and to take part in the final of the three sessions, see <http://metrodcclca.org/imagodei/>

Worship, Music, and Art

- ⊕ Paul, Philip Moeller, Suzanne and I met to discuss the WMA budget for cantors, as well as Susan Blackman's bequest.
- ⊕ I participated in the Synod Emanuel 9 commemoration service on June 17.
- ⊕ Online communion in Extraordinary Times has 4-10 people. The attendance is heavily affected by the number of people attending the Wednesday forum at 7:00 p.m.
- ⊕ More often than not, preparing and preaching sermons this past month or more has been more difficult and time consuming than usual. I've been challenged both by the logistical issues of recording sermons for on-line worship as well as by the serves crises our nation is in. I spend at least 6 hours preparing my sermons each week—recently that has grown sometimes to 10 or more.
- ⊕ Worship planning in the COVID era has also been more time consuming than usual. Pre-COVID I spent 2-3 hours preparing for each liturgy. Now I'm spending 5-7 hours a week. I'm grateful for Caitlin Jacobs as the new worship leader coordinator. Her dedication and thoughtfulness will help us all.

Evangelism and Communications

- ⊕ I'm worried that I'm not doing enough to reach out to community members who are searching for a spiritual community like Reformation.

Spiritual Growth

- ⊕ The summer Wednesday Forum series has had some very good events. On June 24 Pastor Ben hosted the executive director and a board member of Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries for a session titled “Pride in the Struggle.” On July 1 Robert Tuttle, the author of *Secular Government, Religious People* discussed the Supreme Court cases regarding religion and government. I’m working with the Green Team to invite a guest from the Anacostia Watershed Society for July 29.

Caring Ministries and Hospitality

- ⊕ My pastoral care has been focused mostly on individuals and families dealing with the effects the COVID disease, racism, vocation, and economic issues.

Service and Justice

- ⊕ Southeast Ministry’s board met twice in the past month. One was our regular meeting and the second was a visioning meeting facilitated by Alesia Frerichs. COVID has been very difficult for SEM. In addition before COVID, the staff and board have been working to envision SEM’s next phase of ministry. The second board meeting was filled with realism, creativity, and hope. A major issue that we pledged to address was the fact that the SEM board is a majority white board even though the staff and almost all the participants are African American. We will also undertake a process to engage SEM participants, other southeast DC religious and business leaders to listen to how SEM can shape its programs to serve Wards 7 and 8 more effectively.
- ⊕ Many hours of organizing and leadership culminated in the July 2 Action of the Washington Interfaith Action. Over 800 people participated. Thanks to Emily Andre, Matt Aviles, and Clare Berke for helping to organize Reformation’s participation. WIN has embarked on a campaign to reimagine DC, not simply to re-open and go back to what was before. Part of that process was to push for a Budget for a Beloved DC. I organized and led WIN’s meeting with Council Member Allen, who is Reformation local council member and also the leader of the council’s committee overseeing policing and community safety.
 - By WIN’s accounting the Council moved \$160 million toward community development and housing and away from gentrification and police projects. This is more than we expected, but far from what is needed. WIN is building a base of 20,000 people to continue reimagining a bold future for DC. Next up is a struggle with Pepco regarding jobs and a plan for developing Reservation 13 and RFK stadium for low-income housing and community business and health care. I’m working on a group listening to small business owners to hear what ideas they have for DC’s future. I am also one of the chief WIN representatives to the DC Values Coalition which works on DC-specific issues regarding immigrants and refugees.
- ⊕ I participated in the LIRS Refugee and Immigrant Leaders’ Summit on June 23. It occurs around World Refugee Day on June 20 each year. Although Reformation has hosted the event for the past eight years, this year the event was virtual. I participated in three Zoom meetings with staff members from Rep. Trone’s, Rep. Raskin’s, and Sen. Cardin’s offices.

Stewardship, Property and Finance

- ⊕ Finance Committee met on June 22. We discussed the Payroll Protection Program, the line of credit for the Anniversary Campaign, the possibility of sending the Anniversary Tithes gifts to LSS, the Synod, and SEM, reviewing the congregation's insurance coverage, and to set up a meeting to review Reformation's investment portfolio (scheduled for July 30).

Pastor Ben:

- **Worship Videos/Website**: Continuing the recording, editing, and video production of worship videos and editing of website and communication of Worship Materials. Continue to have a shifted work schedule to Tuesday-Friday & Saturday evening/Sunday work schedule.
- **Livestream** - All of the equipment has arrived and is being put together and inspected before being installed in the middle of August. I will begin to put together the Sunday Livestream team and training dates/time together in early August. Minimal excitement around funding - 4 designated gifts, one from a member of council.
- **Spiritual Growth - Youth Group** - Called together Sr. Pastors of the 4 partner congregations to look ahead and decide the future of StLuthRefA. Led the conversation around the next steps and 'buy-in' for a combined youth group. Reformation, St. Paul's, and Augustana will move forward together, Luther Place had decided to go another direction. Will be communicating with youth and families soon.
- **Spiritual Growth Staff Lead** - Summer prayer bags have been put together and distributed. We've given ~15 bags to 20+ children/families (members and neighbors). Another mailing of faith activities and coloring sheets for children and families will go out at the end of this week. Committee will meet early August to discuss Fall Plans. Watching DC Gov's decision on 7/31 regarding reopening of schools.
- **Congregational Leadership**: On 6/13, Matt Fuehrmeyer and I attended Bishop Ortiz's Zoom Call for DC Conference Pastors and Presidents to discuss current practices and plans for reopening. We gave a brief report, then listened to conference congregations.
- **Engagement/Communication Staff Lead** - Livestream project. Christmas in July promotion and invitations - saw a higher 'summer' attendance with visitors and a bump in of social media evangelism.
- **Pastoral Care** - Ongoing support for members with established PC relationships and youth. Took over Pastoral Care lead while Pastor Mike was on vacation.
- **Hospitality/Caring Ministries** - Organized and hosted Nancy Dinse's surprise send-off on Friday, June 26.
- **Food Pantry** - Partnering with and distributing gift cards to [VASH](#). Beginning to look at reimagining the opening of the Food Pantry. Will begin to pull together 'stakeholders' for conversations.
- **Service & Justice** - Attend 'Roundtable to End Homelessness' on 6/22 with The Way Home Campaign. Attended virtual WIN Action regarding FY21 Budget. Hosted conversation with Everyone Home DC and Reformation for Wednesday Forum 7/8. Hosted conversation with Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries "[Pride in the Struggle](#)" on 6/24.

- **Worship** - Presided at outdoor communion on 7/5 and presided at virtual communion on 7/1, 7/8. Hosted Deacon Deb, guest preacher, on 7/12 and Sunday worship on 7/5, service for the national holiday weekend.
- **'Virtual' Synod Assembly** - [Wrote the chair's report](#) for the Metro DC Synod Candidacy Committee.
- **Personal** - Will be on vacation 7/26 - August 5.
- **Personal** - Named 2020's Outstanding Young Alumni by my alma mater California Lutheran University. Will accept the award virtually in the fall. Honored to receive this (and glad to still be considered young).

Tegan:

- The Property Committee is going to meet July 20 to talk about 2020 projects and start to plan for the next FY.
- The Insurance Review Committee met to look over and discuss Reformation's insurance policies. Our next steps will be to have a conference call with our account manager from Church Mutual next week on the 27th. He is going to go over all of our policies and answer our questions. He will also come to the property in the fall to do an annual assessment.
- The Anniversary Campaign is complete. The lights are working perfectly in the sanctuary and the last invoice has been paid!
- An ad hoc Space Use Committee is going to meet on July 30th to plan for those returning to Reformation in the fall. Our goal is to develop policies and procedures for our space users and Reformation to follow to ensure everyone's safety. After our meeting, I will meet with each school and our regular music groups.
- We have moved forward with our internet wiring project (separate from but helpful to Pastor Ben's livestreaming project). This will allow us to have wired internet access on every floor of St. John's, in the Sanctuary, and in the Parish Hall. It should be complete during the first week of August. Andy also finished setting up better WiFi for the Shalom Room. Thank you, Andy!
- In the last week of June, we had a significant plumbing issue due to a cracked toilet in the Hill Havurah bathroom on the second floor of St. John's. The water damaged the ceiling to the first-floor bathroom and two of the walls. An insurance adjuster from Church Mutual is coming out on Wednesday to take a look to see if we can claim the damage. Our deductible is \$1000, so if the damage is greater, our coverage will help pay to repair the bathroom. If not, the claim will be dropped and we will have to pay for the repairs. I have already gotten a quote from Bruno Clay for this work and to do two additional repairs in the parish hall bathrooms.
- We are finalizing a lease with Hill Havurah. We are sending them our latest draft today so they can look it over and present it to their Board. It would begin on September 1 and run for three years.
- As of this coming Friday, we have 12 more weeks to spend the PPP loan.

8:00 PM Discussion of upcoming proposals – Stewardship Committee, Finance actions – Matt Fuehrmeyer, Pastor Mike

Matt wants the council to know that stewardship and planned giving is being discussed. Pastor Ben will take the lead on this new committee. Matt would like Council to suggest people to join Pastor Ben on this endeavor.

Regarding the Anniversary Campaign

From Pastor Mike's email to Executive Council on Monday, July 20:

1) I proposed to Matt that Reformation send a special gift (on top of our usual Mission Support) to the synod of \$2500. The gift can go toward the new synod Disaster Accompaniment Loan Fund. For info about the fund see: <http://metrodcelca.org/for-congregations-2/disasteraccompaniment/>

I will also check with Bishop Ortiz about this gift. I would like to ask her if it would be best to direct our gift to the Loan Fund or simply make an unrestricted gift.

Why \$2500? The Synod Council started the fund with a \$10,000 deposit. So, our gift would be significant. It would also allow the synod committee that oversees the fund to grant loan forgiveness for \$2500 knowing they would still have the initial \$10,000 to help other congregations and ministers.

Why give? Just like many Reformation members have given to the congregation and to the Pastors' Discretionary Fund to sustain and grow our ministry, I would like to share some of Reformation financial resources with other congregations and ministers who are in dire need.

2) I'd also like us to release the current Anniversary Tithe Funds to LSS, SEM, and the Synod New Connections Campaign. I know that we will still be receiving donations from members for at least the rest of the year, but the release of the current funds will help those three orgs during this difficult year. We can send them another check in December or in 2021 for other donations that are yet to come.

Matt also informed the Council that a Nominating Committee will start next month. We need 4 adult and a youth member for the 2021 Council.

8:20 PM Ministry Area Committee Action Items and Liaison Reports
Worship, Music and Art - Elizabeth Hann

The next WMA meeting is July 28

Notes from the Director of Music and Arts

We continue to prepare hymns and musical offerings with our talented soloists. Pastor Ben has been preparing the videos for the online services, and the singers have managed to sing together while keeping at least 6 feet apart. The choir has continued to meet on weekly zoom calls on Thursday night until the beginning of July.

We are still planning to make a virtual choir presentation of the choir singing some of its favorite repertoire. It's a very involved process that requires the choir singers to make recordings of themselves on their phones or computers. It's quite challenging. There's a steep learning curve, but so far a few have managed to do it.

I'm currently planning to give some solo piano and organ recitals in the fall in the sanctuary. Thanks to the equipment the church is acquiring, we'll be able to have live-streaming events on Facebook and other sorts of social media. I'm deliberately waiting until the fall because it's very warm in the sanctuary during the summer and the reed stops on the organ tend to go out of tune. We'll have our organ technician come back in September to tune the instrument so that it will present well.

Our substitute organists, who are all members of the congregation, are invited also to make recordings of preludes and postludes for inclusion in our online services. It's a great privilege to have so many talented organists in the congregation and we're looking forward to hearing them as well.

Respectfully submitted by Paul Leavitt

Spiritual Growth - Evan Benoit

Nothing to add.

Fellowship and Caring Ministries - Chari Voss

Nancy Dinse leaving party was hosted by Pastor Ben.
We will need to find members for coffee hour.

The Hart family is recovering from the COVID but Chester has also had open heart surgery. Kim will have to nurse him at home while working because their insurance will not pay for home health care.

Parry Carlson is working with Kim Hart on getting her driver's license. Copliam is an Uber driver and he will also be helping her get to work, shopping, etc.

Engagement and Communication - Corey Petree

There is a meeting in August. Also, the Livestream will be tested in September. There is currently a push to train people to Livestream.

Also, E&C is working on helping new comers via livestream

Service and Justice - Bryan Anderson

Nothing to add

Stewardship, Property and Finance - Laura Swanson

Property Meeting 7/20/20. Minutes from Laura:

Parry Carlson described where we are with property maintenance budget—some new property repairs that need to be addressed.

- \$4,600 for male and female bathroom repairs— holes in ceiling when fans were replaced, black mold removal in female bathroom, and Hill Havurah/ St. John's had a bathroom leak, ceiling needs to be re-plastered. Not contract yet

Discussed if St. John's repairs could be done by volunteers to lower cost. Perry will further evaluate black mold situation.

- Discussed some possible source of funds for new repairs
 - PPP loan, 12 weeks to use loan, can use more for utilities, and could use part of it for repairs.
 - \$8,000 of savings in utilities through May
 - Move money around within the areas of ministry's budgets.

Pastor asked Committee to begin to think in August and September about bigger priorities/ improvements/ dreams for property committee for 2021 budget. Dale talked about deferred improvements, and how we move forward on them. Hopefully we are turning the corner on deferred maintenance.

- Projects over \$15,000 are considered major projects.

Discussed Elevator projects—long term and short term improvements. Because it is not in use currently, the committee will revisit in the new year.

Discussed possible security system

- Police department suggested that the church apply for the sacred places grant to help pay for security system (because of the anti Semitic flyers left at the church).
- Possibly share costs with Hill Havurah, they have asked about this.
- Need to understand better how many cameras, where they would be placed, who would have access to seeing the footage, how would we address privacy issues?
- Teagan will look into the DC program, and ask the community purchasing alliance (CPA) for security companies/ programs they have used.

Tegan discussed renewed electricity contract with CPA—for two years; CPA is also looking into new gas contracts. Dale asked about previous decision to pay more for landfill gas and wind energy, and whether we are still doing that. Pastor confirmed that we do pay more for our electricity from wind sources. Tegan will ask CPA about this.

Tegan mentioned new wiring for Livestream in sanctuary, parish hall and SJ. Will benefit new livestream technology and other parts of sanctuary that you couldn't get internet access in before.

The Property Committee will meet again on August 17th.

Archives and History – Molly Higgins

Nothing to add.

Personnel Committee - Craig Haas

Nothing to add.

8:20 PM Closing Prayer – Elizabeth Hann, Eleanor Grant

8:21 PM Adjourn

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Carlson