

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church- Proposed
Minutes of the Annual Informational Meeting of the Congregation of Grace
Evangelical Lutheran Church, Westminster, Maryland
held on Sunday, May 1, 2011 12:32 pm

Opening of Meeting

Charlie Beckhardt, president of the Council, called the meeting to order at 12:32 pm and noted that the purpose of the meeting was for sharing information as outlined in our Constitution and Bylaws. He asked members to refer to the printed agenda for the order of the reports/updates. Pastor Kevin opened the meeting with devotions and prayer.

President's Report

Charlie Beckhardt reflected on the good, "crazy busyness" of our congregational life and the wonderful things happening at Grace Lutheran Church. As he spoke about our active schedules, Charlie reported that the Delaware-Maryland Synod Council approved the changes to our Bylaws which reflected our new vision and mission statements. He noted that the Lenten season just completed provided evidence of a very intentional effort from lay leaders and the Pastors to offer broad opportunities for participation, i.e., younger people, older people and families participating together. Throughout the Lenten journey, many members joined their talents in song and story, dramatizations, and soup-making, as we gathered to remember the passion of our Lord and to rediscover what love is and what it is not. This was one example of our ministry focus, namely the development of God-given gifts and interaction among generations.

Charlie described a second example of how our vision/mission is being realized. We are engaged in a call process to hire a Director of Christian Education, Youth and Family Ministry. A document entitled a Ministry Site Profile was prepared by Pastor Martha and members of the Call Committee to tell a potential candidate who we are, what we do, and what we plan to do. We look forward to finding someone who will become an integral part of our team, and again, help us move forward.

While the real work of the church continues to get done in our Committees; Council's primary role is one of providing oversight and direction. Charlie reported to the congregation that our mortgage debt is of continuing concern to the Council. In collaboration with our Finance Committee and Stewardship Committee, we have considered various courses of action and will continue to do so. However, all of the solutions available to Council involve ALL OF US. The mortgage debt, slightly in excess of two million dollars, remains somewhat of a barrier to greater ministry at Grace. It is something that we need to acknowledge and address, but it is equally important to celebrate that we remain fully engaged in mission, outreach, and worship activities.

As we enter a great period of promise for our congregation, Council President, Charlie Beckhardt, concluded by saying, “ The State of Grace this spring of 2011 is: ‘all is well’ – and occasionally crazy busy – and all is in our God’s hands. It’s not just the light shining through those new cloister doors, but the Easter joy we felt last weekend shining back out for the good of the people that God loves.”

Pastors' Report

Pastor Martha presented the Pastors' Report. She began with an update on the call process for the Director of Christian Education, Youth and Family Ministry. The Call Committee, in collaboration with Synod, is in search for a rostered person to fill the position and become an educational partner with the Pastors. We continue to work with Pastor Hobbs in searching for the right person and exercise patience because potential candidates are few in number.

Pastor Martha reported that an active search is underway for our office staff. Job descriptions have been revisited. There will be one full time position to greet, be the voice of Grace and support worship. A three-day, part time position will be responsible for checks, membership and back-up the full time person. Interviews will be conducted for the full time position the first week of May with the intent of the person selected beginning in June. The second round of interviews will take place on May 17th for the part time position.

Opportunities for learning and fellowship all summer long were highlighted by Pastor Martha including Mar-Lu Ridge camp at Grace, community gardening, mission trips, etc. Pastor Martha also noted that Confirmation will be held on May 22, 2011, at an All Grace Service at 10 am in Grace Hall.

Pastors Kevin and Martha thanked the Council and the congregation for their support and expressed their gratitude for our partnership with them.

Property Report

Randy Bachtel, interim chair, began by recognizing the members of the Property Committee (Pastor Kevin, Gary Ganjon, Ed Leister, Arthur Pease, Michael Shipley, Steve Sabol and Ronnie Wentz) and providing the attendees with some church trivia.

- The area of our church property is around 3 acres.
- We have about 24,000 square feet of first floor space.
- There is approximately 54,000 square feet of finished space.
- The estimated value of our church proper is \$10 million.
- The Property Committee budget represents about 10% of the church budget and includes all utilities.

Randy highlighted key items that the Property Committee continues to focus on and to monitor. In terms of risk management, church safety and security was reviewed. A new PA System for Little Friends of Grace has been installed. In addition, the door security system has been revamped and updated. The

Property Insurance Policy Coverage has been reviewed and the committee is pleased to report that the furnace is insured.

Randy and the members of the Property Committee are formulating a long range facilities plan to identify and prioritize items of need to be addressed over the next ten years. Currently, a utilities study is underway to monitor use and to identify any potential energy-saving or cost-cutting measures that may be realized as a result of the data analysis from the study. The committee is also developing an operations manual for use during an emergency and for general information purposes.

Randy reported on the sanctuary ceiling/renovation project. He reminded attendees that this was the final phase of the Ministry and Mortar Program. A number of meetings were held with contractors. The components of the renovation would include the following: replacing the ceiling (its approximately 80 years old), providing maintenance to stain glass windows, repairing plaster walls in the vestibules, and modifying the chancel area. It is estimated that the costs of repairs would be \$100,000. While the Council supports the improvements to be made to the sanctuary, no further action will take place until funding is secured. The Council has asked the Stewardship Committee to conduct a fall Capital Campaign to address mortgage debt reduction and this renovation project.

Randy noted that problems with Grace Hall's heating and the AC system in the Stoner building have been addressed. He also acknowledged the inviting appearance of our new cloister doors.

Treasurer's Report

The treasure's report was presented by Don Ludwig, member of the Council and treasurer. He began by thanking Ed Leister for his dedication and service as the outgoing treasurer and to Don Meyers for his dedication and service as chair of the Finance Committee .

Don began by reporting how the year 2010 ended. General Giving was up over 2009 by \$29,379. This increase was due to the giving trees that were instituted during 2010 to help reduce our deficit. It was important to understand that 2010 actually ended with our expenditures exceeding our income by \$33,539. Our Committees did an excellent job of keeping their expenditures down and none of our ministries suffered.

At the present time, we are in a favorable financial position. Don reported that as of April 26, 2011, our actual income has exceeded our budgeted income by \$25,064 and expenses by \$60,210. In addition, a transfer of \$50,000 was made to our investment account. As of March 31, 2011, our total investments, including cash, were \$987,306.

At the end of 2010 and through February 2011, Grace has received one bequest, four gifts of cash or stock, and three gifts of gifts-in-kind. These special gifts and bequests help our ministries to flourish and are very important to our operation.

Don reminded all of us that as we enter the summer months, it becomes very important that we keep up our giving as it tends to drop off during this period. We need \$15,833 monthly just to meet interest and principal on our debt reduction/financing expenses. In addition, Don reiterated the major expenditures we may be facing as highlighted in the property report Randy presented.

Don concluded his presentation by acknowledging that this has been a difficult financial period for everyone. On behalf of the Pastors and the Church Council, Don thanked everyone for their continued support of the ministries of Grace.

Charlie entertained questions from members of the Congregation. There were no questions asked by attending members.

Adjournment

Charlie thanked Don, Randy, Karen and the Pastors for their reports and assistance during the meeting. The informational meeting was adjourned at 1:05 pm by all attendees praying the Lord's Prayer.

Minutes submitted by Karen Ganjon, Secretary