



Grace
Lutheran

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CONGREGATION COUNCIL OF GRACE EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Rm 108, 21 Carroll St., Westminster, MD 21157

www.gracelc.org

<http://gracelc.org/about-us/council/meeting-minutes/>

Meeting held on Monday, March 20, 2017 at 7 p.m.

Members Present: Rev. Martha Clementson, Co-Senior Pastor, Rev. Kevin Clementson, Co-Senior Pastor, Bill Comegna, Bob Lichtfuss, Linwood Van Horn, Kevin Dayhoff, Brian Sherfey, Arthur Pease, Don Meyers, Kari Ebeling, Robin Hoff Skrtic, Patt Patterson Jones, Jan Mickey, and Ginger Myers.

Members Absent: Ron Fairchild, Rich Chaney, and Johanna Monka,

Call to order - Opening of Meeting: President Bob Lichtfuss called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

Devotions - Linwood Van Horn continued with the theme from Pastor Kevin's message on the Third Sunday in Lent, from the gospel lesson concerning the conversation that Jesus had with the Samaritan women at the well, found in John 4:5-42. Linwood shared a reading about our faith journey. Faith is about trust and believing in someone. Christin faith is also about hope.

Approve Minutes & Adopt Agenda - A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes. The motion passed. A motion was and seconded to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

President's Report - President Bob Lichtfuss thanked everyone for participating in the Lenten soup supper. He shared that the executive committee has brought forward a motion that the soup offering be donated to the ELCA domestic relief fund. The motion passed.

A revised calendar for council meetings was proposed. Instead of not meeting in the month of August, we will not meet in the month of June this year.

Bob mentioned that we will task the property committee to renew efforts to put up a new sign for the church, to replace the sign that was removed when the oil tank was removed from the front of the church.

Pastors' Report - Pastor Martha shared that Laura Heller has been accepted as a Deacon of Word and Service. She has accepted a position as a coordinator of [creation care ministry task force](#) for the Delaware Maryland Synod. Her consecration will take place April 22, 2017. Bishop Gohl will be here. We discussed taking-up a collection from the council members and getting her a gift from the church and council.

Pastor Kevin noted that Ron Fairchild has done a good job chairing a Delaware Maryland Synod Restructuring Task Force initiative. The proposed changes will be presented at the [upcoming annual 2017 Synod Assembly](#), June 1-3, in Ocean City, Md.

Treasurer's Report – Bill Comegna presented the treasurer's report: Income for February was less than outgoing by \$13,718. Because there was a surplus in January, income for the first two months is \$6,694 more than expenses.

Debt Reduction for the second straight month took in less than was needed for the mortgage payment. In February \$10,941 was donated while the mortgage payment was \$10,953. Eleven thousand dollars from surplus monies from 2016 was applied to the principle.

Income for the current year is \$183,363 for the operating budget, and expenses have been \$175,501.

Linwood Van Horn, a member of the finance committee, discussed a presentation, prepared by John Myers at a recent finance committee meeting, about the structure of our current mortgage, which will be subject to market based interest rate changes starting in December of 2018.:

The variable rate that will be in effect after that date is based on the Wall Street Journal Prime rate + 1%. The report provides the history of this rate and demonstrates the likely rates to which our mortgage will be exposed. If the rate goes up to just what the historical average has been over the past 25 years, we could be paying over \$2,800 more a month in interest on the loan. Such an increase would make payments prohibitive.

Linwood brought forward a motion by the finance committee that the church council begin consulting with Thrivent now about restructuring the mortgage at a fixed rate for the life of the loan. The motion passed.

At that point, Bill Comegna presented his findings from investigating some possible mortgage rates from Thrivent. A motion was made and seconded that we authorize Bill to negotiate refinancing the mortgage at a ten-year rate of between 4.95% and 5.25% for a 10-year term based on a 20-year amortization schedule.

Prayers of the Church – were led by Pastor Kevin, Bill, and Pastor Martha.

New Business - There was no new business.

Announcements – Pastor Martha reminded the council that we are in the midst of the 2017 stewardship campaign that culminates on Palm Sunday April 9th,

2017 in the receiving of commitments. The stewardship campaign materials were sent out prior to the council meeting.

Bob Lichtfuss has established a committee to coordinate future plans for Shepherd Staff concerning the possibility of adding on to the current building at 30 Carroll Street. <http://www.shepstaff.org/index.asp>. Any change in the overall size and function of the current building would require action by the City of Westminster regarding a change in zoning, a number of options are being explored. Because Grace owns the property in which Shepherd's Staff is housed, papers would need to be filed by the church.

Kevin Dayhoff reported that he recently visited with Rev. Fred Eckhardt at Carroll Lutheran Village, who sends his best.

There was a discussion about the recent social statement conversation in the church. A congregational conversation took place on Feb. 12, 19, and 26, 2017 about justice for women in church and society. This conversation gave Grace Church the opportunity to provide feedback to the ELCA in the development of a [social statement](#) on "Faith, Sexism, and Justice," that will be proposed to our entire ELCA. Social statements help guide the church in discussing and advocating social issues in the greater community.

Kari Ebeling reported that her daughter, Emma Ebeling, recently worshiped at the [Hope Lutheran Church and Student Center](#) on the campus of the University of Maryland for Ash Wednesday. At the service Pastors Julie Bringman and Ray Ranker expressed their praise of Pastors Kevin and Martha. [<https://www.hopecp.org/about/our-pastors.html>]

On April 29, 2017 we will have a progressive dinner in Grace Hall.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Kevin E. Dayhoff, Grace Lutheran Church council secretary.

Rev. Martha Clementson, Co-Senior Pastor
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Bill Comegna (1st term expires Dec 2017)
Bob Lichtfuss (2nd term expires Dec 2017)
Ron Fairchild (2nd term expires Dec 2017)
Johanna Monka (2nd term expires Dec 2017)
Linwood Van Horn (2nd term expires Dec 2017)
Kevin Dayhoff (2nd term expires Dec 2018)
Brian Sherfey (2nd term expires Dec 2018)

Kari Ebeling (1st term expires Dec 2018)
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Jan Mickey 2nd term expires Dec 2019)

Our Mission: Gifted with God's grace, redeemed by God's Son, and filled with the Holy Spirit, we grow in our relationship with God, one another, and community. Through word and sacrament, we gather to worship, learn, and go into the world empowered to serve.