

# Trinity Lutheran Church Congregation Council

## Minutes of Special meeting with Bishop Gafkjen

### Thursday 16 MAY 2013

**Call To order:** 7:05 p.m.

We went around the table so everyone could introduce themselves to the Bishop and vice versa.

**Present:**

Bishop Gafkjen, Pastor Santoro, Deaconess Barb Herzinger

Council members: Paul Parsons (council president), Valerie Steil (council vice-president), Matt Hernes, Gary Behrens, David Burrow-Flak, Norm Amundsen, Mike Kinsey, Erma Eichhorn, Kathy Brannen, Jane Schreiner

Other Congregation Leadership: Ron Landgrebe

**Discussion:**

Bishop Gafkjen began with a devotion from Ephesians Chapter 4, followed by prayer.

He then asked where we have seen God present at TLC over the years. Almost everyone shared something—among those things shared were the following:

- Friendliness of trinity to visitors
- Pastoral caring for the congregation, specifically when near the end of life here on earth and when blessing children at communion, but also in general
- Our community outreach—affordable housing, work with the homeless, etc
- Bible studies
- Our diverse members that work together to accomplish a lot
- Our openness to more diversity in our membership
- Our embracing of members who have personal challenges, and not ostracizing anyone
- Our beautiful building that provides a wonderful place for us to worship, engage in fellowship, and do so many other things
- Our terrific property committee that keeps our building safe and in great condition
- The wonderful music and musicians of Trinity
- (What am I forgetting? I didn't write everything down, but later thought it may be helpful in future conversations)

The Bishop reminded us of a favorite prayer of his, which goes something like this: “For all that has been, thanks. For all that is to come, yes.” Appropriate for the present leg of our congregational journey.

The Bishop then expressed his profound appreciation for the ministry of Pastor John Santoro, other thanks were shared, and Pastor was asked to leave the meeting at that time.

We then continued our discussion of our gifts and challenges, which will be ongoing in the coming months as we define what Trinity is looking for in its next Pastor.

To help with this, Bishop Gafkjen's gave his 3M Speech:

1. **Mission:** We must first define why we are here, and whether that is changing or not. We may want to do a healthy Congregation Workshop<sup>0</sup> to help with that. Valerie Webdell could possibly facilitate that. *Mission is intentional. Healthy Congregations can be used as a "booster" shot. To that we can choose to add 2 or 3 sessions of retreat work (beginning with the council) which could include a stewardship focus, potentially led by Rev. Nancy Nyland from the IK office.*
2. **Money/Resources:** What do we realistically have available for compensation, without sacrificing our mission(s)? Pastor Rudy Mueller will need to know a clear answer to this question. *The Bishop spoke of growing in generosity. He asked that we be prepared to speak with Rev. Mueller concerning our requirements for Interim Pastor*
3. **Minister:** We must then define what we need in a minister, and what will perhaps stretch us.

We need to fill the pulpit in the meantime, which can come from Pulpit Supply, or synod resources such as the Bishop or other ordained pastors from its staff (these Pastors are free, though their schedules fill up fast). We can also look to retain an interim pastor, whose duties and responsibilities would be defined, and then compensation negotiated. Pastor Rudy Mueller would assign that person, subject to an interview with us and acceptance by both parties. There would be a Vacancy Pastor until the Interim arrived. Pastor Charles Strietelmeier, from Hobart, would assign that person. Pastor Strietelmeier would also assign our call consultant, who can help us through this process. We need to create a call committee. *This is a time of discernment. The committee should engage in Bible Study and take time to become acquainted with one other. They should be listeners and have a deep commitment to the congregation's mission and the ability to gather insight of the entire congregation. Although important, secondary is having a cross section of members on the committee. Being a long term commitment, it is important to have members who can stay with it. When candidates are being interviewed the committee work can become a very intensive time commitment.*

There was some additional discussion about the process, what's next, and where we can go for help when we need it.

**Meeting adjourned:** 9:13 with prayer led by Bishop Gafkjen

Respectfully submitted by Valerie Steil, council vice-president, and temporary substitute emergency stand in acting secretary.

*On a personal note, I would like to commend our Council President, Paul Parsons, who made sure this meeting happened, and has already gathered lots of information and has been on top of this from the time of Pastor's announcement. We are very fortunate to have his leadership, wonderful support from our congregation council, committees, and many other members, and from the Synod, along with the God's Grace to guide us through this process. Many good things can come from this process as we perhaps get to know each other better, and face our faith head on through the examination of our gifts and challenges and what we need to best serve them.*

*Valerie Steil*