

# Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church: Congregation Meeting Minutes

September 26, 2021

**Our Purpose Statement:** Sharing God's love, growing in faith, and creating community.

**Our Guiding Biblical Principles:**

1. Worship of the triune God is central to our life together.
  2. We are grounded in Scripture & prayer & we encourage each other to question, listen, & learn.
  3. We believe everyone is loved & worthy of love; all people are welcome in God's kingdom.
  4. We respond to the needs of our neighbors near and far, following Christ's example.
  5. We use our time, talents, and finances for the glory of God.
  6. We promote love and justice for all of God's creation.
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## **Call to Order**

Norm Philion called the meeting to order. Pastor Sarah gave the opening prayer. We noted that some members were joining the meeting on Zoom. Those on Zoom were asked to type their questions or comments in the chat so a member of the tech team could read them aloud at the in-person meeting.

## **Minutes from May Congregation Meeting**

Minutes from the May 16, 2021, Congregation Meeting were approved as presented.

## **Election of Council Secretary**

Mary Dallao was nominated by Council and approved by the congregation.

## **Budget Report**

David Whitten presented the budget report.

- Council is committed to funding Nadia's position through June 30, 2022, and has identified funds for this. The most critical piece of this is that we finish this year without a deficit. Right now, we are running about \$30K behind where we thought we'd be. We ask for continued generosity in supporting the church through the last three months of the year.
  - For the last 18 months, Nadia's position has been funded by a synod grant. The grant covered expenses through the end of this year, but those funds are not available through 2022. As we get into the budget process, Council intends to make a commitment through the end of 2022. This will be covered when we discuss the budget in an upcoming congregation meeting.

## **Homework Club Update**

Pastor Sarah gave this update because Nadia was weeding and cleaning up the property with the youth.

- Pastor said it "feels like a God thing" that Peace already has the infrastructure and relationships in place to help Afghan evacuees. She noted that Peace's neighborhood elementary school, Parklawn, is getting the most Afghan students in all of Fairfax County. She then invited Marcia Dursi to speak because Marcia had participated in Homework Club over the weekend.
- Marcia said it had been her first time doing Homework Club, and she had been amazed at how many people came and how quickly kids settled down with the tutors. Many were working on math and reading. Their mothers and fathers were also here. The women needed help with English, and the men needed help getting jobs. There is a need for beginning reading books, both at the child and

adult level, and lots of books, in general. Marcia said they also brought out four bags of quilts, which were literally scooped up in minutes. If you can volunteer or be a tutor, please let Nadia know. It was an incredible experience.

- Pastor Sarah added that people who live in the neighborhood but are not Afghan evacuees are also Homework Club clientele. Peace is trying to figure out how to balance the two communities. We are exploring the idea of an afterschool program for Parklawn students who live nearby but are not sure how it will go and if this is the right thing to pursue. Asking for prayers in figuring out how Peace can be a blessing to students living nearby.

### **New Website Design**

Josh Keiter provided this update.

- Josh is working with Autumn Kendrick on refurbishing the website. They just completed a first draft. They are making revisions and updates and expect to be finished in a month or two.
- Josh is also working on upgrading and transferring Peace's database of members, history, and giving from Shepherd's Staff to Breeze, which is an online, secure, private database. This will give members an online login portal linked through the website. We will have an online opt-in directory where people can upload a photo, etc. Members will also be able to access a history of their giving. If you're not comfortable with online portals, Josh will be sharing some resources to help with this transition.
  - Debbie Marquardt asked when we will switch systems. Josh said we have Shepherd's Staff through the end of June.
  - Pastor Sarah added that Peace takes management of members' online data very seriously and emphasized that Peace knows this transfer of data is a big deal and is being extremely careful about process and security.

### **October Retreat Status**

Pastor Sarah provided this update.

- The retreat is still moving forward but will just be one night. Six households are participating. If you decide you want to go after all, we may still have some rooms available. It's Friday night through Saturday midday. It will be low-key, with a campfire and songs, October 8 and 9. Let Pastor know if you want to go, and she will see if it's possible.

### **Status of Reopening**

Norm Phillion provided this update.

- We haven't made a decision. The Reopening Committee will meet again in early October to review the situation, which is confusing. All institutions are facing this problem right now, but as soon as we have a change to report, we will do so.
- Pastor Sarah said we will have two more Sundays outside, then move inside October 17.

### **Closing Prayer**

Norm Phillion gave the closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned.