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holy cross episcopal + ascension lutheran

Leadership Team Meeting
Minutes
Thursday, August 20, 2026

Meeting minutes taken by Jill Barry

Members Present: Cal Meuzelaar, Sally Todd, Laura Kremer, Co Walter, Mary Trasky, Marjo Jordan, the Rev. Jonathan Bratt Carle (JBC)
Non-voting Present: Jill Barry (recording secretary), Laura Daniels, Deacon Kim Hoop

Meeting called to order 6:01 PM; Cal offered the opening prayer.

- Cal reminded the team that we are all "small working models of the new creation", and that we should remember to breathe, and to celebrate all that has happened at Two Churches this year.

Agenda approved as written (Co moved / Laura K. 2nd/Passed)

Prior Minutes for June (no meeting in July) approved with typo corrections (Laura K. moved/Marjo 2nd/Passed)

Liaison & Clergy Reports – all reports accepted. (Sally moved/Laura K. 2nd/Passed):

Clergy Reports (written) for July & August accepted

- Jonathan's report
  - Upcoming planned time off includes Sunday, Sept. 6 – Family Camp @ Camp Henry, Fr. Klein supplying; Sept. 28-Oct 4 @ continuing education event in Buffalo NY, Fr. Klein supplying.
- Kim's report
  - Had been doing some groundwork regarding potential Vacation Bible School offering for the future; Co suggested that we have a lot on our plate right now so perhaps this initial investigation might be the extend of what we need currently. Sally suggested we might consider doing just a one-day event rather than the more typical week-long VBS. Jill reminded everyone that both Church Publishing and Augsburg-Fortress (Episcopal & ELCA publishing) have lots of different curricula available for VBS when the time comes. No decisions made at this time.
  - Has been looking into church house groups; will be starting a small group book/Bible study at her house in September.

Property (written report from Sally)

- Elevator - Still no response from McNally regarding estimate for elevator repair.
- Jon G. removed 2 dead trees and 4 dead bushes, and the welcome flag was moved from the tower to the street side of the building by John S.
- Landscape Design Task Group – their work has been completed, and Sally will be meeting with the designer 8/21.
- Rain Garden weeding is scheduled for Sept 1, and 3rd garden planting will be Saturday, Sept. 19.

Community Ministry (written report from Laura K)

- At their July 12 meeting, the CM team decided that we would no longer support Bethany Christian Services due to their new "Statement of Faith and Belief" which takes a very conservative and exclusionary view of human sexuality and marriage, and which BCS is requiring all board members, employees, volunteers, and current & future foster families to accept and sign. The CM team has asked Rev. Jonathan to write a letter to BCS to explain our decision, convey Two Churches' beliefs, as well as their disappointment that we can no longer support an otherwise worthy charity. Rev. Jonathan agreed to write said letter.
- Donation being sent in August to the LGBTQ+ Healthcare Consortium, which aims to improve healthcare access for LGBTQ+ people in the greater Grand Rapids area.
- St. Mark's Breakfast Café workday scheduled for August 29.
- "God's Work. Our Hands." Sunday is Sept. 13 – we will be putting together personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief.

- Kibble Konnection collection begins Sept. 20 and runs through the annual Blessing of the Animals on Oct. 11. – this supports the pet food bank of the Humane Society of West Michigan.

Hospitality (verbal report from Laura D.)

- We need a new coffee pot/urn as the old one stopped working and is too old to consider trying to repair. Jill asked Polly S. to look into what we need.

Worship & Music – (verbal report from JBC)

- The Wednesday night Zoom Bible Study that was tentatively set to resume Sept. 9 is being replaced by some other form of in-person class that is still in development by Rev. Jonathan & Cal.

Together West Michigan – (verbal report from Marjo J.)

- People are slow in signing up for the informational dinners at Polly's house
- Talked briefly about possibility of local clergy being trained as poll chaplains (with some training on state law) to provide a "less anxious" presence at the polls.

Correspondence

- Thank yous from In the Image, Esther Y.-P.'s family, and Bethany Christian Services

Treasurer's Report – (written report from Co)

- Audit was a productive meeting, looking at not just financial but general business practices as well.
- We had a positive month in July which gives us a year-to-date net income of $1795.
- Recently became aware that we now have to pay payroll taxes monthly rather than quarterly; paid a penalty of $289.98 for the first quarter of this year; did not receive notice of this requirement until June, so there may be an additional penalty coming. Monthly payments were implemented immediately upon receiving the notice.

Old Business:

- LGBTQ+ Workgroup (Jonathan BC, Sally T., Marjo J., Cal M., Mary T., Laura K.) – have not done anything further since putting out the "inclusion" pins in the narthex.
- Vision Retreat Goal Updates – reminded everyone of our 3-, 6-, and 12-month goals – no discussion.
- DHS/ICE Protocols – still a need to schedule Peaceful Observers presentation. Cal suggested this be tabled in light of other fall groups and bible studies starting.
- Dismantling Racism – keeping this on the backburner for the fall

New Business:

- Discussed Fall Class being planned (verbal report by Cal & Jonathan) – JBC, Cal, Prof. Brian Bowdle (neighbor of JBC; Psychology Professor at GVSU), and the Rev. Michael Gulker from The Colossian Forum met together to hash out the basis of a class on how we can maintain connections with each other when there is so much division in the world today.
    - JBC: "Love of neighbor begins at home" – we need to learn how to love each other in our differences. How do we intentionally increase our feeling of warmth/safety/engagement in our congregation?
    - This dovetails with our desire to move from "doing ministry for" to "doing ministry with" – we need to work on ourselves first.
    - What does it mean to truly have our lives woven together?
    - Brian B. has agreed to facilitate our class.

Next meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 17, at 6 PM

Meeting adjourned at 8:18 PM and closed with the Lord's Prayer.