

Immanuel Lutheran Church & School
Voters Meeting Minutes
09.23.2021

Attendance: 45

Meeting was called to order by Tom Ruff at 7:03 p.m.

Pastor Jason Auringer opened with a devotional message and prayer based on a reading from Mark 9:50.

Tom Ruff reviewed the minutes from the May Voters Meeting, noting corrections to the spelling of his name (pg. 1) and Dave Rawlings (pg. 2). John Waddell made a motion to approve the minutes with noted corrections. Kris Schuldt seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

Tom Ruff reviewed the minutes from the July Special Voters Meeting. Dan Ebert made a motion to approve the minutes. Sam Miles seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

Tom Ruff highlighted recent BOD activity.

Tom Ruff commented on the resignation of BOD member Sam Miles, and the subsequent appointment of Grant Goris to both fill the vacancy and complete the open term.

Tom Ruff stated the BOD held an August workshop to review activities and needs of Immanuel Lutheran Church and School.

Tom Ruff provided an update regarding the process to move the review of the church Constitution forward:

- Discussion to be tabled to a specific open evening session at which time those interested can come forward to discuss particulars of the Constitution. Questions regarding the Constitution can also be submitted through the BOD e-mail. This process will allow time to process questions in more detail and consider the structure of what Immanuel wants the Constitution to be. Evening session to be scheduled mid-October.
- BOD will review the outcomes of the meeting and determine how quickly the document can be brought back to the voters.
- A special Voters Meeting will be called for Constitution approval.

Roger Huslage, chair of the Balcony/Sanctuary Improvement Committee, presented the following update:

- Committee members: Roger Huslage, Vern Boehme, Forrest Van Ness, Rod Kumm, Jason Auringer, Joel Mueller, Sharon Blalock, Mike Schlipp and Mark Kaiser.
- The Committee met to assess balcony needs, including AV equipment, seating, conference room, choir(s), and storage needs, as well as renovations timing.

- Members met with three contractors.

Roger Huslage presented a preliminary renovation drawing. The Committee is waiting for bids, with bids likely based on time and material. Renovation timing anticipated after the first of the year.

Dan Ebert stated that any storage closet will require a sprinkler system, which will dictate what is stored.

Roger Huslage shared that auditorium-style seating chairs have been purchased and received. These chairs will add seating to enable social distancing when necessary.

Roger Huslage responded to both Paul Edwards' question about renovation construction materials and John Waddell's question about what open space will be included.

Tom Ruff commented that the balcony improvement project will require a special Voters Meeting for review and approval.

Tom Ruff reminded those in attendance that sanctuary upgrades are also being reviewed and input is needed.

Carol Waddell presented the Treasurer's Report.

Carol Waddell reported that the end-of-year financial support was very positive and that the first months into this current year are also positive. Carol Waddell stated that the staff continues to keep expenses down.

Tom Ruff stated that the 2020-21 excess revenue of \$104,000 has not been designated into a special fund at this time.

Les Blalock asked where this surplus is reflected on the financial report. Carol Waddell reported the funds are shown under the June 2021 line item (Month by Month Fiscal Year Summary), are currently held in the Sanctuary fund, and are reflected in the "Church Funds Set Aside as of June 2021 - Cap Reserve for Sanctuary/Balcony" balance of \$343,642.

Amy Schult asked if funds can be designated in some other way. Dan Ebert provided additional clarification of the financial report.

Tom Ruff asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report. Larry Landman made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Dan Ebert seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

Pastor Auringer provided a review of the Senior Pastor's Report.

Pastor Auringer introduced Maxx Fisher, pastor at St. Paul Lutheran Church - New Melle, and Janie Fisher, Immanuel Youth Ministry intern.

Pastor Auringer stated, as discussed at the August BOD workshop, a desire to provide clarity of Immanuel's mission: narrow down who we are — with 141 years of church and school ministry — as a church and school. While disappointed to have not received a result statement(s) from

the District on the church survey taken about a year ago, a statement which may have provided some survey insight, clarity is needed to guide Immanuel's next steps in ministry.

Pastor Auringer commented on both balcony and sanctuary upgrades and preliminary land acquisition. God has blessed Immanuel. What could Immanuel dream about for the next 100 years to set up the next generation in the community?

Paul Edwards asked about current entrance accessibility both on Sundays and Monday through Friday. Discussion regarding potential MDOT future plans.

Pastor Auringer reported on current staffing, with a need to review and redefine the Business Manager role, as well as plans for the deaconess intern role once Janie Fisher completes her internship (June 2022).

Janie Fisher presented an outline of the current Immanuel Youth Ministry. The goal of Youth Ministry is to develop continuous programming with student engagement.

Amy Schuldt asked if other groups, such as St. Paul-New Melle, are invited to join. Janie Fisher responded other groups are invited.

Jason Auringer reported on a new online church directory, especially needed as both online and in-person attendance have increased during the past year. Jason Auringer responded to both Darlene Whited's question regarding logistics for submitting individual photos to the directory and David Rawlings' question about permissions when it involves children.

Pastor Auringer reported on the Sunday School program, which include 'huddles' for the younger children, Sunday morning classes for elementary, middle and high school students, and Pastor Matzat teaching the adult class.

Pastor Auringer reported on the recently formed grief support ministry.

Pastor Auringer commented on the goal for better, more timely communications from the pastoral office.

Pastor Auringer introduced Maxx Fisher.

- Maxx Fisher reported on the St. Paul Lutheran-New Melle year in review and ministry plans, including community connections, financial matters, future planning and sustainability, and grounds maintenance.
- Sam Miles asked about the St. Paul-New Meller Oktoberfest date: 12-6 pm Sunday, October 17.
- Maxx Fisher thanked Immanuel for the support in walking along with St Paul-New Melle.

Pastor Auringer presented the Property Report for Mike Schlipp.

Pastor Auringer spoke to the ability to address and sign off on vaccine religious exemption requests.

Allison Dolak reported that the school has taken on the "Overflowing" theme for the 2021-22 school year.

Allison Dolak provided a 2021-22 enrollment update: 510 students, most of which are full time. Allison commented that one-half day preschool programs are not in demand; consequently, the preschool programs have moved to full days.

Allison Dolak reported the school continues to address and manage Covid needs.

Allison Dolak stated the Trunk or Treat drive-through event is scheduled for October 29. Interested vendors are to contact Allison.

Allison Dolak commented that God has blessed Immanuel with a fantastic staff of teachers and support staff.

Allison Dolak noted the decrease in individuals going into teacher training for Lutheran schools and the potential future hiring impact.

Paul Edwards asked about reasons behind the decrease. Allison Dollak stated several reasons, including college tuition, teacher pay for Lutheran vs. public schools, and retirement age impact for public vs. Lutheran school teachers.

Paul Edwards asked how Covid has affected Immanuel employees? Allison Dollak responded that with a year under our belt, rapid testing, and Zoom classes, the staff continues to exhibit a good attitude. The 2020-21 year involved more "hesitancy," as staff was unsure how things would go. This year Immanuel has its own data as we have "lived it."

Dan Ebert asked if all classes have electronic capability and what kind of technology is made available to them.

- Allison Dollak responded that every child has the capability of a Chrome book; and if a child is out, they are allowed to Zoom. The school continues to maintain a 72-hour out requirement if ill.
- Brandon Charter comment that as a parent when his children were home under quarantine, things worked wonderfully. Brandon commended Allison and the school on doing an amazing job.

Tom Ruff commented on the blessings of sustainable leadership, strong financial position, and partnerships Immanuel has received; and he invited voters to close this Voters Meeting in the singing of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

David Rawlings asked about the status of organ repair. Pastor Auringer responded that the organ should be ready the weekend of October 2-3 services.

David Rawlings asked about the Advent schedule. Pastor Auringer noted that children's programs will be held on Wednesday evenings during Advent, Friday Christmas Eve will involve three services, one service on Christmas Day (Saturday), and one service on Sunday, December 26.

Tom Ruff asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dan Ebert made a motion to adjourn. John Waddell seconded the motion. Motion approved by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m. with the singing of "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow."

HANDOUTS:

- Meeting Agenda
- May 24, 2021, Voters Meeting Minutes
- July 11, 2021, Special Voters Meeting Minutes
- Treasurer's Month by Month Summary Report
- Senior Pastor's Report
- Immanuel Youth Ministry Report
- Letter – Pastor Maxx Fisher, St. Paul – New Melle
- St. Paul – New Melle Ministry Summary
- Property Report
- Preliminary balcony renovation drawing