

Congregation Assembly Minutes—Sep 17, 2023

1. Governance Board (G) Chair, Todd Wegman opened the Congregational Assembly on Sunday Sep 17, 2023 at 3:35pm
2. Elder, Rene Stein led the opening devotion and prayer.
3. Attendance: 45 attended in person. Quorum required: 44 voting members present (20% of 217 voting members). Quorum achieved.
4. Minutes from June 4, 2023 Congregational Assembly were provided online. Cheryl Lee moved that minutes be approved. Ethel Rukensbrod seconded the motion, no further discussion. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
5. **Governance Board update.** Todd Wegman had those present read our vision statement together and then went over the six proposed Ministry Target Areas of our Ministry Action Plan (MAP). See PowerPoint slides for details. Target areas are:

- Operations During Vacancies. Special note: Todd explained that due to the vacancy of the senior pastor, the Governance Board is now a Managing Board, providing decision making and supervision on operations in conjunction with Elders and Staff. Pastor Flahn's position as Associate Pastor is now full-time.
- Witness, Outreach and Communications
- Community Building
- Children's ministry-continued from last MAP
- Spanish Outreach
- Prayer

Motion was made and seconded to approve the Target Areas for '23-'24. There was no discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

6. **Open Arms Update.** Enrollment is now at 150, up from 136 in January. OA had a successful summer program including VBS. There was great congregational support for staff appreciation luncheons during the staff's summer work week. Todd publicly affirmed the tremendous work of Becci Stewart, Open Arms Director and her staff.
7. **Youth Ministry Update** from Youth Ministries Director, Natasha Bowlds. High School mission/service trip was to North Carolina to help rebuild a local park that had been destroyed by hurricane. The annual youth trip to Assateague trip was successful. Four of the adults were previous youth members. Wednesday night youth group has resumed with about 30 kids. Youth do break into small groups. Natasha is also starting a high school Bible study group on Sunday nights. This year there are planned service activities with Orphan Grain Train and World Vision (30-hour Famine). Formal confirmation has not restarted. The reasons are many but include why we also don't have the full Wednesday afternoon scope of activities for all ages that we had pre-covid. Youth group members and families are challenged with work schedules and more single/co-parenting arrangements that make regular attendance and finding parent volunteers more difficult. With different youth attending every week, it is difficult to maintain a structured weekly class like Confirmation. Natasha has a need for volunteers to work with Confirmation. She would especially like a few to step up for this year's 8th graders. She has great volunteers for Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings but not for Confirmation.
8. **Facilities update and Challenges.** Board member, Roger Harrison provided update on HVAC installation. The good news is that BG&E has approved a \$19,358.34 rebate once installed.

Unfortunately, the installation date has now been delayed to November due to supply chain issues. There are temporary spot coolers in each of the classrooms that have mostly worked to provide AC but these struggle during the hottest and humid days. Todd added updates about the need for dry-pipe repair to prevent future flooding (we have had two floods in the past) and the fixing of a non-operational water shut-off fund. Older buildings have maintenance issues, and we will keep the congregation informed on volunteer opportunities and major cost issues. Ron Pieper asked a question about the maintenance budget. Roger answered that there is \$96,320 in the property budget from which maintenance is paid. The water shut-off valve repair is not included in the budget. Repairs will be paid for from the budget and if there is a greater need the congregation will be informed.

9. **Columbarium update.** Committee has been expanded, pamphlet updated, online contract and rules prepared. The committee is working on the zoning process, two niches have been sold and others are interested in purchasing. A niche costs \$2500 which would be for one or two cremains. 12-14 niches must be sold before the contract will be signed. Once the contract is signed it will be six months before installation.
10. **Financial Report** (See separate detailed power point) Expenses still exceed giving but are even with budget. Cash on hand covers any shortfalls.

- **Cash on hand as of 31 Aug:** \$1,061,041 compared to 31 Aug 22: \$1,003,376 (This includes LCEF loan for HVAC if needed).
- **Mortgage Balance as of 31 Aug** \$1,476,572 compared to 31 Aug '22: \$1,639,496 (163K pd against principal since Aug, '22) Term on note in 2031.
- **Loans**
 - **LCEF loan-- 0original \$150,000 current balance \$147,500.**
 - **PPP loan --original 11,000 current balance \$5520**
 - **PNC line of credit -- \$100,000 current balance \$0**
- Church financial activity **FY '23: 9/1/22-8/31/23**

General Fund Giving:	\$ \$845,021
Designated fund giving	\$ 257,723
Total Giving	\$ 1,102,744

General Fund Expenses	\$ 967,576
Designated fund expenses	\$ 239,905
Total Expenses	\$ 1,207,481

Net General Fund Activity \$ **-104,737** **FY23** Cash on hand covered shortfalls.

Open Arms financial activity **FY 23: 9/1/22-8/31/23**

Tuition/Contributions \$ 1,515,104

Open Arms Expenses \$ 1,521,283

Open Arms Balance \$ -6179 FY23 Note—Cash on hand from grants etc covers this shortfall.

11. New Business.

- Bylaw Change Resolution to increase the Call Committee from 5 members to “at least 5 members” to be more inclusive of our demographics and population was submitted by the Governance Board and seconded by Roger Harrison. An animated discussion was had after a suggestion of having a “no more than” number as well as a “no less than number.” Several argued in favor of having a specific finite number which would insure there were no complaints from congregational members that they weren’t represented and wanted the committee expanded; whereas others thought the flexibility of an open-ended number was preferable but recognizing that the group could become unwieldy above 12. Ethel Rukenbrod proposed an amendment to the resolution that “the Call committee shall consist of at least five members and no more than 11 members. This motion was seconded. More discussion ensued. Question was called for the amendment to the resolution. The vote to end the discussion was approved. The voice vote to approve the amendment was too close to determine the outcome so written ballots were provided. Written ballot count: 24 votes for the amendment and 19 opposed. Amendment carries by simple majority. Christine Maconachy moved for a vote for the amended resolution. This was seconded and the voice vote was unanimous in favor of amended resolution. The resolution was approved as follows.

Whereas, the current OSLC bylaws limit Call Committee members to five members including one member of the Governance Board and

Whereas, the Governance Board desires that the Call committee reflect the diversity and demographics of our congregation, which might require more members on the Call committee;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Current OSLC Bylaws dated 06/03/2023, Article III: Office of the Pastor, Paragraph B. Procedure for Securing a Pastor, Subparagraph 1. Occurrence be amended to read

*1. Occurrence. As soon as a pastoral vacancy occurs, the Governance Board Chair shall appoint a Call Committee. The Call Committee shall consist of **at least five and no more than eleven** members. At least one shall be a member of the Governance Board. The Chair of the Governance Board shall then contact the District President Office to arrange a meeting with the Call Committee.*

- FY 24 Budget Resolution. Roger Harrison presented the Governance Board Budget resolution. Specifics were described in detailed PowerPoint slides with explanation. Peter Walsh seconded motion. Discussion included if OA salaries were being raised, was tuition also being raised. The answer was yes. Kirk Rittenhouse questioned the debt service increase. OSLC accountant, Marcie Zell, explained that this budget includes paying off LCEF loan of 150k before it incurs interest. It’s accounted for in the budget as debt service, but we have the cash to pay it off because we have not used it. Natasha Bowlds proposed an amendment to add \$1000 to VBS and \$1500 to the Sunday School budget changing the overall budget to \$3,392,360.00. These

numbers were left off the proposed budget inadvertently. Christine Maconachy noted that our Ministry Action Plan target area emphasizes children's ministry and yet the percentage of our budget for children's ministry is small, this seems to not represent a true desire to serve children. Pastor Diefenthaler called the question on the amendment. Voice vote unanimously approved the amendment. Voice vote on amended resolution was approved unanimously. Approved Resolution is as follows:

*Whereas, the FY 24 budget has been developed to cover the expected expenditures for FY24 based on staff input, FY 23 actual spending, and inflation adjustments and
Whereas the FY 24 budget includes General Fund, Designated Funds and Open Arms Funds with a total budget of \$3,392,360.00*

Be it resolved that the FY 24 Budget be approved as presented to the Congregation at the September 17, 2023 Congregational Assembly.

12. Announcements.

- There will be a special Congregational Assembly for the Call process only sometime soon.
- Next full Congregational Assembly will in Jan '24
- Todd thanked the Board as well as current staff, finance committee and all the ministry teams and workgroups for their hard work and commitment to OSLC mission and ministries.

13. Other questions or concerns. Question was raised about call or hiring process for additional staff. This will not be the responsibility of the current Call Committee, instead it will be addressed by the Governance Board and Todd promised transparency as we move forward.

14. Pastor Flahn closed us in prayer at 5:30pm

Minutes prepared by Tina McGuffey, Governance Board Secretary.