

President's Report to our St Mark Congregation (Special Edition: January Voter's Meeting)

January 2018

In an effort to keep everyone informed of our critical decisions and operations at St Mark, I would like to recap our discussions and decisions from our last quarterly voter's meeting, held January 21, 2018.

At the beginning of our meeting, we reviewed our board quarterly reports. I don't think there is much news to report here over what I'm already reporting to you with my monthly reports. The boards completed their reports, highlighting key messages and activities.

A new item was an announcement that Peter Micheel has received a call to First German Lutheran School in Manitowoc, WI. This would be for duties in grades 7-8, staff ministry, and principal. Please keep Peter in your prayers and he would welcome your thoughts and support as he deliberates his call.

The Treasurer reported that our last quarter offerings were about \$35,000 short - comparing to previous years and our 5-year averages. This seems to account for our 50 in 50 offering fund drive - as it may have "replaced" our general fund giving. Operations should remain within our budget - barring any unforeseen expenses.

The voters then proceeded to handle motions presented to them by your council. I'll speak to each of those and the outcome.

The voters approved an updated policy to better support MLC matching tuition gift funding from our St Mark Scholarship Fund. The goal was to make best use of our MLC matching gifts opportunities and also use an average payout to better provide a consistent amount to support our students from year to year. This motion was approved and carried.

Some updates were then heard concerning a couple of items: The first was our LED conversion process. The Buildings and Grounds team, along with Steve Hahm, are in the process of changing out and re-wiring nearly 900 bulbs. They are about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way through this process. Because we pay about \$5000/year in electricity costs for our facilities, we believe we are already conservatively saving nearly \$150/month in electricity costs. The big effort will be bulb conversion in our Shaker Center and Sanctuary. The team was urged to organize a date to accept help from willing members of our congregation - and they are working to organize this event and get information publicized.

The second item discussed was our Bell Tower building progress. James Murillo from our Buildings and Grounds board is representing this effort. Research dead-ended with a current company exceeding our costs and budgets. He is currently re-working the planning effort. They asked the council for consideration for an additional expense of about \$3000 to finalize planning and code requirements in order to drive the bidding process. The council and trustees are now considering this expense in order to keep this project forward. The voters have already authorized the budget not to exceed our existing fund balance and our 50 in 50 expense - which totals around \$30,800.

A motion was then made by the Elders to "start the call process" for additional pastoral support. Much discussion occurred on this item. Overall, there was much support and the motion passed. As the next steps, the challenge to the elders and council is to return to the voters with much more detailed information on projected duties of an additional pastor, budgetary costs/expenses, and generally more

detail on input needed to start the call process. I'm expecting there will be a special voter's meeting called to inform our voters and proceed officially into the call process. Look for more information from our Elders to define this process and need going forward.

Another motion was approved to create a committee to review our school staff and church staff policies and handbooks. The purpose of the committee will be to adhere to our constitution and bylaws in terms of equality of our church and school staffing definitions and benefits.

To quickly go through other approved motions:

- School accreditation standards: Support teachers to join professional organizations (paid up to \$100/year). Also supported was continuing education for our school staffing.
- Updated student fees for our 2018/19 school year.
- Accepted donation of chairs from Mike Hulke - funeral director.

We did discuss a motion to increase our CMO (Church Mission Offering) to support our Synod. We currently submit \$60,000/year to our synod in support of their operations. The motion was to increase this amount to \$66,000/year. The motion did not carry - and our CMO will remain at \$60,000/year.

We also discussed a lay delegate for our Synod's district convention. Tom Kuzenski volunteered to attend and represent our church body. Another miscellaneous motion was made to declare our 3318 Patton Street property as used as storage for taxation classification purposes. The last motion was made to utilize remaining funds of our "50 in 50" fund drive for debt reduction and hurricane relief funding. The remaining funds will be equally divided.

I hope this keeps everyone informed of our discussions at our quarterly voters meeting. We had 40 in attendance and had very good and beneficial discussion and input on our motions. Much was accomplished!

I'll include my standard closing statement with you: If you ever need more information on any of the work the boards are performing, let me know. I'll work to find the answer or raise a suggestion for discussion. Contact information for me: Email (fischerfull@gmail.com), Cell (715.497.5264) - feel free to give me a call if you want to discuss anything we're working on, if you have ideas, can help, or just want to chat. Your council values your ideas and support.

In God's service,
Eric Fischer, President