



## **ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**May 23, 2021  
11:30 a.m.  
Under the Tent**

President Chris Victoria welcomed everyone to our second meeting under the Tent. He commented on being together again now that restrictions necessitated by the Covid-19 Pandemic are being relaxed.

He announced that the requirements of the Bylaws have been met, with announcements of the meeting and materials available in advance.

He introduced himself as the President of the congregation and thanked everyone for attending this meeting. He stated that he is honored to serve as President and Chairman of the Trustees and appreciates the opportunity to serve.

He commended Dave Kruse and the excellent work he and his team have been doing in providing streamed services. He mentioned the return to in-person services and the opportunities for volunteers to be part of our ministry. He read Hebrews 10:24-25, *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* We have all been missing meeting together and worshiping together. It is time to be back and today is the beginning.

### **Invitation to Sign Constitution**

The President invited all confirmed members, over the age of 18, who have not yet signed the Constitution, to come forward and sign in order to be able to participate in the issues to be presented at the meeting this afternoon. He invited those members who have not signed the Constitution to come forward to the table set to the side of the tent.

He invited Pastor Tim Klinkenberg to bring the Devotion and opening prayer as we begin the meeting.

### **Opening Devotion and Prayer**

Pastor Tim greeted everyone, commenting that it is a great day to be gathered together and to celebrate God's goodness and His presence at St. John's. He began his devotion with prayer. He commented that sometimes we stay away from some scriptures that are confusing, but Romans 8 shows us the Spirit can open our hearts. *“We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.”* It is by being anchored and rooted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness that comes from that has allowed us to be together during the months of the Pandemic. The character and nature of the Church has been seen and revealed during the last few months. We are in a strong position to help families and mentor children, to speak words of grace and to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It is an enormous blessings to be

speaking the Word to the world. We can celebrate a lot of good things today. He closed with prayer.

The President thanked Pastor Tim for prayers and the devotion.

## Minutes

Minutes of the Congregational Assembly of September 27, 2020, were reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Minutes of this meeting and an oral vote reflected that the Minutes were approved.

## Elections

In the absence of Vice President Mark Bogh, Congregational Secretary Boe Boezinger introduced himself and commented that it is good to be here leading the election as we add new leaders to our ministry.

Following the Bylaws, announcements and information for nominations have been circulated over the last few weeks, verbally and through the internet. Short bios of each candidate have been available online and at the meeting today. He thanked those who have nominated candidates, all of whom have been vetted and confirmed by the leaders of the congregation, as required by the Bylaws. He introduced the nominees and asked them to stand. The ballot reflected that none of the open positions were contested, with one candidate for each position.

Carol Wold made a motion, **“because there is only one candidate for each position to be filled, the nominees on the ballot be declared elected by acclamation.”** The motion was seconded. There was no discussion. Boe stated a motion has been made and seconded that the nominees be declared elected by acclamation. If there is no objection, a vote will be taken on the motion. An oral vote reflected **the motion has been accepted and the nominees are declared elected.**

President -	Chris Victoria <i>(elected to second term)</i>
Secretary -	Boe Boezinger <i>(elected to second term)</i>
Council of Schools, Member -	Mike Crawford <i>(elected to second term)</i> Julie Brown <i>(elected to first term)</i>
Council of Elders, Members -	Ryan Bartholomew <i>(elected to second term)</i> Jon Krueger <i>(elected to first term)</i>
Ratification:	
Council of Worship and Music, Chairman -	Dennis Blanchard
Council of Youth & Young Adults -	Brian Todd
Council of Evangelism, Outreach and Missions –	Dale Newcom
Council of Families with Children –	Deanne Zimpelmann
Council of Prayer and Congregational Care –	Bonnie Crawford
Council of Adult Ministries –	Cathy Joeckel
Council of Business Administration –	Tim Virus

The Secretary congratulated the newly-elected officers and leaders and thanked them for their willingness to serve.

## Senior Pastor's Report

The President commented that, with the light agenda for the meeting today, he invited Pastor Tim to bring a more complete and inclusive report about our ministry.

Pastor Tim thanked the congregation for what they have done during this time. He has talked with many Pastors across the country who would love to have a congregation and church as we do with the nature and character of our congregation. We have taken more ground and have been able to grow. Our congregation is made of extremely capable people. The flexibility has been gratifying, generosity has been off the charts, we have been able to expand ministry. The strength of our schools has been outstanding and attracted many new people. We have gained a momentum during this time that started when we returned to campus on June 15, 2020, and it continues to grow.

There are many things to report and celebrate

- After almost 50 years in ministry and 31 years at St. John's, Dr. Bill Heide will retire on June 30, with our deep gratitude and appreciation for his service to ministry of St. John's. His last Sunday leading worship will be June 27, after which we will turn this area into a party and have a St. John's family celebration under the Tent to thank Bill.
- Two faculty retirements, with thanks to God for their contributions:
  - Pam Cook, who has taught for over 40 years, 23 at St. John's. She adjusts her teaching methods to the needs of her students. Kids find a home in her classroom. Parents appreciate her care for their children.
  - Stephanie Van Blarcom, teaching at St. John's for 31 years. She has taken scores and scores of students across the country to Washington, D.C. A teacher who has such reach and deep influence on the lives of her students and deep connections in our church family.
- Dr. Jake Hollatz is working hard to bring in new teachers for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Director of Worship & Music Search Team has been meeting for the last 18 months to fill this position. The task began with surveys of our congregation, worshipers and community. The data was digested and some things you have already seen implemented and other items brought changes to our internal mechanics as a result of the information gathered. The Search Team utilized data as part of their work and review of the nominees and candidates. Forty questionnaires were sent to 40+ people and 16 completed forms were received. As they worked through the information, two candidates came to the top of their list: Alex Guebert and Karissa Raebel, both graduates of Concordia and both deeply committed and dedicated. They will both interview on campus in the next month. And we hope to have the position filled in the next couple of months.
- DCE for Families – The Search Team has been working to identify a candidate for this position and has identified Jim Meyer, now serving at Community Lutheran in Escondido. A recommendation will be presented to the Trustees next week, with a hope to have Jim with us soon.
- New IT Person and Videographer – a new position and staff person has been added with Estevan Feliciano. This will help us better record all aspects of our ministry. He has been moving around during the lunch and the meeting, taking video.
- Services during Covid – we were blessed to have been able to stream services during the Covid lockdown last year, which are continuing. Since that time, progress toward returning to in-person worship has been made and we are coming back. Today is a great example. He acknowledged President Chris Victoria's role in streaming services in the Auditorium. He helped to facilitate a meeting with our member, Joe Shackelford, to set up a new system with five cameras. With this new equipment, we are able to produce services that are better than most congregations. It is a blessing to be able to do that.
- Life Groups, where people find community and circle around each other, became very adept at delivering online programs for adults, children, junior high and high school students.
- VBS for 2021 will be in a new format for families, beginning in June. He commented on the

- creativity of the team.
- Bible Studies will be opening up as the City and County open, allowing all to study God's Word in person.
  - New Members were received today in the service under the Tent. Pastor Michael Hayes has been teaching new members on Zoom and doing a great job. We have received 125 new members over the last year. He praised Pastor Mike and his team for their great work.
  - Confirmation – 51 students were confirmed last Sunday, most of whom are students in our School.
  - School – he praised the great cohesion among faculty and staff, supporting and helping each other. He thanked Dr. Hollatz and staff for their fine work. Enrollment for 2021-2022 began several months ago and is still ongoing with parents contacting the School because they want their children to attend St. John's. A number of students came to us last year from public school and found community that provides a great curriculum and a deep and abiding faith in Jesus Christ. They are returning for the next year.
  - Our Preschool is full and we need to find more space. The recent baby boom, and the desire for what our Preschool brings will only increase.
  - Pastor Nathan Huse came to St. John's last year and brought so many gifts in so many areas. He has done an outstanding job at Peace Lutheran in Tustin. He is a marvelous light of hope on our staff and we needed the energy he brings. Worship at Peace has been outside, on the grassy lawn under the trees, which has been a great benefit for many people who want to worship outdoors. A number of people from St. John's are worshipping there. There is a problem in that the number of people worshipping there, averaging 120, is greater than the capacity of the sanctuary. He is working toward a solution for that now.
  - Outreach & Missions – one of the things that we could have put on a back burner during this time is missions. But, with Pastor Trevor Van Blarcom leading this ministry, the bell curve is the people we have helped. Last weekend, they had a bounce house for kids in the Kinship program on campus, with lunch, and had a great time. Being loved and cared for is an enormous blessing. There are stories about the character of our congregation and what Mary Salgado and St. John's are doing. We are respected because we do what we say and find ourselves in a position of leadership in Orange County. We are working on a program that will help us raise up more and more volunteers in Foster Care, which will keep mothers and children together and keep them from sleeping in the park. St. John's has an opportunity to help.
  - Graceworks in Kenya – we have an opportunity to go back to Kenya. There is still work to be done in Africa and Pastor Trevor has been an army of one leading this. This may be some of the best work we have done.
  - Music – Marco Mejia accepted a position as Worship Arts Director at St. Matthew's in Rocklin, CA, joining Pastor Nathan Hausch. Stephan Nosrat has stepped into an interim role as Director of Contemporary Worship.
  - Worship – last two Sundays have been very exciting and we are looking forward to being more and greater than we have been. Hats off to Dave Kruse and his team for the work of streaming each week. We have people in Canada and Europe and all over the nation watching and worshipping with us each week. We receive messages from people saying thank you, encouraging us with an offering. This digital platform will continue. He thanked Dr. Heide and his Worship & Music crew for their work
  - Prayer & Care – Jenny McClelland is doing an excellent job leading this ministry, which is what our congregation is all about – care for people. During this past year, we have made countless phone calls, followed up with people and loved people. It is a way to connect with

people who are struggling and hurt, although, it has been a struggle with Covid protocols. Jenny has been training volunteers to visit our people. She is also re-setting our meal train ministry and creating other ways in which to care for people. Night of Hope will resume after June 15, which is a place for people to come for help, care and encouragement. More than half of the people who attend are not members, but are blessed by the community that we provide. This includes a ministry that has been a hallmark for us, Celebrate Recovery, led by Chris and Susan Higgins.

- Support Services – Betsy Kunau moved into the position of Executive Director during the Pandemic and has been outstanding. Shannon and Tim Beshara have done yeoman work during this time. Other areas that have moved St. John's to the forefront include our excellent work in social media by Chris Higgins and Kelly Early. Our Altius program increases that visibility, with our new series, People in the Pews, that includes interviews with members of our church family. Betsy is working on our site planning on campus with a strategic focus. She is also working on policies, protocols and procedures, and helping people who have become concerned during this time. We continue to return to the strategic plan.

He commented on the President's invitation to get back to worship. We are working hard on the weekend experience and he encouraged people to come to in-person worship. The streaming experience is secondary to what we do on campus and the thrill of being with other members of St. John's in worship.

Pastor Tim concluded with a statement that he is really grateful to serve at St. John's. He was Called to St. John's just fifteen months after being ordained on July 14, 1991. He thanked everyone for their support and encouragement and desire to move St. John's forward. He is grateful to bring such a positive report today and looks forward to the Church and ministry opening up more and more, and St. John's being a blessing to the community.

The President thanked Pastor Tim for his very extensive report about our ministry, updating the congregation on what has happened since the last time we met. He also acknowledged the occasion just four days ago, on May 19, 2021, the 22<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Pastor Tim's installation as Senior Pastor of St. John's.

## **Financial Report**

Treasurer Nick Villasenor introduced himself and commented that he was elected as a member of the Trustees at the Congregational Assembly last September, in the middle of the Pandemic. In this time, many good things have happened. Pastor Tim alluded to the generous St. John's community that rose to meet the needs of the congregation. With a lot of savvy spending and leadership, they have been figuring out how to move through everything. It has truly been amazing. Covid has changed our spending priorities dramatically. Unanticipated expenses included safety, cleaning and the tent, which are quite high. The PPP loan forgiveness will allow us to use those funds to pay for the expenses.

Our investments were moved from Wells Fargo to Farmers & Merchants Bank where we have an established relationship from the School Endowment Fund. It is good to have all of our accounts together and to be working with the same advisors. Unofficially, contributions are \$82,000 over Budget projections, thanks to generous people.

## **Budget 2021-2020**

Treasurer Nick Villasenor reviewed the proposed 2021-2020 Budget, which reflects optimism for the next year. He reviewed several areas of the Budget:

- Contributions have been increased by 2%, an additional \$96,000
- Preschool enrollment is 140
- Tuition has been increased by 4% to 7%, after a year of holding rates at previous levels
- Normalizing salaries to align all teachers and staff
- New position of DEC to Families was added
- Reduced allowances for Covid-related expenses, moving away from that
- Increase of students in the School with a projected additional income of \$312,000

The total amount of the 2021-2022 Budget is \$10,941,600.

He discussed the proposed 2021-2022 Projects and Initiatives Budget that included Maintenance and Replacements, Improvements and Initiatives, and Special Projects, in the amount of \$817,000, funded by the Trustees' Restricted Account.

Carol Wold made a motion was made **“to approve the 2021-2022 Budget and the Projects & Initiatives 2021-2022.”** It was seconded and, with no discussion, it was **approved without dissent**.

### **School Endowment Fund Report**

A copy of the written report of the School Endowment Fund report is available on the table today. The President commented on the positive investments and contributions to the Fund this year with a balance of \$4.4M. The members of Endowment Fund Committee are Fred Whitaker, Chairman, Boe Boezinger, David Willett and Cameron Early.

### **Constitution and Bylaws Committee Report**

President Chris Victoria discussed the Trustees' appointment of a Constitution and Bylaws Committee to review the governing documents of the congregation and the appointment of Darryl Wold as Chairman of the Committee. Darryl presented updates on the work of that group at the Congregational Assembly in September of last year. The Committee has continued to meet and he invited Darryl to report on their progress.

Darryl Wold began by mentioning the Committee initially thought this would be a short project, however, as they worked through the documents, the project was much more complex. This has taken much longer than anticipated and forecast. The Articles of Incorporation were last updated in 1941 and included many provisions that are no longer appropriate or relevant, which now requires revising, also.

The Committee has almost completed drafts of our three governing documents, relevant parts of which are being reviewed by the chairs of each ministry Council, by SMT and the Trustees. When they are finalized, they will be sent to the Pacific Southwest District for review by the President, after which they will be brought to the Congregational Assembly. They are required to be brought to two meetings for ratification.

He asked if there were any questions and there were none. The President thanked Darryl and the Committee for their work. He commented that there are many things going on at St. John's.

### **St. John's Cemetery Report**

The President announced that the annual report from the Cemetery Trust Committee is available at the meeting.

- Columbarium

Adding a columbarium to the Cemetery has presented some challenges and more research will be required. An inventory of how many plots are sold, occupied and available has

been undertaken, which is necessary before we could move forward.

- Cemetery Software

St. John's has implemented new cemetery software after talking with several software companies. He found a company called Cemify that has such a program that will give us immediate information about the plots and it will be available on our website. Information about how to access facts about the new Cemetery on Fairhaven is available on a handout on the table near the gate. With this software, someone visiting from out of town can go our website to find where their loved one is buried. If a member would like to purchase a space, viewing available spaces online will reveal available plots. Documenting the Old Cemetery off Santa Clara is in progress and will also be online. He thanked Joan Willett for her work in inputting each purchase and burial in the cemeteries.

### **Adjournment**

The President thanked all of the many volunteers who make the ministries of St. John's so successful.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded and approved.

### **Closing Comments**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m. Pastor Tim offered a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joan Willett, Recording Secretary