

St. Paul's Lutheran Church - Board of Directors Meeting Minutes May 6, 2020 (via audio conference)

DIAL IN: 605-472-5577
ACCESS: 494369#

2020 St. Paul's Board of Directors present:
Zac Huffman, Tom Cook, Bernice Prescott, Jen Houck, Cyndie Dixon, Rick Wood,
Diane Segelhorst, Pastor Dave

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. Prayer was offered by Pastor Dave.

Zac identified that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the congregational voting procedures established by St. Paul's Constitution and Bylaws. The current procedures stipulate that a voting quorum is 20 percent of the voting members and that a measure requires a simple majority to pass. Given the questions raised and potential of different viewpoints toward the anticipated pastoral call vote, it was deemed appropriate to consider if these procedures should be revised for the purpose of calls alone. It was confirmed that there are no voting provisions stipulated by either the District or the Synod. It is understood that many or most congregations call on the basis of majority votes. It was explained that the relatively low quorum requirement is based on the fact that many members do not attend the regular Voters' Assemblies. The BoD briefly discussed if voting requirements for a pastoral call could be modified under the interpretation authority granted to the BoD in Article XI, Section C, for this vote only, with a formal amendment to the Constitution to then be recommended later. This could be explained to the congregation at the meeting of May 7, stipulating that it is recommended as a one-time matter and based on an interpretation by the BoD. After discussion it was agreed that the term "simple majority" in the Bylaws is specific and not open to interpretation in this manner.

To change the voting requirements would require an amendment to the Constitution, which requires a 75 percent voter approval. Article XI stipulates that written notice of a proposed amendment must be given to the congregation at least two weeks prior to a voters' assembly. Accordingly, if an amendment is to be considered, the proposed amendment could be announced at the May 7, 2020 congregational meeting, and it could be voted upon on May 21. A call service could then be held any day thereafter. It was recommended that the proposed amendment be presented to the congregation and that it state that a pastoral call vote requires a quorum of 50 percent of voting members and a positive vote by two-thirds of the participating voters. All voting members would also be notified, as all might not attend the May 7 on-line meeting.

BoD discussed whether to proceed in this manner, or proceed under current voting procedures and requirements. The concern was raised that the call of 20 years ago was conducted under the current procedures, although the circumstances were different

from today's. There was also concern that the Call Committee has done their work and we should proceed on that basis. The other view was that the change needs to be proposed because without it a close vote is possible and undesirable. The low number of votes that could be required to issue a call may create the false impression that the BoD was attempting to sway the process. Additionally, a vote should ideally indicate that any incoming pastor will be received eagerly by most or all members. It was also noted that the additional time this process will require will allow the congregation to pray and better prepare for the vote. If the BoD decides to proceed with the proposed amendment, the only remaining question is whether the necessary two-week delay in the call process is feasible. At this point in the meeting, Zac contacted Glenn Nielsen at the seminary and confirmed that the delay is feasible. Zac told Glenn we will conduct the call vote by May 24.

The BoD voted to proceed with the proposed amendment, to establish that a pastoral call vote requires a 50 percent quorum and a two-thirds majority vote. Diane agreed to draft language for the amendment and send to all BoD members for review and then presentation at the beginning of the congregational meeting on May 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bernice Prescott, Secretary