MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting of the Danish Lutheran Church of Toronto held in person and via Zoom on April 7, 2024.

**Opening of the Meeting**

The President, Sune Overgaard, declared the meeting opened at 12:00 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending.

He commenced by giving a brief overview of the events of the previous week when the city sewer backed up due to heavy rain and the church had 2-3 inches of water all throughout the lower floor. It took the City 24 hours to unplug the drains. The restoration team arrived Thursday morning and has done a great job cleaning up the mess and drying out the area. It has been necessary to remove all the baseboard and the lower foot of wall all around. The large fridge in the Grundtvig Room and all the cupboards will have to be replaced and we do not yet have a complete picture of the total damage. The restoration team is confident that we can return to normal activity by the end of the coming week.

**Determination of Quorum**

A roll call indicated that with 27 members participating in person and 14 attending via Zoom, a quorum was present and the meeting was therefore officially constituted to conduct the business before it.

**Approval of Minutes of 2023 Annual Meeting**

The minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting had been distributed ahead of the meeting.

**On Motion by Elizabeth Cseke, seconded by Susanne Truelsen and carried, the minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting were approved.**

**President’s Report – Sune Overgaard**

The President read his report, the highlights of which were as follows:

* 2023 saw things getting back to pre-Covid conditions and we had 50 services with an average attendance of 30-35. In addition, we had three baptisms, four confirmands, one wedding and four funerals. Of the 13 or so names mentioned in the ‘In Memoriam’ section of Kirkehilsen, about eight were actual services either at the church, Sunset Mindepark or at a funeral home.
* Early in the year, Pastor Simon gave notice that he and the family were planning on returning to Denmark at the end of June to accommodate the children’s education. Pastor Simon was an extra special pastor, who had helped guide the church and the board through the pandemic with video services, email blasts and zoom meetings. He was very popular among the congregation and supportive of our outreach plans.
* Facing the challenge of finding someone to fill his shoes the Board got to work immediately to find a replacement and after an extensive screening process in co-operation with DSUK and the Bishop, Kirstine Rasmussen was selected.
* We were very fortunate to be able to bridge the gap with the help of first Pastor Pamela Kormano, for the month of July and then our good friends Kirsten and Jørgen Flensted-Jensen who came over and filled in for the months of August and September.
* Pastor Kirstine and her husband Frej and daughters Tui and Zoe arrived in early October and during the past six months, she has proven to be the ideal fit for our church, showing great enthusiasm both for continuing existing programs but also for initiating new ones.
* At this time last year, the Church was looking for a part-time Program Co-Ordinator to relieve the pastor and the Board of some of the time-consuming administrative duties and actually found the ideal candidate. Sadly, after working just a few weeks, she was offered a full-time job elsewhere, which she could not turn down. We are now ready to start the process again.
* A separate fundraising is underway to purchase a baby grand piano for the church.
* The church will play host to the Federation of Danish Associations’ annual conference at the end of May.
* This summer we are planning on replacing the kitchen in the rectory and have received several quotes.
* The work and success of the Church could not happen without the hard work of the Board with support of the membership.

The President’s report was accepted by a show of hands.

**Pastor’s Report – Kirstine Rasmussen**

* Pastor Kirstine expressed her gratitude for the warm welcome she and her family have received. They are all happy to be here and it was inspiring to be met with such openness, enthusiasm and dedication. She has spent a lot of time familiarizing herself with our requirements and opportunities for learning and fellowship.
* Pastor Kirstine and Hanne Simmelsgaard have started our new knitting club, which meets once a month. The aim is to use up some of all the yarn which has been donated to the church and over a cup of coffee and fellowship creating items which can be sold at the Christmas bazaar.
* Movie afternoons have started up again, currently watching the documentary series of the History of Denmark. Next on the program we will show Danish Academy Award winners.
* Another new program is a Youth Club in an attempt to build a bridge to the next generation which will hopefully lead to new initiatives. Everyone is invited to bring forth their ideas and suggestions.
* One focus going forward will be on establishing closer ties with some of the Danish companies with operations in Canada, the Consulate and Embassy. There should be a way for newcomers to Toronto to hear about us.
* She thanked Liselotte Ostergaard for her efforts with Church Café, Lilly Nielsen for Golden Age Club, Brigitte Bogar and Mark Fenger for the music, Gerda Andersen for ongoing support and help with the web shop and imports. She also thanked Sune for all his hard work and support.

Sune Overgaard thanked Pastor Kirstine and reiterated that we are lucky to have her. The Pastor’s report was accepted as presented.

**Treasurer’s Report – Lisa McConnell/Sune Overgaard**

Sune Overgaard presented the Treasurer’s report.

The Balance Sheet shows assets of $2,117,258 and fixed assets of $1,329,789. The accounts receivable includes an HST refund of $21,000 and $10,000 for the purchase and subsequent sale of Simon’s car. We needed the car for use by Jørgen Flensted-Jensen over the summer, it has since been sold to Pastor Kirstine and her husband and the child care payments are being used to retire the cost of the car. The amount of the accounts payable is mostly for DSUK, legal and accounting fees.

The income for the year was $387,781 and expenses were $446,516 for a loss for the year of $58,735. ‘Other expense’ shows depreciation of $84,257.

The expense for DSUK is inordinately high for the year, but that is explained by the cost of moving Simon and family back to Denmark and moving Kirstine and family to Canada as well as paying for the services of Jørgen Flensted-Jensen. Repairs of the rectory includes the cost of painting the interior prior to Pastor Kirstine and family arriving.

The accountant’s comments to the financial statements were not available, but mirror the comments from previous years. We have not had a formal audit done but rather a financial review.

**Motion by Sune Overgaard, seconded by Hanne Simmelsgaard and Carried to approve the financial statements.**

The Operating Budget shows a zero balance with projected revenue of $360,000 and expenses in the same amount. The Capital Budget shows anticipated repairs and upgrades to the church in the amount of $95,000, which includes replacing the Finch window and redoing the landscaping in front of the church by removing the round flowerbed and creating two parking spots near the elevator. The capital budget for the rectory is $35,000, which includes the plans for a new kitchen. Ikea did the original plans and we now have estimates from five different contractors ranging between $20,000 and $42,000.

Questions followed regarding specific financial issues.

**On Motion by Lis Sondergaard, seconded by Malene Gibson Morse and Carried, the Capital Budget was approved.**

The Board proposes the annual levy remain at $20, which was approved by a show of hands.

**Appointment of Accountant**

**Motion by Sune Overgaard, seconded by Gerda Andersen and Carried to appoint Rakesh Majithia CPA Professional Corporation as the Accountant for the Church for the coming year at a fee to be determined by the Board of Directors.**

**Report from Building Committee – John Uffe**

John Uffe reported that total amount spent on repairs and maintenance for 2023 was $59,369 and read out the itemized list. The major posts are $13,685 for snowplowing and salting, waterproofing the northeast corner of the church building where the foundation was completely eroded causing flooding every time we had a heavy rainfall, and the cost of the sound absorption boxes for the sanctuary.

The upgrades to the sanctuary and chancel could not have happened without the generous contributions from the estates of Bengt Storgaard and Verner Norgaard as well as the congregations of the Grimsby and Granly churches, which sadly were forced to close.

A lot of people have contributed with their volunteer work and deserve mention. John Uffe again thanked Jens Skovhoj for performing snow removal and landscaping services for 40+ years at no cost to the church, a service that cost 13,685 for 2023.

The report from the Building Committee was accepted.

**Reports from Church Activity** **Groups**

***Bazaar Committee – Hanne Simmelsgaard***

Hanne Simmelsgaard reported that the success of the bazaar was due in large part to the number of people who stepped up to the plate and volunteered their services. At the Christmas Bazaar we were assisted by over 40 volunteers on the day and by countless helpers for the week leading up to the bazaar getting all the booths ready and set up and import orders packed ready for pick-up and shipping. Due to the church hosting the Federation Conference at the end of May, we have adopted a different format for the spring bazaar, a Food Fair with only imports, sandwiches and bake booth. We hope to see many of you there for this hyggelige event.

***Church Café – Liselotte Ostergaard***

We continue to meet in person every Tuesday to celebrate all birthdays, sing a song or two, share stories, play games and hear a few jokes. Pastor Kirstine attends and helps us with the singing and reminds us of upcoming everts. In 2023 we had 38 meetings with an average attendance of 18. If you are able, we hope to see you at Church Café.

***Danish Lessons – Susanne Truelsen***

Susanne Truelsen reported that it became too onerous for her to run the in-person Danish lessons, but we are fortunate that a Danish teacher residing in Niagara Falls has offered to conduct on-line lessons at no charge to us. We are charging $10 which goes towards the operation of the church. The information can be found on our web site. Also, Susanne and Pastor Kirstine have started monthly Café Evenings where people can attend a casual get together to have a chance to speak Danish and exchange experiences.

***Folk Dancers – Audrey Urszulan***

The folk dancers, a small group of 11 dedicated dancers led by Laine Ruus, have regular Friday evening practices from September to May. The group was invited to dance at the Constitution Day celebrations at Sunset Villa and also performed at the Church’s Royal Dinner and the Thanksgiving dinner. During the past year they have had a couple of fun evenings with the Swedish folk dancers learning new dances.

***Golden Age Club - Lilly Nielsen***

Lilly Nielsen reported the GAC meets one Thursday a month with an average attendance of 18-20 for a delicious lunch and fellowship. All are welcome to join for lunch and a chance of meeting others.

***Music Director – Brigitte Bogar***

Brigitte Bogar reported we had an active year supporting every service with music. Our main contributors on the organ are Mark Fenger and William Shookhoff. For special services such as Easter and Christmas Eve we were able to add musicians such as Emily Eng on the Viola and Boris Chung on the trumpet.

As Brigitte has had a challenging year with illness in the family, Victoria Gydov has generously been able to fill in when she was not available.

There were two special events in 2023, a Scandinavian Spring concert with Brigitte, Emily and Bill and the Christmas sing-along with Brigitte, Emily and Mark. The plans for a family choir were put on hold when Pastor Simon departed, but it is hoped that we can do something special during the family services.

Sune thanked the Groups for all they do for the Church.

**Election of Board Members**

The following Board members’ term have expired and they are coming up for re-election. Gerda Andersen, Mark Fenger, Lilly Nielsen and John Uffe. As all have agreed to serve another term, the Board recommends that they be re-elected in addition to Keri Pedersen, who was recently appointed to the Board.

As there were no nominations from the floor the following were all acclaimed to serve a two-year term:

Gerda Andersen Mark Fenger
Lilly Nielsen Keri Pedersen
John Uffe

**Conclusion**

As there was no further business Sune Overgaard thanked everyone for participating and moved to close the meeting at 1:50 p.m.