

Minutes of the Congregational meeting February 20, 2022

Present: 87

Interpreter: Marco Helles

§ 1 **Welcome and opening**

The Chairman of the Board, Greger Hjelm, welcomed everyone to the meeting and said a prayer for the meeting.

§ 2 **Agenda**

The agenda was set after a question was added.

§ 3 **Election of adjusters**

Glyn Taylor and Anita Isaksson were elected together with the Chair to be adjusters of the minutes.

§ 4 **Selection of the election committee**

Marco Helles, as convener in the nominating committee presented the committee's suggestion to the election committee.

Anders Andersson, convener
Young Sook Wennergren
Vida Attah
Sujata Lalit Kumar
Esther Nyiramugisha
Kristina Gustavsson
Karin Sandström

Marco presented the nominating committee focusing on the election committee's assignment which is to work on producing proposals for candidates to the Board, auditors, the Ministry Evaluation committee, the councils, all congregational committees as well as representatives of the organizations in which the Congregation is involved.

The meeting was open for questions.

Questions regarding the different congregational groups were asked and who should work with them. The chairman replied that there are no clear guidelines regarding the groups in the constitution and that groups and group members change over the years. The Board will have discussions with the nominating committee about how the groups can be handled.

A proposition was made, as a clarification from what emerged at the annual meeting on October 3, 2021, that it would be reasonable for the nominating committee to work in producing a convener for each of the groups the congregation has.

The Congregation decided to elect the members suggested by the nominating committee. This decision is valid until a new election committee is elected.

§ 5 By-election, the international council

Karin Sandström, convener for the outgoing election committee, presented the suggested proposals for by-election to the international council until the 2022 annual meeting

Nancy Bono, new chair
Christabel Sabina Warouw

The Congregation decided according to the proposal.

§ 6 Election of representatives to various organizations

The chairman said that the election of representatives to the organizations in which the Congregation is involved, needs to take place now, before the new nominating committee starts its work.

The following members of the congregation are suggested:

- The Council of free churches in Stockholm: Deacon Agneta Selander
- The organisation Hela Människan in Stockholm's province: Anna-Carin Persson Stenbeck, Monica Ahlberg
- Bilda, region east: Anna-Carin Persson Stenbeck, Anders Wennlund
- The organisation Sociala Missionen: Chung-Soon Yoon, Johannes Nilsson, Sefan Nilszén, pastor Anna Berndes

The Congregation decided according to the proposal.

§ 7 Confirmation of loan to Estonia

The Chairman gave a historical foundation of the cooperation between our three basic organizations in the Eumenia Church and our sister churches around the world. These are important contacts knowing that we are part of a worldwide church and collaborations are a part of our soul.

About a year ago, Bertil Svensson, former mission secretary of the Eumenia Church, asked whether Immanuel Church could consider supporting a construction project for a nursing home in Tartu, Estonia. The congregation has borrowed most of its funding through banks and other financiers. Since SEK 2.5 million is needed for this project, the question is whether Immanuel Church can provide this as a five-year loan with a 5% interest rate.

The Board has said yes to the loan request provided that the congregation says yes. This is an opportunity for Immanuel Church to support the Union Church in Estonia and the congregation in Tartu specifically, an opportunity to develop relationships and exchange between us and also share our experiences in terms of building and running a nursing home. The loan is taken from our IFAB funds and not from the church activities.

The meeting was open for discussion.

Several members commented on the issue and welcomed the proposal. Concerning the exchange of experience about nursing homes, it was said that transparency and clarity from the beginning on the selection of people who will be accommodated at the nursing home is vital. Another question that was raised was whether Immanuel Church could remit the interest rate as a gift to the congregation in Tartu. The Chairman replied that currently they have asked for an ordinary loan, with interest, but that it is possible to return to this matter later, if the congregation in Tartu turns out to have problems with the repayment of the loan.

The Congregation decided, based on the requirements and terms of conditions presented, to approve the proposal.

§ 8 Report on the recruitment of a new Senior Pastor

The Chairman briefed on his conversations with Pastor Ulla Marie Gunner and linked back to the information that was sent out separately to the congregation. He expressed the Congregation's hearty thanks to Pastor Claes-Göran Ydrefors, who accepted the role of acting Senior Pastor until May 31 and reported on the two-part leadership that is now being tested.

The Interim Senior Pastor Claes-Göran Ydrefors is responsible for leading the Congregation together with the Board. He also has a management responsibility over pastors and deacons. The Chief of Administration Marianne Eriksson is responsible for reporting to the Board on issues pertaining to finance, communication, administration, music, staffing, real estate, and IT. She also has a management responsibility over the staff in these areas. The Board believes that this two-part leadership will facilitate the recruitment of a new Senior Pastor

The Board has sent questions to the councils on what they feel is needed and what criteria they deemed as important for the recruitment of our new Senior Pastor. Immanuel Church is turning 50 soon. What step does the church need to move ahead and what is the springboard to move forward? The plan is to collect the councils' response to the mail and to discuss this at the next board meeting. After that, the hope is to get started with the recruitment work. A job that needs time and space for conversation in the congregation. The Board is hopeful that a new Senior Pastor will be in place in the autumn of 2022.

The meeting was open for discussion.

A question that was raised was what will happen after May 31 when the Congregation is probably without a Senior Pastor. Claes-Göran Ydrefors replied that he is working part-time and did not want to commit to a longer period of service as he and the Board need to have a chance to assess how this acting leadership has worked.

§ 9 Information on Climate Emergency

Ingrid Östlund, Vice Chair of the Board, briefed on the climate emergency that the Equmenia Church raised at the church conference in the autumn of 2021. An important issue that is rooted in our love for God and creation. A burning question discussed at the church conference with several motions on the subject. Equmenia Church has appointed a project group that has started working on the issue based on four main areas:

- **Reduced climate footprint.** It's about how we use our resources, how we travel for private and business trips, how our real estate company Probitas works with the climate issue, etc. We will get a toolbox to work on this.
- **Training.** The Equmenia Church will produce material to be used in the congregations. We are already promoting a 3T in this lent season based on these Swedish words - *tiden - tallriken- transporten*; time (slow down and reflect, preferably in the nature), tallriken -the plate (there is a weekly menu which defines the framework for the climate footprint) and transport (do what we can to be as fossil-free as possible taking into account our different conditions).
- **Prayer, worship and immersion.** There is a prayer book and a wooden cross to order and use in both individual occasions and in groups.
- **Advocacy.** 2022 is an election year and we as a congregation can influence and make a difference.

We need to think that we are doing this together and Ingrid welcomed more members to get involved in the congregation's environmental and justice group. She encouraged all to contact the group members, Anders Berndes and Sten Stenbeck.

§ 10 **Proposal of assignment to the international council, appendix 1**

Christoffer Dalid has submitted a proposal to the congregation to mandate the international group to present at the next congregational meeting what they want with the congregation based on what was discussed at the congregational meeting on 16 January 2021.

The meeting was open for discussion.

It was proposed that the assignment be broadened in order to apply to all the congregational councils and give them the task of asking the question in their respective groups about what they want with the congregation. Find out what we want with "we". Christoffer Dalid gladly approved the adjustment of his original proposal.

Members of the congregation emphasized on the need to do this work specifically in the international group, regardless of what is done in other language groups. The frictions and discords that were observed as a result of the different views within the group must be given special attention.

The congregation decided to commission all three councils to discuss in their various language groups what they want with the congregation in relation to a common "we". Feedback will be given to the church at the congregational meeting on Sunday March 27, 2022.

Christoffer Dalid has already reflected and formulated his thoughts on the matter and attached his material as an appendix to this point.

§ 11 **Other matters**

Report from the acting Senior pastor

The acting Senior pastor Claes-Göran Ydrefors expressed his gratitude in his report. It is easy to get preoccupied with everything that is difficult, but we will get nowhere in

solving difficult issues if we do not allow gratitude to carry us through. He expressed his gratitude towards the volunteers who are repeatedly involved in the work with Lunch in Community, towards the discussion groups that have been fully booked. He was also grateful for the many new members that have joined the congregation, and the fact that many people are finding their way to Immanuel Church which is testified by the information hosts and for a proposal for a new music project around Sångers För Immanuel as well as for the opportunity to take another step and create arenas for our young people in the congregation. He encouraged all to be grateful for the positive and wonderful things that are happening in the church.

Claes-Göran went through the many recruitments lying ahead of us and asked the congregation to pray for them. He concluded by challenging us to take another step, both personal and for the congregation. He urged us to not dwell on the current situation but to think about the challenge of taking another step and what it can mean.

We were reminded to lift pastor Ulla Marie Gunner up in our prayers and pray for her recovery.

§ 12 Conclusion

The next congregational meeting will be held on Sunday March 27 after the joint service. Sunday April 3 is the last day for the suggestion of candidates to various recruitment positions to the election committee.

Pastor Claes-Göran Ydrefors said a final prayer after which the chairman ended the meeting.

Cathrin Sjöström, secretary

Adjusted by:

Greger Hjelm, chair

Glyn Taylor, Anita Isaksson