

## St Stephen Lutheran Church

### Church Council Meeting Minutes, March 14, 2022

Mira Stearns called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm via ZOOM.

**Present:** Pastor Jim Woodruff, Patsy Olson, Betsy Clark, Marla Amborn, Ken Smith, Mira Stearns, John Rohr

**Absent:** Judee Bramscher

**Devotions:** Pastor Jim Woodruff – Psalm 89:1,2,8,14,20,21,29-33. Theme “Turning towards God’s faithfulness”. Reminder to all of us in everything we do, God does not forget us, He faithful to us, not because it is earned or deserved, but that is the character of God. Despite all the troubles we have brought on ourselves, God still watches over us and pours out his steadfast love upon us. Starting at verse 20, the tone shifts, talks about David and descendants of Abraham. If we sin, there are consequences, reality in midst of the sin, but still God will not remove those from His steadfast love. In the present time, He is always intervening on our behalf, even with what is going on in Ukraine.

**Prayer Concerns:** People of Ukraine, no one in the hospital currently.

**Approval of Minutes:** No changes. Minutes for February council meeting were voted on.

*A motion was made by John Rohr. 2<sup>nd</sup> Betsy Clark, to approve the February 2022 council minutes. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Adjustments to the Agenda** – Marla wishes to ADD the following items to the end of “New Business”

- 1) Synod Assembly attendees May 13-14
- 2) Ukrainian disaster response – ELCA Lutheran Disaster Relief

**Treasurer’s Report** –Patsy Olson

Balance Sheet: Total cash assets: Checking \$132,579.99; Savings \$32,750.12. Grand total (which includes CDs) \$213,580.02.

Benevolence Fund: Net income \$2,697.41

Capital Fund: Net income \$101,699.20. February expenses \$1,525.32 for furnace repair.

Cash Reserve: Net income \$31,348.79

Current Fund: Negative income \$-4,298.85. No unusual expenses for February. Income down for month of February.

Special Designated Fund:

Special designated accts \$24,314.12; Funding accts \$19,197.88; Tanzania accts \$20,515.63; Tecate acct \$2,900.00; Special designated memorial accts 16,833.85; TOTAL NET INCOME \$83,761.48

*A motion was made by Ken Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mira Stearns, to approve the Treasurer's Report. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### **Pastor's Report** – Pastor Jim Woodruff

Lenten services – Theme “Turning toward God’s Abundance”. Ash Wednesday attendance was good in terms of COVID. Next Lenton service, noon service was good attendance, evening service ½ of expected participation.

Mission related things – New mission trip in lieu of National Youth Gathering that was cancelled has 10 kids signed up. Bible Camp has 4 kids indicating they want to go. Long-term plan is for the Tecate mission trip in the Spring of 2023. The Tanzania mission team is planning a trip to Lukani, Tanzania, May 24-June 6 dependent on any resurgence of the pandemic, but it seems safe to make the trip

Property – West canopy is paid for in FULL! Insurance company made the last outstanding payment of \$15,000 directly to DCI Specialty Contracting. We have a record of that payment. Total cost of the canopy repair was \$52,316.13. All transactions now complete.

Redeemer partnered ministry – Looking for other ways we can partner in ministry, we are not looking at losing the autonomy of each of our churches but potentially help both churches financial and spiritually. Joint Good Friday service with Redeemer is planned. Don't need approval of this from Council. 7:00 pm service at St. Stephen. Redeemer choir to start rehearsing this Wednesday and both choirs will sing together. Kari Hosmer will be directing the choirs. Readers theater format for whole service. 3-4 hymns into the service. Patsy likes the idea of joint choirs, beneficial to both churches. 20-24 people rather than 10-12. Organist from Redeemer will lead the hymns since Cindy will be gone on sabbatical. We will plan for some time in future to do joint service at Redeemer. Maundy Thursday with be run by the Fools for Christ, service based on the Last Supper.

There should be a task force put together related to Redeemer/St. Stephen partnership. We should have people from worship/music committee, council, youth/children MT. At some point, need to Ad hoc task force group partnered Redeemer ways to partner in general.

Mira would be happy to put together ad hoc group and be on that group. Patsy thinks it is good idea. Two churches she is familiar with partner together.

It's a stretch for us to hire our own C/Y/director – strain on our budget, doesn't make sense with our kid numbers so low. Makes sense to partner with Redeemer in the areas of senior, adult education, fellowship. Marla's previous church, Immanuel, partnered with other 4 congregations, added a lot of liveliness in a lot of ways and very positive. Council agreed there should be a motion for the joint Good Friday worship.

*A motion was made by Pastor Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Marla Amborn, to approve joint worship with Redeemer Lutheran Church at St. Stephen for the 7:00 pm Good Friday service. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### **Ministry Team Reports** – Mira Stearns

Youth ministry (John Rohr) – Tecate mission planning for spring break 2023. Pizza fundraiser planned for after Easter (after Tanzania fundraiser). \$2,900 available for this mission trip. It will be a joint Redeemer/St. Stephen Tecate mission trip. There are kids from both churches interested in going. .

Worship/Music (Betsy Clark) – Cindy Bittner sabbatical confirmed. All dates are covered for her absence except for May 29. Pastor Jim will confirm with Steve Holtz to cover that day.

*A motion was made John Rohr, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ken Smith, to approve Pastor’s report and Ministry Team reports. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

## **New Business**

### Review Mask Policy – Mira Stearns

The CDC/MDH have put out new guidelines which are as follows:

*The CDC currently (as of March 9, 2022) classifies Ramsey county as low risk for COVID-19. As such the MDH and CDC recommendations are:*

- *Masks are optional. You may choose to wear a mask at any time based on your personal preference, even if others around you are not wearing masks*
- *Consider wearing a mask if you are immunocompromised or at high risk or frequently interact with someone with these conditions*
- *If you are sick or test positive, it is please stay home and away from others*

Council has agreed to use the above verbiage in the church messaging communication. Our door sign will be changed to “Masks are currently optional. Please do not enter if you are sick or COVID positive.”

The COVID task force has not been meeting since the council adopted the CDC/MDH guidelines. The committee was not disbanded as council wanted them to be available in case a situation arose that they would be needed.

*A motion was made by Mira Stearns, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Patsy Olson, to approve updating mask guidelines for St. Stephen by using the above verbiage for church messaging communications and for door sign. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### Approval of Endowment Continuing Resolution Policy – Pastor Jim

Endowment policy was revised following last month’s council meeting which brought up two issues. Each change was voted on by council.

Changes made:

2c) **The Senior Pastor will be an advising member of the committee, without voting rights.**

*A motion was made by Pastor Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by John Rohr, to approve Senior Pastor be advising member of committee without voting rights. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

4d) Emergency distribution. **When, in the opinion of the church council, an opportunity arises that would enhance the future ministry of the congregation, OR, an emergency occurs that disrupts the ministry of the church, the council may recommend a distribution that exceeds the 4% limit or comes out of the principal, the council shall call a congregational meeting, present their proposal, and the congregation will decide by majority vote to use all or a portion of the fund principal for this use.**

*A motion was made by Pastor Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mira Stearns, to approve Emergency Distribution changed wording as listed above. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

*A motion was made by Pastor Jim, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Marla Amborn, to approve the Endowment Continuing Resolutions in its entirety following the revisions made to 2c) and 4d) above. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

Marla agreed that this wording change addressed Marla's concerns from last council meeting. Marla will reach out to Viki Bosin to thank the committee for their hard work.

#### Approval of Partnership of "Many Faces of White Bear Lake" – Mira Stearns

Mira was not able to participate in last month's meeting with the group. She would still like to have council approve the partnership between St. Stephen and Many Faces. Mira would represent

Mira Motion for St. Stephen to partner with "Many Faces of White Bear Lake" including authorizing yearly payment of \$100 for required annual dues. Mira would represent St. Stephen on their monthly meeting. Mira would bring this information to St. Stephen, communicating information on their different forums they are having, possibly us hosting forums here, getting people involved in their programs and what they have to offer. Marla felt like her liaison position with Social Ministry Team fit well for this program. social ministry seems like a fit for this program. Marla second motion . voted unanimously.

*A motion was made by Mira Stearns, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Marla Amborn, to approve the partnership between St. Stephen and Many Faces of White Bear Lake including authorizing the yearly payment of \$100 required for annual dues. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

#### Adding 3 Council Members – Mira Stearns

Nominating committee has not yet convened. No other council member has reached out to people. Cindy Scott might be interested. Mira will ask some of the youth. What kind of balance do we need, age, gender, etc. Need to try keep a good mix in mind. Get more young adults, parents with kids. When Patsy asks people, she looks for groups that aren't represented, she tells them we do want them to be active and working in the church, and be present. Patsy has already asked every Wednesday night families, no positive response. Do they think it's a big commitment? More than it really is? Betsy will convene the nominating committee.

#### Discussion on Future Partnerships With Redeemer – Mira Stearns

To put everyone at ease, St. Stephen is not merging with Redeemer. Think it's in best interest for both churches to add more partnership opportunities. Jim will put something in next steppingstone on what partnerships we may do. We already talked about the joint Good Friday service between both churches

which Council has made a motion to approve. Mira will put together a small group to work on Redeemer partnership areas.

*A motion was made by Mira Stearns, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Patsy Olson, to approve the formation of an ad hoc committee to discuss future additional areas of partnership with St. Stephen and Redeemer Lutheran Church. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

Synod Assembly May 13-14 Representation – Mira Stearns.

Synod Assembly will be held at St. Andrews in Mahtomedi. St. Stephen are allowed 2 pastors and two lay reps (should be one male and one female). Mira agreed to go, Pastor Jim said that church will take care of registration. Still need a male representative. No further volunteers from the council. Deadline end of April for registration. We need to think of a male representative.

Ukrainian Disaster Response – Mira Stearns.

Council agreed we should do a collection. We will plan on doing a collection Sunday March 20 and Wednesday March 23 for the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response specific to the Eastern Europe Crisis. Will put publication of this fundraiser into the Wednesday eblast.

*A motion was made by John Rohr, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Marla Amborn, to approve the collection of donations for the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response: Eastern Europe Crisis Response on March 20 and March 23 following service and to put in the appeal in the weekly newsletter with direct link. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

## **Old Business**

Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders – Marla Amborn

Update on the meeting. Everyone wearing masks, vaccinated. Sense of fellowship felt very good. Worship service started out with Bishop Lull leading. 75-100 people there. Attended one workshop on leadership skills for the future. If we have Adult forum, should invite the speaker to come. She was very good. Networking piece was good.

Furnace Update – Pastor Jim

In cue for next furnace replacement. Need to wait until snow is gone on the roof. So, date to be determined. All the furnace parts are available.

Synod Grants – Marla Amborn

Marla sent grant application in. SPAS received 80 applications for the grants. SPAS will notify people before the end of March for those who applied on who won grants.

Review Meeting Highlights – All

- 1) Report updated mask policy
- 2) Approval of endowment policy
- 3) Many Faces of White Bear Lake

- 4) Approval of Good Friday service with Redeemer
- 5) Approval of committee to look at other partnership areas with Redeemer
- 6) Ukrainian fundraiser March 20/23
- 7) Actively looking for people to serve on the council

*A motion was made by Mira Stearns, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim Woodruff, to close the Council meeting. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Adjourn at 8:45 pm**

**Close with the Lord's Prayer**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Clark