

St Stephen Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2021

Betsy Clark called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm via ZOOM.

Present: Pastor Jim Woodruff, Randy Amborn, Betsy Clark, Paul Colaizy, Jodi Millard, Patsy Olson, Ted Schaff, Ken Smith, Mira Stearns

Guests: Jill Sandvik, Melissa Whitman

Devotions – Psalm 18:5-8 The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Prayer Concerns – Lorraine Birkeland, John Lovold, John Rohr, Patsy Olson’s parents, Nan Duchene’s mother, Ann, Jim Lemon, Randy Schreiner, Ted Schaff, Glen Alstad, all those affected by the Capitol insurrection, and for a safe presidential inauguration.

Approval of Minutes – *A motion was made to approve the December 14, 2020 council minutes by Jodi Millard; 2nd by Patsy Olson. Voted on and approved.*

Adjustments to the Agenda – Add “ELCA Toolkit” at the end of New Business

Treasurer’s Report – Patsy Olson

Reports received.

Current Fund \$ 20,614.74 Capital Fund: \$117,953.01 Benevolence Fund \$ 132.37

Special Designated: \$ 76,306.31 Cash Reserve Fund: \$ 17,641.21

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic of 2020, our church state of affairs was most non-traditional. We had lower than usual property maintenance expenses, absence of in-person worship, festivals, auctions, boutiques and new member pledges. We did have the benefit of regular and generous giving by our members and the assistance of the Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loan. The Benevolence Fund was able to donate to Lutheran Social Services, White Bear Lake Food Shelf, Harriet Tubman Foundation, Camp Wapo and the ELCA. We do not qualify for a 2021 PPP Loan. We have ended 2020 in a healthy manner. Appreciation given to Patsy Olson for all her dedication to this Treasury position.

A motion was made by Randy Amborn; 2nd by Paul Colaizy to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Voted on and approved.

Pastor's Report – Pastor Jim Woodruff

Report received. Small group worshiping continues while in-person worship remains on hold. Online services and live streaming viewer numbers are steady and remain at nearly 300 each week. The Online Christmas service was well represented. Much appreciation to the 95 people who made this wonderful endeavor possible. The Drive Thru Living Nativity was quite successful with donations amounting to \$860. and was donated to the White Bear Lake Food Shelf. We started 2020 with a deficit of \$ -22,631.93 and with the generosity of our congregation, we begin 2021 with a positive balance of \$20,612.25.

Ministry Team Reports

Report on Living Nativity – Melissa Whitman

This COVID-19 compliant drive-thru, one night event was a huge success. Traffic was consistent and steady. This event was featured in the White Bear Lake Press. A cash-offering of \$860. was donated to The White Bear Lake Food Shelf. Hope to return this event to the standard 2 night/2 weekend event. Thank you to all the many volunteers!

A motion was made to accept the Pastor Report and the Ministry Team Report by Mira Stearns; 2nd by Ken Smith. Voted on and accepted.

Old Business

COVID-19 Response Team Update – Randy Amborn

Ken Smith continues to follow the Minnesota Department of Health website and follow the St Stephen COVID-19 policy. Data was presented showing that the pandemic numbers are not yet stable. A more consistent trend is needed before considering in-person worship.

Annual Meeting Update – Ken Smith

The January 31, 2021 Annual Meeting agenda has been finalized. Due to COVID-19, this meeting will be commissioned via the video conferencing ZOOM platform. Five people will be stationed in the Fellowship Hall to manage “help lines”. A minimum of 44 people is needed to reach a quorum. A reminder that registration is necessary thru the church office.

Report on Phone Calling – Betsy Clark

Council members were each given approximately 10 congregant names to call with a holiday greeting just before the Christmas holiday. Response was very positive with recommendations to repeat next year.

New Business

2021 Budget Approval – Betsy Clark and Jill Sandvik

Proposed 2021 Budget Report hand-out received. The 2021 income 'Forecast' is \$360,000. 2021 operating expenses are forecast at \$400,000. This forecast shows a shortage of \$40,000. Statistics for 2018, 2019 and 2020 show church income declining. Discussion ensued – is this predicted forecast on the low side, will COVID-19 be apparent in 2021, do we reduce expenses, where can we find more income, is 'breaking-even' good enough, can we expect this trend to be consistent etc. Good news shows our net cash is improving – we are gaining cash.

Screen share presented showing 2021 budget with staff salary raises and additional income needed. Further discussion continued whether to approve the budget with the staff salary raises or without. Council members were supportive of the staff salary increase. Thank you to all those that have given their time and dedication to working with our budgets! We appreciate you! As a council, it is our responsibility to remain diligent and mindful of our present and future budget numbers.

A motion was made to accept the proposed 2021 budget for presentation at the January 31, 2021 Annual Meeting by Betsy Clark; 2nd by Jodi Millard. Voted on and approved.

Election of 2021 Church Council President – Betsy Clark

The council would like to nominate Ken Smith as the next church council President. Welcome Ken! Thank you to previous 2020 council members Ted Field and Jessica Rotschafer. Continuing council members are Mira Stearns, Ted Schaff, Betsy Clark and Ken Smith. New council members include Kristen Duffy, Marta Honstadt, Chris Sheldon and Abby Ternus.

A motion was made to elect Ken Smith as the 2021 Church Council President by Betsy Clark; 2nd by Patsy Olson. Voted on and carried.

Agenda Adjustment Add In –

ELCA Tool Kit – Ken Smith

ELCA Tool Kit is scheduled for Saturday, February 27, 2021, 9–11:45 am. Registration is now open. This event will be virtual. Keynote speaker to be Dr. Michael Osterholm. He will assess where we're at with the pandemic and what the future might hold for churches. Seven workshops will be offered.

Betsy Clark adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm.

2021 Annual Council Meeting January 31, 2021. Next council meeting February 8, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Teri Cinis

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