

**St Stephen Lutheran Church**  
**Church Council Meeting, February 12, 2024**

Ted Field called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Ted Field (President), Marla Amborn (Past President), Kathy Stickler (Vice President), Phyllis Ballata, Denise Ashley, Scott Zieman, Susan Lemon, Jackie Colaizy, Nancy Finley, Mary Beth Skunes (Treasurer), Interim Pastor Karri Anderson, Melissa Whitman (guest).

**Absent:** NONE

**Devotions and Council Member Introductions** – Pastor Karri Anderson

Opening Prayer lead by Pastor Karri. Everyone shared two truths and a lie about themselves, and people needed to guess which one was false. She then read Matthew 18:20. Are there any expectations or fears from anyone? Have the new members been on council before? Jackie and Sue have never been, Nancy has been and was Council President in 1998. Ted commented that we will have a challenging year and he hopes all will feel good being on council.

**Prayer Concerns** – ALL

Betsy friend Lisa, Kathy friend Sara, Kathy Aunt Pat, Nancy brother Chuck, Sue grandson's fiancée Annaha, Sue got good news regarding a biopsy.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes for January 8, 2024, were reviewed.

*MOTION: A motion was made by Marla Amborn and seconded by Sue Lemon to approve the January 8, 2024, Council minutes. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Adjustments to the Agenda** – ALL

- Betsy – Add to “Council Liaison Assignments” the Lenten soup and sandwich meal ministry team assignments (New Business)
- Betsy – Add to New Business Cindy Bittner payment for additional Lenten noon services, first item.
- Denise – Add to New Business, Painting bid for areas of the church, place after council retreat scheduling.

**REPORTS:**

**Treasurer's Report** – Mary Beth Skunes (Treasurer)

January Treasurer's Report is included for review.

Mary Beth stated that the Treasurer's report is more abbreviated, each ministry team budget is listed in total rather than with line items. If you want more details, you can ask for full report. For new people here, Mary Beth gave detailed information on the balance sheet. The total of the top four accounts represents our cash availability. Marla asked where we are currently with our special appeal. We are at \$4,670 of the special appeal right now. \$5,000 special appeal amount accidentally got placed in the envelope income and this will be placed in the special appeal account to make the total right now for the special appeal at \$9,670. January income was \$51,878.29, expenses were \$27,522.03. Income was high because there were 2 donors who gave their yearly pledge in the first month.

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*MOTION: A motion was made by Phyllis Ballata and seconded by Jackie Colaizy to approve the January 2024 Treasurer's Report. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Pastor Reports – Pastors**

Pastor Juli Thompson and Pastor Karri reports were presented. Marla asked Pastor Karri if part time hours were working out. Pastor Karri said that they were. There were no other questions.

**Ministry Team Reports – ALL**

Worship and Music – Denise Ashley

Written report provided.

Property – Kathy Stickler

Verbal report. We are looking at options for installing solar panels on the roof. Ken Smith agreed to contact a person who works for a solar company that works with churches. Kathy doesn't know if he was able to reach the person.

*MOTION: A motion was made by Denise Ashley and seconded by Kathy Stickler to approve the Pastor Reports and Ministry Team Reports. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Call Committee Update – Kathy Stickler**

A mock interview with a retired pastor is scheduled for tomorrow. Questions have been prepared. The Call Committee had a walk-through at their last meeting for the mock interview from start to finish. Tami gathered information about St. Stephen for the pastor. There will be a packet that has some fun stuff in it. The reason behind the packet is it's not just about us interviewing the candidate, it's also about what the candidate wants to know about us. Tami made up a new "Welcome" brochure for the church and for prospective pastors.

**Toolkit for Congregational Leaders and Conference Assembly – Marla Amborn**

The Toolkit is scheduled Saturday, February 24, at Faith Lutheran in Forest Lake. The Synod is holding it in conjunction with the conference assemblies. Would love to have some council members go. People need to register. You could go to both sessions. Here is the schedule for the day:

8:00 a.m. – Check-In

8:30 a.m. – Conference Assembly Meetings

9:45 a.m. – Worship

10:30 a.m. – Tool Kit Session One

11:45 a.m. – Lunch

12:45 p.m. – Tool Kit Session Two

2:00 p.m. – Conclusion

Deadline is February 20 for registering. Jackie Colaizy, Sue Lemon, and Kathy Stickler said they could go. Let Tami know that you are going so she can register you.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Cindy Bittner payment for Lenten noon services – Mary Beth Skunes**

\$1,200 is budgeted for pianist for the noon service (8 services). Traditionally it has been an outside pianist, but since Cindy Bittner is retired now, she said she would do it. She asked if she would be paid for those services as she usually does not do those. After discussion, it was agreed that Cindy should be paid the budgeted amount for those services (total of 8 which would be \$150/service).

*MOTION: A motion was made by Kathy Stickler and seconded by Nancy Finley to approve paying Cindy Bittner the budgeted amount of \$1,200 for the Lenten noon services (8 services at \$150/service). Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Council Liaison Assignments – ALL**

<b>Ministry Team</b>	<b>Ministry Chair</b>	<b>Council Liaison</b>
Worship & Music	Brenda Steady, Anne Jackson	Denise Ashley
Fellowship	Betsy Clark	Jackie Colaizy
Finance	Nancy Finley	Nancy Finley
Stewardship		Ted Field
Adult Learning		Scott Ziemann
Children, Youth, Family	Melissa Whitman	Susan Lemon
Congregational & Community Care	Isaiah (Dan Streeper, Juli Thompson)	Phyllis Ballata
Property	Ken Smith	Kathy Stickler
Staff Relations		Ted Field
Mission & Benevolence		Pastor Karri
Evangelism		Marla Amborn

**Lenten Ministry Team Soup & Sandwich Schedule – Betsy Clark**

Ministry Teams will be preparing the Lenten meal before service on Wednesdays. Jodie Millard will purchase all sandwich makings and have it available in the kitchen. Each ministry team is responsible for making soup. If a team is not comfortable making soup, Jodie can make the soup for them. She will also put some recipes together. Pastor Karri mentioned that Costco and Sam’s Club both have nice soups in large bags that can be used. Food should be for around 35 people. Jodie Millard will purchase sandwich supplies each week. Meal is from 5:15 to 6:00 pm. Lenten service starts at 6:00 pm.

Menu:

Sandwiches (bread, meat, cheese, condiments, lettuce if you want)

Soup (make enough for around 35-40 people)

Dessert (does not need to be homemade)

Water or milk or lemonade

Set-up time – get soup and sandwiches set up by around 5:00 pm. Preparing soup will need to be earlier in the day. Clean-up time – 6:00 pm

MINISTRY TEAM SIGN-UP

February 14, Ash Wednesday	NO MEAL
February 21	Worship and Music (Denise Ashley)
February 28	Children/Youth/Family (Melissa Whitman, Sue Lemon)
March 6	Adult Learning (Scott Zieman), Finance (Nancy Finley, Ted Field) (Marla will make soup)
March 13	Fellowship (Cheryl Skrypez, Betsy Clark, Jackie Colaizy)
March 20	Property (Kathy Stickler), Congregational & Community Care (Phyllis Ballata)
March 27	NO MEAL

**Youth Covenant Partnership** – Melissa Whitman

The covenant is a way to engage families in the spiritual life of the church. Instead of having fundraisers all the time, it is better to have church families sign up to support a child or youth. St. Stephen has youth whose families don't have the financial ability to provide funds for activities. This way, the families who support the child can also have a relationship and connection with the youth. Melissa is starting with St. Stephen as we have more youth than Redeemer. Each kid's family needs to commit to 25% of the total expenses. There was some discussion on what would happen if each kid did not get three families to financially support them. There is a risk that you don't fill the pie. Then they will have to do some fundraisers to fill the gap. Strengthening the relationships between the sponsors and youth is almost as important as the funding. Covenant Sunday would be the Sunday to give information on the program. We have combined 13 youth that attend groups. 8 kids are from St. Stephen. National Youth Gathering has 7 St. Stephen kids and 4 Redeemer kids going. Marla suggested that there be a period prior to August that the congregation is introduced to the program, to generate interest, get kids involved in worship services so people can see the kids. Melissa plans the last Sunday of each month that the kids and families have to be at church. The council felt it was a good idea. The council agreed to table the discussion for now and make a final decision on support of this program at the next council meeting in March.

**Schedule Council Retreat** – Ted Field

Possible purpose of retreat brainstorm what we personally are passionate in for the year ahead. Not meant to come up with a strategic plan but what we want to do together and what the schedule would look like. March Saturday or Sunday couple of hours in afternoon. Email Ted with available dates. We further discussed that we should use the retreat as the day to address budget cutting.

**Painting Estimate** – Denise Ashley

There are several areas of the church that were included in this estimate: main north/south hallway on west side of church, coat hanger area, hallway in front of kitchen, back bathrooms. Quote \$2,300. We would have to take wallpaper borders off ourselves. We discussed that this could come out of capital

or out of special designated. Mary Beth very strongly wants the last bank of furnaces replaced so the cost doesn't get too high.

*MOTION: A motion was made by Marla Amborn and seconded by Jacky Colaizy to authorize payment of \$2,300 for painting above listed areas using funds taken either from special designated or capital funds. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### **2024 Generosity Challenge – Ted Field**

The congregation approved a budget at the annual meeting that had a challenge. It was a step-down budget reduction. Unspecified because there was not time to figure out how to do this. \$30,000 of money to be reduced in expenses hopefully earlier in the year rather than later. The council will develop and move forward with a plan. Council needs to make final decision.

Areas of budget cutting:

1. Ministry Team level – Each council person was given their ministry team budget. Each of the council members was asked to meet with their ministry team chair and committee and look at their budget for that year. The report lists the 2023 actuals, 2023 budgeted and 2024 budgeted. The report also lists the expense details. Council members need to come back at next month's meeting with a plan on where they can cut dollars. Property should consider looking into setting up an energy audit.
2. Operation, maintenance, office, administration level. The finance team will take the lead on these areas.
3. Staffing level – Finance will need to go to staff relations and have conversations about staffing.

We will need more time than one month. Idea was to use the retreat as an opportunity to focus on the budget. Possible dates in March – March 16 or 23. However, Kathy said that Saturdays may be used as days for interviews by call committee. So it was thought that maybe have the retreat on a Sunday afternoon.

### **Council Highlights:**

1. Approved the January treasurer's report which showed a favorable response to the special appeal for additional giving, with approximately 30% of the appeal's goal received.
2. Assigned council members to serve as the liaisons to specific ministry teams in the coming year.
3. Assigned council members to help serve Wednesday evening meals during Lent.
4. Approved the painting of walls in the kitchen area.
5. Heard a presentation from our youth ministry to build better spiritual relationship between the youth of our church and all our church members.
6. Created a plan and schedule for developing a budget reduction that will help our 2024 finances.

### **Communion signup list – ALL**

The open slots will be filled later with Tami Heart's assistance.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Server 1</b>	<b>Server 2</b>	<b>Server 3</b>	<b>Server 4</b>
Sun, February 18	Pastor Karri	Dan Ruth	Judy Ruth	Ted Field

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Sun, February 25	Pastor Karri	Pastor Juli	Sue Lemon	Viki Bosin
Sun, March 3	Pastor Karri	Gretchen Trenda	Mary Beth Skunes	Ted Field
Wed, March 6	Pastor Karri	NO COMMUNION		
Sun, March 10	Pastor Juli	Paul Colaizy	Jackie Colaizy	Marla Amborn
Sun, March 17	Pastor Karri	Denise Ashley	Nancy Finley	Kathy Stickler
Sun, March 24		Sue Lemon		
Sun, March 31	Pastor Karri	Pastor Juli	Nancy Finley	
Wed, April 3	Pastor Karri			
Sun, April 7	Pastor Juli or sub	Phillis Ballata		
Sun, April 14	Pastor Juli	Ted Field	Denise Ashley	

**Adjourn** – Ted Field

*MOTION: A motion was made by Denise Ashley and seconded by Kathy Stickler to close the Council meeting. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm**

**Closed with the Lord’s Prayer.**

**COUNCIL PICTURE WAS TAKEN.**

**NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: Monday, March 11, 2024, at 7:00 pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Betsy Clark  
Council Secretary