

## St Stephen Lutheran Church

### Church Council Meeting Minutes, February 13, 2023

Marla Amborn called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Pastor Jim Woodruff, Patsy Olson, Marla Amborn, Ted Field, Phyllis Ballata, Cheryl Skrypez, Scott Ziemann, Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer (Guest - SPAS Assistant to the Bishop)

**Absent:** John Rohr, Kathy Stickler, Denise Ashley, Bethany Zenner

#### **Devotions – Pastor Jim**

Refer to handout for complete devotions. Paul writes in his various letters the importance and presence of many gifts. We as council members are gifted with a variety and diversity of abilities. Refer to these writings:

- 1 Cor 12:4-7, 27-28 (...To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...)
- Eph 4:10-16 (...the gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,...)
- 1 Thess 4:1-10 (...how you ought to live and to please God,...you should do so more and more...)

#### **Introduction of Synod Representative and Discussion of Pastoral Interim Process – Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer**

Rolf explained his role in the pastoral transition process. He is involved in the actual call process, he works with the interim pastors (there are about 22 in SPAS). Also works with our lay leaders across the synod. Also works with those who may not have titles, but who have important roles in the church. Rolf lives in WBL. He has gotten to work with Christ the King WBL and Redeemer for their recent call processes, both have called a new pastor. WBL is his community, so he has a particular interest in this area.

1. Celebrate – First, St. Stephen needs to take the time to celebrate Jim's 30 year legacy over the next few months. Incredible tenure. This is the time to have cake, to celebrate, be grateful, pay attention to Jim and each other. Don't get too far ahead of ourselves. There will be grieving in addition to celebration.
2. Exit Interview – We will have an exit interview in the next few months. Who participates in this process can be varied. It can be with Jim and the entire council, or with Jim and the executive committee, whatever works for this church. Will be assessing what has worked well, reflect together, what the future may look like. Will schedule some time April or early May.

3. Interim Pastor – Rolf will find interim pastor who is a good fit and whose timing works for our timing. TIMING AND FIT. All have good experience. We should take some time to have that person help with looking at our past, present and future.

#### Four-step phase

- 1) Leave taking
- 2) Ministry exploration at St. Stephen
- 3) Move into call process while interim present
- 4) Begin new chapter with new pastor

We will figure out mission exploration team and call committee when time comes.

Interim Pastor time frames generally are 1 to 1 ½ years in length. Recommendation is that you need 6-9 months in interim time before call process even starts. Exit interview will give some clarity on our needs.

Some of the jobs of council:

- 1) Help congregation celebrate.
- 2) Join Rolf in the exit interview.
- 3) When time for interim (1 or 2 candidates), present to council, interview pastors and make decision. No congregational vote is needed.
- 4) Help introduce that new interim to the congregation.
- 5) During interim, support interim pastor and make sure they have what they need to do job well. They will ask for your support and leadership. Trust God is at work through all of this, pray for each other, treat each other well, listen to members who have all kinds of ideas. Every voice is important, both of dissent and agreement.

Complete Ministry Profile – Prior to forming call committee, need to start working on Ministry profile (who you are, etc). Could be a special group (mission exploration team task force) which dives into this (done during time interim has been here and established, closer to time of call process)

Call Committee – When it is time to enter the call process, we will form call committee, Rolf will work with call committee (composed of lay leaders of the church, council liaison on committee okay). Call committee responsibilities: look at job description, interview candidates, choose candidate.

Visioning retreat this weekend will help generate questions about the future, information may contribute toward the call process. Help us think outside of the box. It was set up initially because of COVID, getting back to normal but what does normal look like, how do we set ourselves up to do what we are called to do.

Interim Pastor Process – Take time before new call process to: 1) have a buffer between long-time pastor and a new pastor. Buffer involves the presence of the interim pastor. Think about new chapter, new vision, get more clear in what you might be looking for.

- Identity
- Context
- God’s mission
- Sustainability

QUESTION: What is your experience if we follow through with rush call process or don’t follow the recommended process. What are statistics on the success of new pastors.

ANSWER: Anecdotally, when interim isn’t taken seriously, next pastor is set up for a tough go because a lot of things haven’t been tended to.

There is a call process manual (online at SPAS). Checklist of phase 1 and phase 2

Interim covenant to be done when interim is called.

QUESTION: What is the response to person who wants pastor right away? ANSWER: This is opportunity to slow down, as where we have been, where God is calling us to be. Interim period is like a retreat; time and space to reflect and do deeper work. Listen deeply to one another and community, do that in intentional ways. A new pastor wants to know that there has been some time, so that grieving has happened.

### **Prayer Concerns – ALL**

John Rohr; Jim Lemon; Patsy Olson’s mom Ginger, Maris Cinis, Teri Cinis; Bill Krannich (dad passed away recently); Marla’s former church secretary at Immanuel Merrie Tolzmann.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes for January 2023 reviewed. No changes.

*MOTION: A motion was made by Marla Amborn seconded by Pastor Jim to approve the January 2023 Council minutes. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** No adjustments to the agenda.

### **Treasurer’s Report – Patsy Olson**

For new council members, there was more time spent explaining the treasurer’s report.

Balance Sheet: Total cash assets: Checking \$80,278.43. Savings \$32,839.07. CDs totaling \$48,342.66. Endowment fund \$25,680.95. Grand total \$187,141.11

Benevolence Fund: January Income: Pledges \$1,357.44; Carryover Balance \$667.11. Total Income \$2,024.55. January Expenses: Synod \$1,000; Journal entry every month Lukani \$300, Tecate \$100. Total Expenses \$1,400.00. Net income balance of \$624.55.

Capital Fund: Income: NHN \$500.00; Envelope \$1,438.00; Carryover Balance \$80,770.86. Total income \$82,708.86. No expenses. Net Income \$82,708.86. Council discussed that we do have enough money in capital to consider completing third phase of the furnace replacement, but we need to consider parking lot and roof are still large capital expenses that need to be considered.

Cash Reserve Fund: January income to fund \$516.00; Carryover balance \$39,109.37. Total income \$39,625.37. Purpose of cash reserve fund is to offset the negative current fund account when we are in a negative balance.

Current Fund: Income: Carryover Balance NEG -\$16,340.91; Income received in January amounted to a Net Income of \$2,386.26. Expenses: Total Expenses were \$29,961.60. This results in a Net Income of NEG -\$27,575.34.

Special Designated Funds: Special Designated Accts \$25,536.70. There are a few accounts here that in the negative: 802.21 Refrigerator \$-2,104.55 (This has been zeroed out for February report). 802.25 Landscaping \$-565.15 (will need to figure out what happened here). 802.30 Library \$-325.38 (WIM will plan on paying for the magazine subscriptions for 2023). General Funding Accts \$14,982.88. 810.40 General Endowment Fund of \$890.00. When we get donations to the Endowment Fund, it goes into this account and then will get transferred into the bank when the Endowment Committee gives instruction, minimum transaction is \$2,000. Tanzania Accts \$11,938.32. Tecate Accts \$0.00. Special Designated Memorial Accts \$15,247.83. **Total Income \$67,705.73.**

*MOTION: A motion was made by Ted Field and seconded by Cheryl Skrypez to approve the January 2023 Treasurer's Report. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### **Approval of 2023 Pastoral Housing Allowance – Patsy Olson**

Council needs to approve 2023 housing allowance

- Pastor James Woodruff – \$3,333.37/month. Annualized amount \$40,000.00
- Pastor Juli Thompson – \$685/month. Annualized amount \$8,220.00

*MOTION: A motion was made by Marla Amborn and seconded by Patsy Olson to approve the 2023 Pastoral Housing Allowance at the above amounts listed. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### **Pastors' Reports – Pastor Jim Woodruff and Pastor Juli Thompson**

See Pastor Jim's written report. Pastor Juli did not have report at the time of council. Welcome to new church council. Annual meeting went very well. Season of Lent starts in one week; encourage everyone to participate at noon or evening service, choir singing a few of them. Holy week first week in April. Council will approve the "think out

of box" task force tonight. We have had three baptisms, three funerals (two nonmembers).

### **Ministry Team Reports – None**

*MOTION: A motion was made by Ted Field and seconded by Scott Ziemann to approve the Pastors' Reports. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Council Member Liaison Assignments – Marla Amborn**

Council members serve as liaisons to these ministry team committees. Some teams have taken a hiatus during COVID. Some are active and some will require recruiting of committee members to get off of the ground.

Mission and Benevolence – Mostly Tanzania mission. Meets a few times a year. Usually Pastor Jim is the liaison.

Evangelism – Programming intending reaching outside beyond our walls. New member reception, other events jointly with children ministry, trunks and treats, Neighbors Night Out, Dinner Church partnership ministry with Redeemer (Sundays at 5:00 at coffee house). This MT does not have active committee now.

Congregational and Community Care – Geared towards those inside and outside the church. Pastor Juli is trying to head some things (Isaiah Coalition). Many Faces of White Bear Lake, Special Olympics. Will need somebody to get that going. No chair right now.

Worship and Music – functioning committee. Meets monthly.

Children and Family Ministry – Paul Schultz runs it. doesn't have a MT committee right now. Robin Eberlein and Deb Yusef, Brianna Wednesday are active participants with Paul. Wouldn't hurt to get a MT committee put together to assist Paul.

Youth and Family – staff run (Melissa Whitman runs it effectively). Woudn't hurt to have MT committee.

Adult Learning – had committee but since covid, now timing on when we would do forums unclear. We still have two bible studies each week. God's Word/God's World.

Finance and Stewardship – two separate ministry teams but there is one committee that works in both areas.

Property – They have a committee Ken Smith chair. Working on property projects.

Staff Relations – not MT, it is a committee. Council President is the liaison for this committee. Marla Amborn will be liaison for this team.

Gift committee, endowment, memorial committee – all separate from ministry teams and have functioning teams.

Council Member Liaison Assignments:

- Staff Relations – Marla Amborn (President)
- Mission and Benevolence – Pastor Jim
- Evangelism - OPEN
- Congregational and Community Care - OPEN
- Worship and Music – Phyllis Ballata
- Children and Families - OPEN
- Youth and Families – John Rohr
- Fellowship – Cheryl Skrypez
- Adult Learning – Scott Zieman (Ted Field will be on committee)
- Finance/Stewardship – Ted Field
- Property – OPEN

Council members still to be assigned MT:

- Denise Ashley
- Bethany Zenner
- Kathy Stickler

**Annual Congregational Meeting Debriefing** – Marla Amborn

Debriefing with council members. Scott Zieman mentioned people at his table wanted the pastor process to speed up. Attendance was good.

**SPAS Tool Kit (February 25)** – Marla Amborn

To be held at Shepard of the Valley. St. Stephen pays fee for your attendance. Please consider attending. Breakout sessions are always good. Take a look at the information and let Marla know if you are able to attend. Need to get registered and identify any break out sessions, dietary restrictions. Need to know at least a week ahead of time. Let Marla know by this weekend if you want to attend.

**Visioning Retreat (this Saturday 9-3)** – Marla Amborn

Invited entire congregation but especially reached out to people of leadership roles. Everyone here will be able to be part of it. In fellowship hall. Donatellis lunch.

**Approval of “Out of the Box” Task Force** – Marla Amborn

Purpose of Task Force is to find other means of income for the church, creative ideas to help get budget within better alignment expenses to income. Budget now is a deficit

budget. Task Force Members: Pastor Jim, Patsy Olson, Marla Amborn, Ted Field, Kathy Stickler, Ken Smith, Randy Amborn.

*MOTION: A motion was made by Pastor Jim and seconded by Phyllis Ballata to approve the above members to the "Out of the Box" Task Force. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

#### Communion Orientation and Sign-up – Pastor Jim

The only new Council members who need communion training are Scott Zieman and Bethany Zenner. Since Bethany is not here and it is late, this item will be tabled for next month's council meeting. PLACE ON NEXT MONTH'S AGENDA.

#### Sign-up for communion assistance

- Wednesday noon Lent services – Patsy Olson
- Ash Wednesday, 6:00 pm – Patsy Olson
- Sunday, February 26 – Marla Amborn
- Wednesday, March 1, 6:00 pm – Patsy Olson
- Sunday, March 12 – Phyllis Ballata
- Sunday, March 19 – Cheryl Skrypez
- Sunday, March 26 – Scott Zieman

#### **Review Council Meeting Highlights:**

1. Meeting with Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer who reviewed the process for the pastoral transition process
2. Identified council members liaisons to various ministry teams
3. SPAS Tool Kit (February 25), encouraged attendance
4. Visioning retreat February 18, encourage members to participate
5. Approved "out of the box" task force aimed at coming up with creative ideas to help St. Stephen finances

*MOTION: A motion was made Cheryl Skrypez, seconded by Phyllis Ballata, to close the Council meeting. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm**

**Closed with the Lord's Prayer**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Clark