

St Stephen Lutheran Church

Church Council Meeting Minutes, March 13, 2023

Marla Amborn called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Present: Patsy Olson, Marla Amborn, Ted Field, Phyllis Ballata, Cheryl Skrypez, Scott Zieman, Kathy Stickler, Denise Ashley

Absent: Bethany Zenner, Pastor Jim Woodruff, John Rohr

Devotions - Getting Acquainted – Marla Amborn and All

See “Getting Acquainted” handout. **Opening Prayer. Gathering time:** Each person chose to answer the following questions: 1) Tell about what you love to do in your spare time; 2) describe what you do on a typical day; 3) Tell something about yourself that no one else in the group knows. **Biblical reflection** (from Matthew 18:20).

Members invited to respond to one of the following questions: 1) Describe a time when you experienced Christ’s presence while gathered with other people. 2) What are your expectations about being in this group? 3) What about the work of this group do you hope to find fulfilling? 4) What questions do you have about participating in this group?

Closing Prayer.

Prayer Concerns – ALL

Families of Jim Lemon, Wendy Peterson, Betty Boyle, David Erickson who all recently died. John Rohr. Congregational member who had wrist surgery.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for February 2023 reviewed. No changes.

MOTION: A motion was made by Cheryl Skrypez and seconded by Phyllis Ballata to approve the February 2023 Council minutes. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Adjustments to the Agenda: Add to the end of New Business: John Rohr resignation on council.

Treasurer’s Report – Patsy Olson

Balance Sheet: Total cash assets: Checking \$59,780.31. Savings \$32,847.89. CDs totaling \$48,342.66. Endowment fund \$25,680.95. Grand total \$166,651.81.

Patsy noted that the checking fund is around \$20,000 down from the same time last year. She is concerned that some people are choosing to not give to the current fund but to other funds. Example is one person who used to put \$15 a week into current fund is now putting it into the cash reserve fund. We need to present finances to the congregation in a different way. Patsy expects this year to be another deficit year. She would like the congregation to have access to all categories, not just the current fund.

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Patsy expects total cash assets to be low by the end of 2023. Question raised: what would happen if current fund were depleted? Then we would cash a CD. Marla noted that the council did approve taking a CD and placing it into current fund but that has not been done and remains on the table if it is needed. Finance Team and Evergreen Team will continue to look at ways to best present financial information to the congregation.

Benevolence Fund: Total Income: \$2,854.99. February Expenses: Synod \$1,000; Journal entry every month Lukani \$300, Tecate \$100. Total Expenses \$2,800.00. Net income balance of \$54.99.

Patsy noted that she does not let Benevolence balance go negative too early in the year. As long as she has been treasurer for St. Stephen, we have never not been able to meet our benevolence goals.

Capital Fund: Expenses in February \$250 which was a bill to replace broken glass on a door. Actual occurrence was in December, but bill identified this month. Net Income \$83,844.86

Cash Reserve Fund: February income to fund \$712.00. Total income \$39,821.37. 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 \$17,818.87. Expenses: Total Expenses were \$66,018.92. This results in a Net Income of NEG -\$48,200.05.

Patsy reported that a family unit who usually gives their entire year pledge in February has not done so yet. This is around \$20,000. She is expecting that it will come.

Special Designated Funds:

Special Designated Accts \$24,541.80. Patsy mentioned that account 802.60 (Pastor's Discretionary) is high because there are people who donate specifically to this account. This money is used at the Pastor's discretion, most of the time to use for donations to people requiring rent or electricity assistance, gas or grocery cards, etc. One question was last month it was said that we need to "clean up memorial funds", what did that mean? Patsy mentioned the two accounts 802.25 landscaping and 802.30 library that are still both in the negative; those need to be sorted out.

General Funding Accts \$14,982.88. Tanzania Accts \$12,238.32. Tecate Accts \$0.00. Special Designated Memorial Accts \$15,315.70. **Total Income** \$67,078.70.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ted Field and seconded by Denise Ashley to approve the February 2023 Treasurer's Report. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Pastors' Reports – Pastor Jim Woodruff and Pastor Juli Thompson

There are no reports from Pastor Juli for this month or last. Marla will make sure she has a report for next month's council meeting.

Marla noted highlights from Pastor Jim's report: Deaths of Jim Lemon, Wendy Peterson, Betty Boyle, David Erickson. Univ of MN engineering students made presentation February 28 on water system development of three villages in Tanzania, Lukani being one of them. Goal is to develop water system that will incorporate the remaining **area of the** village of Lukani that is not supported by the current water system. Celebrating some milestones: Cindy Bittner's 30 years as organist was celebrated March 12; Paul Swanson's 20 years as custodian will be celebrated April 16. And of course Pastor Jim's 30 years! His retirement party will be May 21 at St. Stephen **and there will be a BBQ and celebration at his last worship service May 31.** Maundy Thursday will have the Fools for Christ. Good Friday service with the senior choir will be at Redeemer. Encourage all the council to attend and invite others. Some property items: painting NHN **and** fellowship hall; plant 4-5 shade trees on north end of property.

Ministry Team Reports –

Worship and Music – Phyllis Ballata

The team will be creating manual for Sunday and Wednesday services which incorporates what equipment is available, how to set up, maintenance, who does what, etc. Will be setting dates to follow Pastor Jim and Justin Woodruff around to see what they do, take pictures, make notes, and finalize "how-to" manual. Also need to do that for the live streaming equipment. Equipment set up and maintenance are being done by various people during services so need to make sure to have clear handle on how to do everything before Pastor Jim's last day.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Synod Assembly Delegates May 12-13 – Marla Amborn

We can have one male and one female lay person represent St. Stephen at the Assembly. Scott Zieman and Denise Ashley tentatively agreed to attend. They will

confirm and get back to Marla ASAP. Alternates will be Ted Field and Marla Amborn if either of them cannot attend.

Evergreen Team Report – Ted, Patsy, Marla, Kathy

Minutes from the Evergreen Team were handed out. This was their first meeting and primarily a brainstorming meeting. Kathy spoke. Helpful piece – post-it notes, brainstorming, getting information from our heads onto paper and where we need to focus our time and effort. Summary of ideas from that meeting on second page of document. Two categories: 1) increase income, 2) reduce expenses. Group is coming up with suggestions that will come back to council.

Interim Pastor Process and Progress – Marla Amborn

We will go ahead with requesting **the** Synod **to** provide **a** full-time interim pastor on June 1. Rolf will know by end of March one or two names for executive committee (consisting of Marla – President, Ted – Vice President, Betsy – Past President, Pastor Jim) to meet with and review. Executive committee will make decision after meeting with candidates by early to mid-April. Wondered what the financial impact the interim will have. Marla did not ask Rolf about salary impact (will we need to pay the interim the same as Pastor Jim **even if the person may not have the same amount of experience as Jim has?**). **Marla will seek clarification** on salary requirements.

What **should we** tell **the** congregation? We need to give people up to date information on a weekly basis. Weekly e-blast. Announcement in church on Sunday and Wednesday, rationale why this is the best choice. Write consistently and concisely on a weekly basis, not huge articles. Announcements during church using lots of different faces, not just Marla. Use council members, someone from the retirement party committee, Marla, etc. Council needs common message to communicate to congregation (Marla can put together notes). What is Marla's experience as a pastor and how can that be used to communicate effectively with the congregation.

There are people who are closer to the process than others, so try to have ~~an~~ ongoing education.

Call process manual – first few pages shared with the council. Table very helpful with different phases:

- Phase I – Leave-Taking
- Phase II – Ministry Site Exploration
- Phase III – Calling the New Pastor
- Phase IV – Beginning New Ministry

We should be informing the congregation about Phase 1 now.

It was suggested that the Adult Forum committee, rather than bringing in outside speakers, that it would be good to schedule monthly presentations **updating the congregation on** the interim pastor progress.

September Council Schedule – Marla Amborn

Marla and Ted will both be gone for the scheduled September 11 council meeting. Will also be gone September 18. Proposing moving September council meeting to Tuesday, September 5. Patsy felt that it was feasible to have financials done by the Sept 5 meeting. Patsy is planning on her last day to be end of July. So at this time, not sure who might be taking over as Treasurer.

Confirmed that September meeting will be Tuesday, September 5, at 7:00 pm.

John Rohr Resignation from Council – Marla Amborn

John **is** having medical problems that make it difficult for him to get to church for meetings. He is receiving home care services and is designated homebound. Marla will ask John whether he would like to continue on council if we set up **Zoom** so he could participate remotely. If he decides he can't do that, Betsy will contact previous 2022 nominating committee and see if they can find a replacement for John. If they don't want to do it, Betsy will contact the 2023 nominating committee and ask them. John's tenure goes until the end of 2024.

OLD BUSINESS:

Visioning Retreat – Review and Next Steps – ALL

Everything from the retreat has been transcribed by Tami and presented to council. What is the best way to make good use of the information we have? Council action planning needed. What are the key values and what action steps to take for those values? Address time lines, resources, specific steps you can take. Should council tackle this or should there be a subgroup to work on it? Or turn it over to the committee who will be developing the ministry site profile? The profile will be addressing things that have been addressed by this visioning retreat. Vision and mission of congregation is in the ministry site profile.

Council agreed that the committee looking at the visioning retreat information should be the same committee that will be developing the ministry site profile. We should put together the committee immediately, not wait until interim pastor comes. Clarifying our vision is key to hiring a new pastor who has the gifts that focus on the mission and

vision of our church. The profile will be done by a team that consists of more than just council.

ACTION – organize a Ministry Exploration Team now to get going. We can include some employees. Combine visioning meeting information with the ministry site profile. We will want mix of people from all ministry teams, components of St. Stephen. While we can't start the Ministry Site Profile until the interim comes, we can certainly start some adult forums and other methods to inform the congregation now what is happening and what the process is.

Remaining Council Member Liaison Assignments - ALL

- Congregational and Community Care – Phyllis Ballata has been REASSIGNED here.
- Worship and Music – Denise Ashley (was Phyllis Ballata)
- Children and Families – Bethany Zenner
- Property – Kathy Stickler
- Youth and Families – OPEN (with John Rohr resigning)
- Evangelism – OPEN
- Mission and Benevolence – Interim Pastor (Pastor Jim through May 31)
- **Staff Relations – Marla Amborn**

Other liaison assignments from last month's meeting remain the same.

Council Member Contact Information – ALL

Name	Phone	Email
Denise Ashley	651-253-4308	deniseashley1@yahoo.com
Cheryl Skrypez	651-481-0688	cskrypez@gmail.com
Patsy Olson	651-214-5941	joellyo@netscape.net
Betsy Clark	612-554-3925	eaclark001@comcast.net
Ted Field	651-600-0822	fieldjackson@msn.com
Kathy Stickler	651-245-8461	kstickler23@gmail.com
Scott Zieman	651-706-0830	scott.zieman@century.edu
Phyllis Ballata	651-426-0697	pballata@msn.com
Marla Amborn	651-315-3354	marlaamborn@gmail.com
Bethany Zenner	612-281-3373	bethanyzenner@hotmail.com

Communion Assistants – ALL

Sunday, April 2, 9:30 am – Ted Field

Maundy Thursday, April 6

- 12:00 noon – Cheryl Skrypez
- 7:00 pm – Marla Amborn

Sunday, April 9 (Easter), 9:30 am – Betsy Clark and Phyllis Ballata

Sunday, April 23, 9:30 am – Scott Zieman

Sunday April 30, 9:30 am – Kathy Stickler

Wednesday, May 3, 6:00 pm – Patsy Olson

Sunday, May 7, 9:30 am – Denise Ashley

Review Council Meeting Highlights: We did not get to this.

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

Next meeting will be April 17 (one week later than usual because of Easter)

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm

Closed with the Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Clark