

## St Stephen Lutheran Church

### Church Council Meeting Minutes, April 17, 2023

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

**Present:** Patsy Olson, Marla Amborn, Ted Field, Cheryl Skrypez, Scott Ziemann, Kathy Stickler, Denise Ashley, Bethany Zenner, Pastor Jim Woodruff, Guest Kevin Peck, Guest Randy Amborn.

**Absent:** Phyllis Ballata

#### **Devotions –**

Pastor Jim – Devotion from Philippians 1:2-6. Paul being thankful of the people in Philippi. Confidence is not about us but about proclaiming God's message and that he is in our midst.

ALL – Where have people found inspiration during Lent, Holy Week, and Easter? Council members shared their thoughts.

#### **Prayer Concerns – ALL**

John Strand. Cheryl Skrypez cousin's son died unexpectedly (Chris). Patsy's family need prayers, mom, dad, sister, brother and Patsy's daughter. Genene Peterson. St. Stephen congregation as we are going through pastoral transition. Tami.

#### **Evergreen Team guest regarding facility rental opportunities – Kevin Peck and Randy Amborn (presenters)**

Kevin Peck from Suntide Realty (St. Paul) was introduced by Randy. Recommended from another real estate leader in town (Jim Voss). Evergreen Team has been looking at ways to close the gap between our income and expenses. Kevin specializes in institutional nonprofit, non-traditional real estate (like commercial real estate, churches, schools). His goal would be to find suitable tenants to rent out unused space around the church. Kevin's compensation would only come when we have a tenant (relatively modest cut of the lease). We wouldn't have to do much until he finds someone who is interested in the specific space. Typical monthly rent received may be \$2,000-5,000. Typical lease length is usually 1-5 years.

Kevin does all the marketing, gets a deal together for our approval, and we don't have to pay him until we have a good fit. We will need to identify parts of the building we are willing to share (also space that is NOT an option at times of the week or ever).

Questions/Concerns:

## Council Minutes

April 17, 2023

Question – Liability and insurance. Do we carry liability. Renters would have business insurance, slip and fall would be covered under their insurance (not ours).

Question – As a non-profit when we lease space and make money is that kosher? Tax exempt use, no property taxes. We would have to pay some kind of income tax. We might not want a for-tax renter for the income tax issue. One possible space would be the NHN building, rent out and NHN would return to the church building. May need sprinkler system, having external door may mitigate needing sprinkler system. Immigrant church rent possibility \$1,000-5,000 per month (depends on need for office, etc). We need to think about what would be worthwhile for us to get into.

If rent is less than \$5,000 a year, it may not be worth it if we need to make lots of changes to space. Example, a home bakery business might want to rent out the kitchen. But we would need to do more upgrades to the kitchen for that to be possible per code.

Concern – We think that many possible tenants would want to see changes to the space. But there may be people who don't want to have any changes, like Bridge Clubs, Social Clubs, Boy Scout groups.

Concern – Scott Ziemen works for City of Maplewood. There are sewer and water services charges. Those places get ramrodded with taxes. Met council controls all of that. But we would be able to decide if a particular tenant would be beneficial financially for us before we decide.

Concern – the NHN building. Not sure whether the building would pass code. We would have to comply with any regulation. You can have an "out" from the lease if someone comes in to say you have to do something that is really expensive. Cheryl believes that moving NHN out of the building will probably be the demise of the program.

Kevin wanted the council to figure out what space we are willing to rent out. Kevin did get a map of the facility from us.

Conclusion/Discussion – What does council think of this idea? Many are on board with this. Kathy gave example of a church she went to for funeral and the bridge club was taking space and it was very difficult for people going to funeral to navigate but overall seems to be a win-win. Kevin finds us something for us, we run the numbers, we decide whether it negatively impacts our mission work, then decide. Council agreed to proceed with this.

- 1) Evergreen Team will receive all tenant possibilities from Kevin to review and then present to the Council for final approval.
- 2) Team should come up with potential space that can be considered for rent.

Council Minutes  
April 17, 2023

*MOTION: A Motion was made by Marla Amborn and seconded by Ted Field for the Council to authorize Kevin Peck to look for renters for St Stephen and when he has them, bring them back to the Evergreen Team for analysis and vetting and at that time the Evergreen Team will bring their recommendation to the Council for final decision/vote. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

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

*MOTION: A motion was made by Patsy Olson and seconded by Denise Ashley to approve the March 2023 Council minutes. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Adjustments to the Agenda:**

- 1) Delete from "Old Business" – Communion Sign-Up. We don't need to send list around. Denise needs someone to take May 7 for her. (Marla will take it).
- 2) Add to "New Business" – Synod Workshop April 29 from 9:00 am to 3:00pm – Tools for the Church Reaching Outside Our Walls – how do you learn who your neighbors are and reaching out.

**Treasurer's Report** – Patsy Olson

Balance Sheet: Total cash assets: Checking \$69,270.75. Savings \$32,860.89. CDs totaling \$48,342.66. Endowment fund \$25,680.95. Grand total \$176,155.25.

Benevolence Fund: Total Income: \$6,317.43. March Expenses: Synod \$1,000; Journal entry every month Lukani \$300, Tecate \$100. Total Expenses \$4,200. Net income balance of \$2,117.43.

Capital Fund: No expenses for March. Net Income \$87,414.98

Cash Reserve Fund: Total income \$41,521.37. The 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 from the beginning of the year amounted to a Net Income of \$56,470.64. Expenses: Total Expenses were \$98,904.39. This results in a Total Net Income of NEG -\$42,433.75.

Actual envelope income close to budgeted envelope income.

Special Designated Funds:

Special Designated Accts \$20,448.09. General Funding Accts \$14,982.88. Tanzania Accts \$12,673.32. Tecate Accts \$0.00. Special Designated Memorial Accts \$15,378.99.  
**Total Income** \$63,483.28.

Additional Discussion – Patsy presented to council a new treasurer's report that combines all the different accounts above into one report. The reason is that the

## Council Minutes

April 17, 2023

Stewardship/Finance team would like to look at Stewardship giving in a different light. We currently encourage people to give to different buckets (current budget, capital, benevolence, cash reserve). Placing our different accounts into one budget encourages people to give a TOTAL gift which is placed into the budget where it is needed.

This type of budget gives the council the ability to decide where donations should best be placed. Every church that the Stewardship team has talked to say this is how they do their budget.

Special Designated Funds are never rolled into the budget though. These need to stay separate. If people still want to give to a special designated fund they have the ability to do that.

Question raised – Do we have the ability to take some of the special designated money and put into CD's? Patsy doesn't think so because there is always some opportunity to use the money. Special designated money sits in the bank until it is needed.

Need to look for additional check signers – Need to look for additional signers for checks. Currently for the safety deposit box the signers are Patsy and Pastor Jim. For signing checks it is Ted, Patsy and Pastor Jim. We need to continue to require two signatures on all checks.

Need to activate an audit committee – We haven't had our books audited for a long time. We need to find volunteers for audit committee.

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

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

Pastor Jim's report provided. Focus on Holy Week, Easter. Shared ministry with Redeemer worked well and I hope this will continue after I am gone. There are some property projects that are upcoming. I want to go through the membership database before I go.

Pastor Juli's report for January, February and March is included.

**Ministry Team Reports** – ALL

Children and Youth Family – These two ministry teams will be combined now. Bethany Zenner will be liaison for this combined MT.

Worship and Music – Denise Ashley. She couldn't be at the meeting. Nothing specific to report from this meeting.

Council Minutes  
April 17, 2023

Fellowship – Cheryl Skrypez. Pastor Jim retirement party plans are ongoing, having a 21 year celebration reception for Paul.

Property – Kathy Stickler. Ken reached out to Kathy. Mentioned furnace. Property asking for new quote for next phase furnace as the quote is old.

Adult Learning/Christian Ed – Scott Ziemen. Denise and Scott will give a report from Synod Assembly some Sunday. No further planning has been done to get a schedule put together.

Finance – Ted Field. Nothing to report. Have been focusing more on stewardship.

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

Synod Workshop looking for volunteers to attend – Marla

Robin Eberlein reached out to Marla to let her know of this workshop put on the by Synod April 29 from 9:00 am to 3:00pm – "Tools for the Church Reaching Outside Our Walls – how do you learn who your neighbors are and reaching out." Cost is \$10. Marla asked for volunteers to attend this workshop. The workshop will be held at Gustavus Adolfus on Arcade. During our visioning retreat, Justin Grimm presented information on different demographics. Kathy Stickler volunteered to attend.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **Ministry Exploration Team Development** – Marla

We need to get a team together to start working on this document. We can't do this yet until the interim pastor is here. Robin Eberlein would like to serve on this committee. Marla said please be thinking about it. Will try to recruit people to be on it. Over the next few weeks to a month. Needs to be completed before the call process is started. Most likely will take several months.

##### **Topics for the pastoral transition update** – Marla

Marla has been putting weekly announcements in the weekly email blast. Marla wanted feedback from council members. All thought her topics were very good. Have an interview scheduled with a potential interim pastor this week with the executive committee. Will be Marla, Betsy, Ted, and Juli. Juli has worked with this person in the past and works well with them. Will see what happens after this interview.

Topics written about so far:

1. What does an interim pastor do?
2. How can I have input into this process?

## Council Minutes

April 17, 2023

3. It's hard to say goodbye.
4. Marla did one topic in front of people.

### New topics

1. Patience through the interim pastoral period.

We discussed the importance of having adult forums where people have a chance to ask questions about the process. Should have more than one over the course of the next several months.

**ACTION:** Pick date in June for an adult forum (should have one on a Sunday after 9:30 service and a Wednesday after the 6:00 service).

### **Spring Clean Up** – Pastor Jim

We need to schedule this. Mostly yard cleanup and some general inside cleanup. Date will be May 6. Tami can contact the boy scout group to see if they can help (PJ will ask her to contact them). For those who can come: bring your own rake, broom, etc. Need announcement in church next 2 weeks. Kathy Stickler will make announcement this Sunday in church.

### **Painting Fellowship Hall** – Denise

Gift committee met and have money that is available. Denise would like to re-paint the fellowship hall. Wants to get a bid from a professional painter as with the high ceilings and need for patching, she prefers to hire a professional. Cost \$2,600 two coats, all patching, priming, painting. Includes Fellowship Hall, bathroom hallway, hallway toward sanctuary. Timing done before PJ retirement party. We can use money from memorial gifts and capital. Take it out of capital now and then reimburse capital from other memorial accounts later.

*MOTION: A motion was made by Denise Ashley and seconded by Cheryl Skrypez to authorize the approval of maximum of \$3,000 from capital to paint Fellowship Hall and adjoining hallways. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### **Vacant Council Position** – Betsy

The Nominating Committee (Karen Smith, Cindy Scott and Betsy) met and discussed the vacant council position (John Rohr). The committee members felt that there is a very high need for members of the congregation to participate on the Ministry Team Profile committee and on the Call Committee. It was best to keep this council position open for the remainder of this year and attempt to fill the remaining one year for 2024 in addition to the 3 three-year council positions that will be open for filling.

**ACTION:** Betsy will contact next year's nominating committee with this information.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Evergreen Team Report** – Ted and Kathy

Kathy presented what was discussed at their first Evergreen Team meeting. A list was made with a lot of ideas. All of them will be explored. Two initiatives were ready to move forward.

- 1) Randy presenting what Kevin is going to do for us finding a tenant
- 2) Stewardship message change. We currently tie too much to finances. Stewardship is not about budgets. Need separate conversations. Parish Publishing, for a small fee, give you a lot of stewardship texts and messages that we can use for stewardship messages. Tami has been putting these messages in the weekly email update. The message is doctored to be specific to St. Stephen. First step is to no longer state that stewardship is about numbers. We hope that this new message will create more generous giving from the congregation. Next meeting is this coming Thursday.

**Interim Pastor Process** – Marla

The Executive Committee is having an interview this week with one Interim Pastor candidate.

**Council Highlights**

- Painting fellowship hall
- Authorizing Kevin Peck to seek tenants to rent unused space in the church
- Spring Cleanup May 6, 9 am – 12 pm – bring own tools and supplies
- Interim Pastor Update

**Council Picture** – Leave until next month since Phyllis is absent.

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

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: May 8

**Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm**

**Closed with the Lord's Prayer**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Clark