

St Stephen Lutheran Church

Church Council Meeting Minutes, July 10, 2023

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

Present: Marla Amborn (President), Ted Field (Vice President), Patsy Olson, Cheryl Skrypez, Kathy Stickler, Phyllis Ballata, Denise Ashley, Pastor Juli Thompson, Interim Pastor Sharon Kelly, Scott Ziemann, Bethany Zenner.

Absent: None

Devotions –Pastor Kelly. Philippians 2:1-4 was read.

Prayer Concerns – ALL

Diane Swanson. Bethany Zenner’s boys Nels and Rohn. Kids and adults who are heading off to Fairbanks, Alaska.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for June 2023 reviewed. Discussion: Page 1 of minutes. Presentation on Synod Worship “Reaching Outside Our Walls.” We thought an appropriate addition to the section “What We Know” should include listing people who participate in voting at St Stephen (we are a voting location). Betsy will add this item to previous month’s minutes and resubmit to the church office. Kathy will add that into her minutes from the workshop as well.

MOTION: A motion was made by Cheryl Skrypez and seconded by Patsy Olson to approve the June 2023 Council minutes with the above amendment. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Adjustments to the Agenda:

- 1) Old Business – move Galilee Lutheran funding request up to first agenda item.

Old Business:

Galilee Lutheran Funding Request – Pastor Juli

Pastor Juli reminded us of last month’s discussion of Galilee Lutheran wanting to raise \$1,000,000 to purchase land next door to allow a community garden to continue. As of July 1, they have raised \$621,000. They will be having a party on August 5 at the garden with food, music, etc. Ted came up with recommendation on where funds can come from: 1) money available in benevolence fund. We carried a surplus of \$600 at beginning of the year. Can’t assume that excess balance would be more than that. If we want to give more money than \$500, we could look for additional money from special designated memorial accounts or reach out to the congregation and do a special appeal.

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ACTION: 1) Denise as member of gift committee will look at special designated memorial accounts (Patsy will give her updated list of contact people for those accounts); 2) we have \$500 now in benevolence that can be sent; 3) consider congregational special appeal.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ted Field and seconded by Phyllis Ballata to approve \$500 from Benevolence to be sent to Galilee Lutheran NOW and to hear back from Denise Ashley at the next council meeting on whether additional funds may be made available from special designated memorial funds and also decide on whether to do a special congregational appeal. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Patsy Olson

(See treasurer's report)

Balance Sheet: Total cash assets: Checking \$67,641.91. Savings \$32,897.82. CDs totaling \$48,377.19. Endowment fund \$25,680.95. Total Current Assets \$148,916.92 (minus the \$25,680.95 endowment fund which is not part of cash assets).

Benevolence Fund: Total Income: \$11,800.75. June Expenses: Synod \$1,000; Journal entry every month Lukani \$300, Tecate \$100. Net income balance of \$2,400.75.

Capital Fund: Net Income \$92,886.98. There were no capital expenses in June. The last phase of furnace replacement has been approved but has not been acted on. Neighbors Helping Neighbors has agreed to increase their monthly rent payment from \$500 to \$700 which is placed into capital. Trees on north lawn were taken out of capital and will be an expense for July.

Current Fund: Income: Carryover Balance NEG -\$16,340.91. Income received since the beginning of the year amounted to a Net Income of \$141,076.21. Envelope income since beginning of year is \$143,904.56. Expenses: Total Expenses were \$193,633.64. This results in a Total Net Income of NEG -\$52,557.43.

Patsy said that we could sustain a negative income for a few years as we go through the process of calling a new pastor.

Cash Reserve Fund: Total income \$46,310.37.

Special Designated Funds: Special Designated Accts \$17,573.07. General Funding Accts \$14,557.88. Tanzania Accts \$14,475.32. Tecate Accts \$0.00. Special Designated Memorial Accts \$14,898.99. **Total Balance** \$61,505.26.

Pastor Kelly question on the current fund deficit. Answer: \$52,000 deficit is difference of what is budgeted and what is actual. We will be combining all the accounts into one account which gives a better indication of where we are financially rather than looking

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at only current fund. Pastor Kelly question on the special designated memorial accounts. How are they allowed? Answer: We have a gift committee that manages them. Example, Bendickson's memorial accounts. Husband and wife passed away at different times and people donated money to special designated account in their names. We ask family how they want to spend that money. In three years, if the money has not been used and the family in agreement, the money will be placed in a general memorial account and can be spent as needed. Maybe have an adult forum on how special designated accounts are used, how you can donate, where the money goes. Maybe people are not aware of it. Patsy said there are rules through the synod pertaining to special designated accounts. People have left stocks; it gets cashed in and does not go into our books until it is a cash asset.

Update on Patsy retirement transition:

Mary Beth Skunes will take over as treasurer and Cindy Bittner to take over as bookkeeper. A joint training session will take place on July 21 with Patsy, Mary Beth, and Cindy in attendance.

Update on new signers at the bank: Process has taken longer than expected. Signers should be going to the bank this week.

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

Pastors' Reports – Pastor Sharon Kelly and Pastor Juli Thompson

Written reports provided for review.

Pastor Kelly – Presented a summary of what she has done from May until present. Observations: We have a lot of documents. I must keep up with a lot! Weekly update, monthly newsletter, staff summary.

Pastor Juli report distributed for our review.

Ministry Team Reports – ALL

Finance committee – Ted Field

2023 Finance forecast done at beginning of the year. Predicts what is going to happen with the main operating fund throughout the year. Most important thing is showing what cash we have. Forecast of Total Cash Assets is compared to 2022 month-to-month cash. This is showing some concerning figures where we are predicting a decrease in our cash on hand of over \$50,000 compared to last year. This trend needs to be changed. This downward trend is based on reliable trends that we can identify: There is a certain percentage that we spend; we have a good record of actual revenue compared

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to what is budgeted at the beginning of the year; this is based on good statistical database of congregational giving. The last set of furnaces is set to be around \$45,000 in cost. Property needs to decide whether they want to go forward with the last furnace installation. If we don't do the furnaces, it does give us a bump in available cash. With the development of the Evergreen Team, the first thing done was improving our giving message (but we have not seen a big change in actual giving). Percentage of givers who pledge is low. We need to grow our commitment to our mission. How many do simply giving? Don't know off hand what the number is. We want to reintroduce an offering section in our service that has been missing since the pandemic. Pastor Kelly put an offering prayer in last Sunday's bulletin; we should keep that up. Plus start the offering basket plus a noisy offering bucket from the kids. We will need an offering hymn.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ted Field and seconded by Bethany Zenner to approve resuming passing the offering plate and do a "noisy offering" that focuses on the kids during Sunday morning services. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Adult Learning – Scott Zieman

Tom and Cindy Scott just came back from a trip to France and England and have agreed to do an adult forum on July 30. Pastor Kelly wants to have more Sunday learning for adults. During epiphany is a good time to have presentations about trips around the world or where they have lived etc.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Housing Allowance designation – Marla Amborn

Pastor Kelly has allotted \$25,000 of her annual salary paid by St. Stephen to be designated as housing allowance.

MOTION: A motion was made by Patsy Olson and seconded by Bethany Zenner to approve Pastor Sharon Kelly's request that \$25,000 be designated her annual housing allowance from her salary. Voted on and carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

Replacement of shrubs and microphone for choir area – Kathy Stickler

Regarding microphone, Kathy talked with Pastor Jim. Microphone has not been ordered yet, but she has information of what should be ordered (she left her notes at home). Two accounts were looked at as possible sources for paying for microphone. 409.3

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worship and music audio and visual account is over budget now. Special designated account 800.3 audiovisual and sound has \$370.89 in it. Purpose of the additional mic is to improve the sound quality of the musicians for the live stream.

MOTION: A motion was made by Marla Amborn and seconded by Patsy Olson to approve authorizing spending up to \$370.89 from account 800.3 for the hanging microphone and if the amount is higher than that, it will come back to the council for re-approval and vote. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Regarding replacing dead shrubs, Kathy has not spoken to Mike Trenda. Original receipts for the shrubs were given to Mike but he has not done anything. Marla will reach out to Mike and find out how things are going and get the receipts and take over getting the plants.

Juneteenth Holiday – Marla Amborn and Betsy Clark

Current holidays allowed are listed in the Paid Holiday policy from Employee Handbook. Marla checked with Synod office and they have not added the holiday, but congregations are free to add the holiday if they wish. Marla talked to Pastor Jim as to how we make decisions on adding holidays. He said that Staff Relations is given the information and makes recommendation for the council. If we add Juneteenth should we add Veterans Day as well? We can ask Staff Relations to look at this. One question is why do we do this? Is this to just get a day off and close the office or does this offer an opportunity for the congregation to do something in honor of the holiday? **ACTION:** Marla will take the request back to Staff Relations. Pastor Kelly will call St. Andrews and see if they take the holiday.

WBL Kiwanis – Marla Amborn

Melissa Whitman has been elected president of Kiwanis club until actual elections in September. Meeting tomorrow night at 6:00 pm at St Stephen. She will keep council apprised of items. It will have a children and youth focus.

Mission Exploration Team Update – Ted Field, Betsy Clark, Marla Amborn, Cheryl Skrypez

- 1) Cottage meetings – came up with standard questions that will be asked at the meetings. 40-50 questions whittled down to 10.
- 2) Cottage meetings will be no larger than 5-8 (max 10) people. There will be two people from the Team participating in each meeting, one leading the meeting and one taking minutes.
- 3) We are thinking final number of participants would be around 100. Should be manageable. Will be scheduling these meetings from now until end of September.

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- 4) One meeting would be council members.
- 5) Followed up with Redeemer on what their process was like. Who they spoke to said what went well and what they struggled with. Recommended there be some overlap of people between the mission exploration team and the call committee so that it will go more smoothly. When we are ready to call a pastor, make sure we have an attractive financial package and move quickly on it. Very competitive market.
- 6) Pastor Kelly wants more people to be involved, so have new people on the call committee that were not on the mission exploration team. But we feel we should have some overlap. Have opportunity to have a fairly large group so nominate other people for call committee.

Council Highlights

- 1) Pastor Kelly will have notice in the weekly update and steppingstone thanking everyone for their welcome.
- 2) Mission Exploration Team is moving forward and preparation for cottage meetings is almost complete.
- 3) \$500 to Galilee Lutheran Community Garden fund. Gift Committee will also look at whether there is money available through the Special Designated Memorial funds.
- 4) White Bear Lake branch of Kiwanis Club starting with Melissa Whitman as President.
- 5) We will be resuming passing the offering plate at Sunday Service and also have a “noisy offering” for kids.

Council Picture – Taken tonight. Everyone present!

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm

Closed with the Lord’s Prayer

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: August 14, 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Clark