

## St Stephen Lutheran Church

### Church Council Meeting Minutes, June 19, 2023

**Revised July 10, 2023**

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

**Present:** Marla Amborn (Council President), Ted Field (Council Vice President), Cheryl Skrypez, Scott Zieman, Kathy Stickler, Pastor Juli Thompson, Phyllis Ballata, Denise Ashley. Guest Robin Eberlein.

**Absent:** Patsy Olson, Bethany Zenner.

Opening Prayer by Marla Amborn.

#### **NEW BUSINESS ITEM MOVED TO BEGINNING OF MEETING (see adjustments to agenda)**

**Presentation on Synod Worship “reaching outside our walls”** – Robin Eberlein, Kathy Stickler

Workshop focused on redefinition. Talked about needing more awareness and a more diverse congregation. And how our community has changed over the years.

Phrase: “Butts and Bucks” – we must make sure we are not inviting people just for this internal goal of increasing our membership and growing our giving.

What is our mission? What is our “why”?

Mission, maintenance, inviting people, discover what their passions are.

Need a shift from “we have a problem” to “we have a responsibility.” We have a congregation that is getting older, look at it as more of a responsibility, what can we do to make a future distinct from the past. Look at how our community has changed and how we can distinguish ourselves.

Workshop had participants break out into groups to discuss the three pillars (see handout). Kathy and Robin’s group came up with this list specific to St. Stephen:

1. What we know:
  - a. Food Shelf
  - b. Neighbors Helping Neighbors
  - c. Outdoor green space – outdoor service
  - d. Building space
  - e. Community meal
  - f. Fools for Christ
  - g. Other church relationships with Redeemer, Christ the King
  - h. **People who participate in voting at St. Stephen on voting day**

## Council Minutes

June 19, 2023

2. What we don't know:
  - a. Maplewood Mall
  - b. Fire Station
  - c. Donatelli's
  - d. Battleground Café
  - e. Clubs – Bridge
  - f. Downtown White Bear Lake
3. Deeper relationships (where we can reach to):
  - a. Senior Living complexes
  - b. New housing (Rooney Farm)
  - c. Schools (high school, elementary, Liberty)
  - d. Rotary Club, VFW, American Legion
  - e. Other churches (St. Mary's, St. Pius X)
  - f. Adult daycare – caregiving opportunities
  - g. Legacy Planning Services
  - h. White Bear Lake Historical Society
  - i. Boy Scouts
  - j. Flicker Meats
  - k. Cup-N-Cone
  - l. Food Trucks
  - m. QR codes
  - n. Community garden
  - o. Toastmasters

Diagram of where we are now at St. Stephen (handout) - life cycle of the church diagram was shown (was also a handout that was given out at the Vision Retreat).

Discussion during workshop:

1. Participants shared stories about how the church or God touched their lives.
2. How little things matter.

The workshop leader suggested that our church should have more of these types of stories shared internally – an idea for us to do.

Statistics were given:

- 5% of people join who are invited by the Pastor.
- 5% join because of a flyer they saw.
- 80% join because of family or friend recommendations.

Evangelism questions from the workshop that we council members discussed:

## Council Minutes

June 19, 2023

1. If visitors come to your church (live or digitally) and have questions, who would they turn to if they had questions? How can we make it easy and clear?
  - a. Pastor stands outside sanctuary to greet people as they leave service, provide opportunities to get questions answered. Don't know about digitally. They don't have many questions while in the line. Juli said that if she sees someone she doesn't recognize, she goes up and introduces herself. Digitally – website?
  - b. What if we combine the pastor with another person. The pastor could send the visitor with a question to a different identified person.
  - c. Do we have visitor cards? We have a guest book but not sure if it is always signed.
  - d. We should have greeters again. Stand and greet before the service and after the service too.
  - e. Greeter ID tag – “do you have questions?”
2. How does your website provide quick and easy answers to questions a new person would have.
  - a. We looked at our website.
  - b. Recommend small group take a look at our website and see if there are any opportunities for changes. Robin Eberlein volunteered to be on this small group. Tami needs to be in the loop on this as she is the one who updates the website. ACTION: need to follow up on this. Who?
3. Secret Shopper idea
  - a. Kathy thought to reach out to a friend who is church shopping and invite her to visit St. Stephen to see how she sees us. “It's about a fit” (friend said)
  - b. Are we pushing our church out to them or are we showing them how they can fit into our church.
  - c. Are we thinking about our mission or butts and bucks.
  - d. Kathy mentioned that her friend has gone to two churches and neither met her “fit” because the first church was too big, and the second church was going through a pastoral change (which is what St. Stephen is going through).

Workshop recommendation for each church's church council:

Put a 90-day micro strategy together. Definition: talks about mission, vision, gifts, strengths, pitfalls. Community outreach. This 90-day micro strategy may be too soon as we are getting started with the mission exploration team that is looking at these items.

Big story is evangelism, but we did stop work on expanding this while we are in the call process. We need to get it going once we know who our new called pastor is. Do we

have the people power to invite people in while we are going through the call process or do we wait?

Do we wait for a new pastor, we can't stay stagnant on evangelism.

**Devotions** – Marla Amborn

Growing together spiritually. Questions “gathering time.”

Question: Why you joined this congregation – Answers - greeted by many people, Pastor Brumm visited, Sunday school program was large then (30 years ago), listened to Pastor Jim giving a sermon at Redeemer so I checked out St Stephen. We had little kids, we watched how other people interacted with each other. My husband was a member already, liked people here. Pastor Juli, first day here, I had 10 names to see on my first day because of people letting her know.

Scripture Colossians 3:16-17 read out loud.

Question: What do these words mean in terms of our work as a group? –

- If you do everything in the name of Jesus, do it in a kind and loving way.
- Great believer in mission and vision, this tells me don't ever forget your mission. Everything we do in word and deed is a way to thank God.
- Think outside of yourself, need to be adaptable, don't think about just yourself.

**Prayer Concerns** – ALL

Family and friends of Nancy Hamilton who passed away. Genene Peterson. John Rohr.

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

*MOTION: A motion was made by Ted Field and seconded by Phyllis Ballata to approve the May 2023 Council minutes. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Adjustments to the Agenda:**

- 1) Old Business
  - a. Move Synod Workshop Presentation by Kathy Stickler and Robin Eberlein to beginning of meeting.
- 2) New Business ADD
  - a. Jim's Odds and Ends from his Pastor's Report
  - b. Neighbors Helping Neighbors Rent Increase
  - c. Melissa Whitman Kiwanis Club information
  - d. Pastor Juli information on Galilee Lutheran

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

Patsy Olson not present. Treasurer's Report provided to council members for their review but not formally discussed.

Ted asked the question whether there should still be funds in the special designated account 803.85 (Pastor Jim Retirement Party). Denise said that she hasn't submitted receipts yet. She noted that most of the geraniums were sold. Betsy asked if the money from the sale of geraniums was put back into account. Cheryl did say that the money was deposited into the safe.

Discussion regarding Treasurer and Bookkeeper positions that are open. Ted gave report.

Patsy stepping down from her role as treasurer (including bookkeeping) end of July. Cindy Bittner has offered to be the bookkeeper. Mary Beth Skunes has offered to be treasurer. Need training from Patsy for both of them prior to her leaving. Meeting with Ted, Marla, Patsy, Mary Beth, and Cindy Bittner next Tuesday. They will be discussing the positions with Mary Beth and Cindy. Pastor Juli asked whether Mary Beth and Cindy have experience in accounting. Ted did not know but did not feel having an accountant background was necessary to do the job. We use QuickBooks which is not hard to use.

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

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

Pastor Jim's last report included. His letter of thanks to the congregation for his tenure at St. Stephen was also included. See NEW BUSINESS for items in his report that need addressing.

Pastor Juli report presented. "Worship" section represents preaching at St Stephen and other outside locations. "Other meetings" – some of the other meetings represent outside meetings such as the Isaiah Project. In July, Juli will be going to an Isaiah Project training session.

### **Ministry Team Reports – ALL**

#### Fellowship – Cheryl Skrypez

- Pastor Jim retirement party May 21 with about 125 attendees.
- There was a reception held following Pastor Jim's final Sunday service on May 28.
- There will be a reception following Sunday worship for Pastor Kelly on July 9.

## Council Minutes

June 19, 2023

- Participation and organization for National Night Out (first Tues in August) will restart in 2024. We have to register in May.

General - Hacked email messages from Sharon Kelly – Tami got notice out to congregation via email and Pastor Juli made announcement this Sunday.

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

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Authorization of Mission Exploration Team Members** – Marla Amborn

The Mission Exploration Team has been formed and has begun their work. Their job will be to complete the Ministry Site Profile prior to the formation of the Call Committee. The following names were presented to the Council and approved unanimously:

- Cindy Scott (chair)
- Marla Amborn
- Betsy Clark
- Robin Eberlein
- Ted Field
- Cheryl Skrypez
- Ken Smith

*MOTION: A motion was made by Phyllis Ballata and seconded by Kathy Stickler to approve the formation of the Mission Exploration Team consisting of the people listed above. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

#### **Report of Mission Exploration Team** – Ted, Betsy, Marla

The team has met twice since the last Council meeting (June 4 and June 15). Minutes from both meetings were provided to the Council for review. The team has done the following:

- Began addressing focus on small group cottage meetings by starting the process of identifying questions for the meetings.
- Identify existing groups that we can invite to these meetings.
- Have contacted Redeemer and they have shared their Ministry Site Profile and other pertinent documents to the group.
- Justin Grimm to be contacted for more specific demographic information on St. Stephen.
- History timeline done during the visioning retreat. This has been placed on the table in narthex for people to add things to timeline.

## Council Minutes

June 19, 2023

- We are committed to being expeditious yet thorough in this process. We launched the committee quickly and will be meeting every other week.
- We have focused on getting these tasks done before Pastor Kelly arrives so that we are ready to begin scheduling cottage meetings and are prepared with appropriate questions.

### **List of Authorized Signers for MidWest One Bank** - Marla Amborn (Council President)

Council was presented with an updated list of authorized signers for MidWest One Bank.

Names of those who will CONTINUE to be on the list:

1. Ted Field

Names of those who will be REMOVED from the list:

1. Pastor James Woodruff
2. Patsy Olson

Names of those who will be ADDED to the list:

1. Pastor Julia Thompson
2. Marla Amborn
3. Elizabeth Clark
4. Mary Beth Skunes

*MOTION: A motion was made by Pastor Juli Thompson and seconded by Cheryl Skrypez to approve the above list of authorized signers for MidWest One Bank. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

### **ADD – Pastor Jim outstanding items** – Marla Amborn

Gift Committee – identify specific memorial funds to reimburse for:

- cost of painting the Fellowship Hall
- the purchase of 5 trees for the north property (check with Phyllis Ballata and Donna Rehtzigel as they have indicated they would like to purchase a tree).

Denise Ashley is a member of the gift committee, and they will be meeting soon.

ACTION: Denise will take this information back to the committee for identification of funds and let Treasurer know results.

Property Committee – Couple of items that still need to be addressed:

- Mike Trenda will be getting replacement shrubs from Gertens that were planted last Fall at the church entrance (3-4 have died). ACTION: Mike will take care of purchasing and re-planting.

## Council Minutes

June 19, 2023

- Matching microphone should be purchased from Metro Sound and Lighting that can be hung to balance the off-center mic already suspended in the choir area. Needs to be hung as well (Jim was hoping Tom Scott could do that).

ACTION: Kathy Stickler, as council liaison, will approach Ken Smith of Property to make sure these items are taken care of.

### **ADD – Neighbors Helping Neighbors Rent Increase** – Cheryl Skrypez

Cheryl wanted the Council to know that leadership of NHN has decided to increase rent payment to St. Stephen to \$700/month (increase from \$500/month). They are doing well and have been able to donate back to the community a sizable amount, so they felt they needed to provide more to St. Stephen in gratitude for their support.

### **ADD – Kiwanis Club** - Marla Amborn for Melissa Whitman

Melissa met with the Kiwanis Club. They will be forming a new club in the White Bear Lake area. She wanted council to know that she paid \$60 for St. Stephen to become a member of the Kiwanis Club. Melissa will be St. Stephen's representative. She will be asking Redeemer to join as well. She will bill the \$60 to the Children Youth and Family Ministry. Melissa will represent St. Stephen at the meetings.

Council comment: This is a great outreach opportunity and cheap too. Council would like to have Melissa give us some updates periodically on information from the meetings. Also are there volunteer opportunities, would she like other people to participate in these meetings if she is unable to attend. ACTION: Marla will let Melissa know of these requests.

### **ADD – Galilee Lutheran** – Pastor Juli

They are asking for donations. They have opportunity to purchase land next to church that is currently being used as a community garden. They need to raise \$1,000,000 and have raised over \$350,000. Would be nice to give them a donation. Benevolence fund sometimes has money left over at the end of year. Could we give something from Benevolence and still cover other benevolence responsibilities. ACTION: Ted will ask Patsy how much money might be possible from Benevolence money. Recommendation to council in July from Ted.

Other items from Pastor Juli:

- Doors were unlocked Sunday morning – Sunday she arrived and found both exterior doors unlocked and lights on. Both exterior doors were left open. Who has keys. Betsy said that Tami has list of who has keys.



## Council Minutes

June 19, 2023

- Juneteenth federal holiday today – Should St Stephen be participating in this holiday? New federal holiday. Should we be adding this holiday to the days off. What does the Synod do? We should follow the Synod. Staff Relations should look into whether we should be adding this holiday. Would affect Tami mostly. Talk to Patsy regarding staff contracts, Pastor Jim. ACTION: Marla will look into it.

### **Council Highlights:**

1. Mission Exploration Team update
2. Kiwanis Club membership
3. Reaching Outside our Walls presentation by Robin Eberlein and Kathy Stickler
4. Neighbors Helping Neighbors have graciously increased their rent payment to St Stephen to \$700/month.

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

**Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm**

**Closed with the Lord's Prayer**

**NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: July 10, 7:00 pm**

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Clark