

St Stephen Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes, November 13, 2023

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

Present: Marla Amborn (President), Ted Field (Vice President), Cheryl Skrypez, Phyllis Ballata, Denise Ashley, Interim Pastor Sharon Kelly, Scott Zieman, Kathy Stickler, Mary Beth Skunes (Treasurer).

Absent: Bethany Zenner

Devotion – Pastor Kelly

PK read from Psalms 84:1-2. Refers to the musical affirmation of joy in God's presence which we are called to when we worship. Vignette read from the book "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations" by Robert Schnase regarding this reading.

Prayer Concerns –ALL

This Saturday 11/18 is Jill Sandvik's mother Rita Englegardt memorial.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes for October 2023 reviewed prior to the meeting. Couple areas on page 6 need change from red to black. Betsy will correct and email to Tami for filing. No other changes noted.

MOTION: A motion was made by Ted Field and seconded by Denise Ashley to approve the October 2023 Council minutes. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Adjustments to the Agenda: None.

REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report – Mary Beth Skunes (Treasurer)

Treasurer's Report in its entirety for October is included for review.

Mary Beth has included a Summary page with the Treasurer's Report. Highlights:

- October income higher than normal, partly because of the Music Festival and Auction income and a \$3,000 anonymous donation, have not figured who it belongs to yet because it was from a bank.
- Expenses for October were higher than normal due to quarterly insurance payment of \$5,769 and the Holy Cow Survey cost of \$1,080, and finally payment to Redeemer for Melissa Whitman was missed in September so she was paid double in October.

Discussion on bank credit card – Need to get handle on the credit cards. Pastor Jim cancelled his card. Patsy Olson still has a card and it is in PK office in locked file cabinet. Melissa Whitman has the third credit card. There was a question if Melissa should have a card from Redeemer, not St. Stephen since she is employed by them. Mary Beth will talk to her. Would like to get this credit card cancelled and make decision on who should have card. Recommend Tami get a credit card. So will cancel card and re-issue to Tami, probably Mary Beth, Melissa Whitman, discussed whether Pastor Juli should have card. New Senior Pastor should have a card when comes.

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Account at Sams Club – People holding a Sams Club credit card are: Paul Swanson, Kathy Anderson, Melissa Whitman, Patsy Olson. Patsy's will be cancelled. Melissa has been buying food for the 5th Wednesdays.

CREDIT CARD ACTION:

- Patsy should be taken off of all cards
- Leave everyone else on for now.
- Mary Beth will talk to Melissa about her bank credit card.

2024 Budget – Mary Beth needs all Ministry Team council liaisons to talk with their ministry teams and get their ministry team budgets to Mary Beth by NOVEMBER 30. Ted said that if a ministry team identifies a project and feels money should come from a different ministry team, you need to discuss that with the other MT and decide which team needs to support it. Mary Beth is available to sit down with anyone this week to help with their budget. She is available to talk by phone or in the church office (10:00 am or after). Give her a call.

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

Pastors' Reports – Interim Pastor Sharon Kelly and Pastor Juli Thompson

Reports from Pastors Kelly and Thompson included for review.

Pastor Kelly report – PK presented actual live stream participant numbers that Zac was able to get from his recording. We have numbers from January 2023 through current. Live stream numbers accurate as soon as worship concludes. PK feels having actual numbers during the service is more accurate. She presented information for the Sundays in October (5) and November (2). We need to make up our mind if we want to count the people who view later. PK feels live stream is more representative of “post-lockdown” viewing. Who is joining at actual time of the service. Kathy Stickler asked if there was cost of livestreaming? There is a small one, maintain cameras, need to fix equipment, paying the person who is running the livestream program. Also Zac gets an hourly rate when asked to do extra recording. What do you think about digital evangelism and read more books that talk about post-lockdown live stream. Mary Beth said that she anticipated in the wintertime the live stream numbers would go up. We need to make sure we are recording both the live stream view/in person count of people every Sunday.

Pastor Juli report – She wants clarity around her role during the time we will not have an interim. Since Juli was not present at the council meeting, the executive committee will meet with Pastor Juli separately to discuss this.

Ministry Team Reports – ALL

Congregational & Community Care – Phyllis Ballata

Phyllis presented information from Isaiah. There were listening sessions across MN. Thousands of people participated. They are now analyzing answers from all these listening sessions. She included a copy of their Faith Agenda which asks all elected officials to govern with the following in the

forefront: A democracy that honors every person's dignity and a caring economy that allows everyone to thrive. She also provided Isaiah key legislative victories in 2023. People from St. Stephen who participate in Isaiah are Phyllis Ballata, Pastor Juli, and Karen Smith.

Stewardship – Ted Field

Last Sunday was "Intent Sunday". Stewardship has received 43 statements of intent. Approximately half of what was received indicated a greater gift. Goal is to get more than 100 envelopes.

Fellowship – Betsy Clark

The Music Festival and Auction was on Saturday October 14 with 80-90 people attending. Our net income from the event was approximately \$5,500.

Worship and Music – Denise Ashley

Denise said that W/M may need to make some changes to the number of Christmas Eve service schedule. Possibly remove one of the services. Need to make final decision before Steppingstone gets mailed November 22. Will have a special meeting in the next week. W/M needing to add to 2024 budget organ repair at \$7,500. Some discussion whether memorial money could be used for that. Will be discussed as budget is prepared.

Nominating Committee Update – Mary Beth Skunes

The nominating committee was asked to find 3 three-year terms and 1 one-year term. The three-year terms will be filled by Nancy Finley, Jackie Colaizy, and Sue Lemon. The one-year term will be filled by Phyllis Ballata (who will be completing her one-year term at the end of this year). Marla informed Mary Beth that Bethany Zenner will not be able to fulfill her final year in 2024 and we are looking for an additional one-year term to fill. Mary Beth asked Denise Ashley and Cheryl Skrypez (both completing their one-year term at the end of this year) whether either one of them would be willing to serve one more year. Denise said the two of them would discuss and get back to Mary Beth.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

Approval of St. Stephen Confirmands – Betsy Clark

Betsy, representing the Executive Committee, recommended that Council approve the following young people to participate in the Confirmation ceremony Sunday, October 29. The council should have done this at the October meeting, but it was missed. The following names were submitted to the council as completing their confirmation studies satisfactorily and able to participate in the confirmation service:

- Laine Bengston
- Eli Hosmer
- Katie Skenandore
- Nels Zenner

Betsy said that Katie and Lainea actually participated in Redeemer confirmation service as they wanted to be with the kids from there. There was a question why we would allow those two to be confirmed. They are members of St. Stephen as thus need to be authorized by St. Stephen council. The confirmation program was a combined program between Redeemer and St. Stephen.

MOTION: A motion was made by Pastor Sharon Kelly and seconded by Marla Amborn to approve these four youth as completing confirmation training and participating in the October 29, 2023, Confirmation service. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Approval of Call Committee – Ted, Marla, Cheryl, Betsy

Ted, Marla, Cheryl and Betsy from the Mission Exploration Team presented the following people to the Council for consideration for the call committee.

Continuing from the Mission Exploration Team:

- Marla Amborn
- Robin Eberlein
- Ted Field

New Members:

- Lee Branwall
- Karen Smith
- Kathy Stickler
- Mike Trendera
- Brad Wilm
- Deb Yusuf

Each of the above people agreed to serve. Were there any questions or concerns about any of those names? None given. The Team was looking for 7-9 names and we have 9.

MOTION: A motion was made by Denise Ashley and seconded by Cheryl Skrypez to approve this list of names to serve on the Call Committee. Voted on and carried unanimously.

Kingdom Restoration Ministry – Ted Field

Karen Smith and Ted Field attended their first service. There were 5-6 people. Pastor Thomas' wife Christine is a musician, sings and plays guitar. Pastor Thomas preached from the front of the altar. Ted has provided instruction in how to turn on the sound system, work the hand mic, turn on/off lights, lock doors, etc. Ted thinks there is opportunity for a bigger relationship between St. Stephen and Kingdom Restoration. Both organizations want our relationship to grow. The first month has worked very well.

2024 budget – Ted Field and Mary Beth Skunes

Goal is to get ministry team budgets to Mary Beth by November 30. MB is willing to meet with people this week to help them with their budgets if they need it. Give her a call.

OLD BUSINESS:

Wednesday Meals – Betsy Clark

Betsy talked to Jodie Millard and Kathy Anderson about developing a menu book for people to choose from when they sign up to make food on Wednesdays. Right now since it is not summer, we have Kathy Anderson, Jodie Millard and Melissa Whitman taking one Wednesday a month. Kathy and Jodie did not really want to stick to a particular menu item each week like Redeemer does because sometimes there is leftover food that can be used for the meal. If there is a night when there is not someone signed up, Dominos Pizza using coupons to 2 for 1 pizzas or Donnatelli's pan of pasta. At this time, there is not an emergency for trying to figure something out as Melissa will be here on Wednesdays at least through January when youth will be back at Redeemer on Wednesdays. At this time, the council does not need to take any more action.

Mission Exploration Team Update – Ted, Marla, Cheryl, Betsy

This Sunday Holy Cow survey interpretation will take place at 1:00 pm. The newly formed Call Committee, Council, and the MET team should be present to participate. Around 130 surveys were completed. Should be some useful information. It will be a live ZOOM meeting that could take up to 3 hours long. Zoom link and final report will be sent to Marla on Thursday. Does it matter that everyone is in the same room together? Groups who have side conversations will lose the speaker. We will have the report. Long term thing will be sharing it with the new called pastor. Marla will call Holy Cow – can they record it? We will have people view individually from their home locations (up to 20 people can be possible) because of the continued spotty wifi at church and also to prevent noise interference from having a large group of people in one space.

Council Highlights – ALL

- 1) The Nominating Committee has identified individuals who are willing to serve on council beginning in 2024. The committee has filled 3 three-year terms and 2 one-year terms.
- 2) The Call Committee has been approved by Council and will be:
 - a. Marla Amborn (continuing from the Mission Exploration Team)
 - b. Robin Eberlein (continuing from the Mission Exploration Team)
 - c. Ted Field (continuing from the Mission Exploration Team)
 - d. Lee Branwall
 - e. Karen Smith
 - f. Kathy Stickler
 - g. Mike Trenda
 - h. Brad Wilm
 - i. Deb Yusuf
- 3) Members of the Council, Mission Exploration Team and the newly formed Call Committee will be meeting Sunday November 19 with a representative from Holy Cow via ZOOM to hear the interpretation of the Holy Cow survey and receive the official report.
- 4) Pastor Kelly's last Sunday will be November 19. There will be a sending ceremony during the service and a reception for her following the service.

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- 5) Wednesday, November 22, at 7:00 pm there will be a combined St. Stephen and Redeemer Thanksgiving Service with the combined choirs at Redeemer Lutheran Church. Please plan on attending this service!
- 6) The St. Paul Area Synod is working on identifying a new interim pastor for St. Stephen. Pastor Juli will be assuming additional duties during the time we will be without an interim pastor.

Communion signup list – ALL

Date	Server	Helper
Sunday, Nov 19, 9:30 am	Scott Zieman	Denise Ashley
Sunday, Nov 26, 9:30 am	Cheryl Skrypez	Ted Field
Sunday, Dec 3, 9:30 am	Demise Ashley	Ted Field
Wednesday, Dec 6, 6:00 pm	Cheryl Skrypez	ONLY ONE NEEDED
Sunday Dec 17, 9:30 am	Kathy Stickler	Ted Field
Sunday Dec 24, 9:30 am	Scott Zieman	Cheryl Skrypez
Sunday Dec 31, 9:30 am		

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 8:33 pm

Closed with the Lord’s Prayer

NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: Monday, December 13, 2023, at 7:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Clark
Council Secretary