

**St Stephen Lutheran Church**  
**Church Council Meeting Minutes, September 5, 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

**Absent:** Bethany Zenner, Kathy Stickler

**Devotions** – Pastor Kelly

Hymnal page 84 “Health of body and soul.” Read in unison.

**Prayer Concerns** – Pastor Kelly, ALL

Ted & Peggy Schaff, Diane & Paul Swanson, Jason Schultz, Mike Trendera, Denise’s friend Julie & her granddaughter Johanna. Any others hospitalized.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes for August 2023 reviewed prior to the meeting. No changes noted.

*MOTION: A motion was made by Ted Field and seconded by Cheryl Skrypez to approve the August 2023 Council minutes. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Adjustments to the Agenda:** No Treasurer’s Report for this month. Add under “New Business” – Offering (Cheryl Skrypez)

**REPORTS:**

**Treasurer’s Report** – Ted Field

Due to council being held early in September, Mary Beth was unable to have a Treasurer’s Report ready. September Treasurer’s Report will be presented at the October Council meeting.

**Pastors’ Reports** – Interim Pastor Sharon Kelly and Pastor Juli Thompson

Pastor Kelly’s report available for review. Pastor Juli is still out of town so there is no report from her.

PK commented on the in-person and livestream attendance for Sunday and GAP services for July and August. Livestream numbers provided by Zach VanDyke. PK mentioned that the Synod is hosting an on-line zoom seminar Thursday, September 14, from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm called “Cultivating Christian Community Online.” PK wants to record the outdoor worship on September 10 and get it online.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. PK will forward the online webinar information to the Worship and Music Committee and to Zach VanDyke.
2. Scott Zieman will ask his wife Maureen if she can record the worship service using her phone and figure out how to get it online. Melissa Whitman would be a good resource.

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

**Ministry Team Reports – ALL**

Fellowship – Cheryl Skrypez

- Rally Sunday – Leaders have been assigned. Finalizing other volunteers.
- Pat Miles event – Held meeting recently. Karen Smith has found volunteers to act as greeters at both doors. We still need more volunteers for the sanctuary and in the fellowship hall during the reception following the talk. Will plan on having another meeting in the next week or so to finalize volunteers.

Worship and Music – Alter Guild – Cheryl Skrypez

Discussed some of the communion changes. Resolved everything. Pouring from the chalice during Epiphany is still being considered.

Worship & Music – general meeting – Denise Ashley

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month (Cindy day off) has been covered by Garrett and Brenda. Thanksgiving service to be held at Redeemer (time? Not sure). Choir schedule will be finalized in September. Tech meeting held to address sound issues. September 7 W/M meeting will discuss Christmas eve service times.

Property – Pastor Kelly

Volunteer brought wood chipper and chipped much of the wood by the garage and spread it on the new bushes by the front door.

Adult Education – Scott Zieman

October 1 – MET doing a report after service on Cottage meetings. Scott's education topic was scheduled on October 1, he will move it.

October 8 – Pastor Kelly will meet with St. Stephen members for them to have opportunity to ask questions about her role, talk about grief, etc.

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

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Parental Leave and Sabbatical Policies – Pastor Kelly and Marla**

In MET document there are a couple of questions if we have parental leave and sabbatical policies. We should put in place these policies to attract new pastors. Synod examples? PK has not been able to find anything online. State of MN just updated their parental leave policies. Need to bring to our Staff Relations committee for review and approval.

**ACTION:**

1. PK check with Redeemer and Synod for examples. (NOT NEEDED – ST STEPHEN HAS POLICIES)
2. Betsy to get a meeting set up with Staff Relations to work on these two items. (NOT NEEDED – ST STEPHEN HAS POLICIES IN PLACE.

After council meeting, Betsy Clark reviewed St. Stephen Employee Handbook and both policies are in the Handbook.

- B-05 Leaves of Absence (covers parental leave in addition to other types of leaves)
- B-06 Sabbatical Leave

These policies were attached for the council to review when reviewing the minutes. They may need to be updated slightly, but at this time, we DO NOT need to get any additional examples. Will hold off on calling a staff meeting.

**Update our Mission/Vision/Values Statement? – Ted, Betsy, Marla, Cheryl**

As part of the MET process, we wanted to review our current mission, vision, and values statement. Betsy reviewed annual reports going back to 2006 to gather history on the creation of these statements. Original Mission and Vision created in 2005. Vision revised in 2013. Value Statements created in 2016. Vision revised to its final stage in 2017. First Value statement revised in 2017. Final version has been in place since 2017.

*MOTION: A motion was made by Phyllis Ballata and seconded by Denise Ashley to endorse fully our current Mission, Vision, and Values Statement as an accurate representation of St. Stephen's congregation. Voted on and carried unanimously.*

**Call Committee – Ted, Betsy, Marla, Cheryl**

MET will be working soon on recruiting a call committee. Redeemer recommended significant overlap of the MET and call committee members but with some variation. Council is responsible for approving the call committee once it's formed. We are looking for around 7 people (ideal size would be 5-9 people). Half of the MET committee should ideally be on the call committee. So looking for 3-4 people outside of the MET team. MET will be working on the process of identifying appropriate candidates. We should be looking for appropriate characteristics of people who would be good on the call committee, do we have any suggested names, are any council members willing to serve? Ideal characteristics:

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- Active member
- Regular worshipper
- Prior Call Committee experience is a plus
- Variety of ages - possibly including a youth or young adult
- Gender balance
- Mix of length of membership - some newer members, some more long-term members
- Willing to work hard and able to devote time needed
- Brave enough to ask questions of a pastoral candidate
- Able to discuss issues of faith and theology
- Someone who stuck out in the Cottage Meetings as committed to this process and to the future of St. Stephen

Some names identified (does not mean they are automatically in):

1. John King. He was gone for a long time and now is back regularly. He was also on the last call committee. Ted was impressed with his responses during the last cottage meeting.
2. Mike Trenda wants to be on the call committee
3. Karen Smith is interested in being on the call committee
4. Robin Eberlein wants to be on call committee

Bishop will meet with call committee before they get going

**Wednesday Meals** – Betsy, Marla

We have been having challenges this month with finding volunteers to make Wednesday night meals. Usually meals need to be enough for around 25 people.

PK – When asking for volunteers from Sunday worshipers, they feel that there is already a group of people who take care of Wednesday night meals. Maybe we should take time off from meals during a period of time in the summer. The last few Wednesdays, we have been buying food. Menu is listed in weekly email if it is identified.

Worship numbers for GAP has been in the upper teens. What is the objective of Wednesday night worship and what is objective of the meals?

The history of Wednesday night services was multi-focal. Create opportunity for weekenders to go to a weekday service, confirmation families, theme of service was what confirmation students were learning, Wednesday night programming, reach out to the community to get a good meal. Now confirmation classes don't meet on Wednesdays. Although starting in the Fall they will meet between Redeemer and St. Stephen on Wednesdays. They will be at St. Stephen September and October and at Redeemer November and December.

On line worship experience – maybe ask those people to answer some questions about themselves. Does it continue to be our mission to provide an ongoing on line worship? It was done out of necessity because of COVID. But now, is it the best use of our time and resources?

We have young people who are regularly involved in the Wednesday service. That is a value. Would people come if there was not a meal on Wednesday? No. Council does not believe so. There needs to be a meal.

Currently we only have Kathy Anderson and Jodie Millard taking one Wednesday a month. Jodie has been our go-to person for cooking for years. They have signed up to do one Wednesday a month. Occasionally Char Redepinning.

Redeemer currently does not have Wednesday night service but does hold adult education and has a big choir, so there is a meal served. They have an email sign-up that does tend to be mostly ministry teams and council members and there is a theme every Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> Wed hot dish; 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed pasta; 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed pizza (purchased from Dominos), 4<sup>th</sup> Wed soup or stew and salad; 5<sup>th</sup> Wed chef's choice. Maybe Jodie could continue for a few more months and during that time, develop and write down a couple of recipes in each of those categories and then act as mentor to those who are willing to learn how to cook for 20-30 people. Then this task could be handed off to some different people.

**ACTION:** Betsy will contact Jodie and ask her about this idea.

#### **Question about Offering** – Cheryl Skrypez

One member approached Cheryl and said that since we have returned to the offering plate, there is not much being placed in it as many members give online. We discussed things like a card. We need to have an offering plate as a gesture or symbol of giving. We should make some statement like “we recognize your digital giving and give thanks for that.”

**ACTION:** Ted was asked if the Finance/Stewardship committee could come up with a card that has multiple purposes: recording communion, prayer request, visit from pastor, volunteer opportunities. They will work on that.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **Mission Exploration Team update** – Ted, Betsy, Marla, Cheryl

Last cottage meeting was 9/3. Total participants may be close to 100. Survey from Holy Cow Consulting has been developed and is ready. Representative from the group will do a video call to go over the results. The link to take the survey will be going out to council and the MET team. Takes about 30 minutes to fill out. Will be giving presentation to congregation on October 1 to give results of cottage meetings. MET needs to address community needs.

#### **Galilee Lutheran funding request** – Denise Ashley

Memorial gift committee has identified \$500 to send to Galilee beyond the amount already sent from Benevolence. A check should be made within the next week. Cheryl announced that NHN will be giving \$1,000 to Galilee Lutheran.

**Council Highlights:**

- 1) Council voted to affirm our mission/vision/value statements as written.
- 2) Adult Education Opportunities
  - a. September 24 2:00 pm Pat Miles
  - b. October 1 10:30 am MET will provide cottage meeting results
- 3) Survey from MET to congregation members.
- 4) Galilee Lutheran funding – we will be sending another \$500 from memorial gifts identified by the gift committee and NHN will be donating \$1000. We have already given \$500 from Benevolence.
- 5) We are in the process of forming our call committee within the next month.

**Communion signup list** – through Sunday October 15

Date	Pastor(s) and Communion Assistant	Communion Set-Up Helper #1	Communion Set-Up Helper #2
Wed Sept 6	Pastor Kelly/Cheryl	none needed (altar guild)	none needed
Sun Sept 10	Pastor Kelly/Pastor Juli	Ted	Cheryl
Sun Sept 17	Pastor Kelly/Scott	Ted	none needed
Sun Sept 24	Pastor Kelly/Pastor Juli	Denise	Scott
Sun Oct 1	Pastor Juli/Marla	Ted	none needed
Wed Oct 4	Pastor Kelly/Denise	none needed	none needed
Sun Oct 8	Pastor Kelly/Phyllis	Cheryl	none needed
Sun Oct 15	Pastor Kelly/Pastor Juli	Scott	Denise

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

**Meeting adjourned at 9:07pm**

**Closed with the Lord’s Prayer**

**NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: Monday, October 9, 2023**

Respectfully submitted,  
Betsy Clark  
Council Secretary