

**Approved Minutes  
Congregational Council  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025**

**Members:** Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Pastor Jonathan Davis, President Michelle Kramer-Prevost, President Elect Paul Beck, Treasurer Judd Lohmann, Secretary Steve Reece; Council Members Cheryl Buck, Jill Enestvedt, Dan Hanson, Andrea Hoff, Eric Johnsrud, Susan Lohmann, and Maggie Odell.

**Present:** Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Pastor Jonathan Davis, President Michelle Kramer-Prevost, President Elect Paul Beck, Treasurer Judd Lohmann, Secretary Steve Reece; Council Members Cheryl Buck, Jill Enestvedt, Dan Hanson, Andrea Hoff, Susan Lohmann, Maggie Odell; Brenda Nelson (representing Worship and Arts Board), Mark Toov (representing Children's Ministry and Education Board), Anika Rychner (representing Youth Ministry and Education Board), Pam Groves-Gaggioli (representing WELCA), Jeff McLaughlin (representing the St. John's Foundation).

**Absent:** Eric Johnsrud

President Michelle Kramer-Prevost called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

### **1. Devotions**

Pastor Jonathan Davis led the group in a lively discussion of Chapters 1-2 of Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Strength to Love*.

### **2. Approval of March Minutes**

Andrea Hoff made a motion, seconded by Dan Hanson, for approval of the March Council Minutes. Motion carried.

### **3. Discussion Items**

a. At the March Council meeting it was agreed that clearer guidelines for accessing Foundation funds needed to be crafted and that this should be a topic of discussion at the April Council meeting. Jeff McLaughlin, representing the Foundation, attended and went over the procedures that the Foundation had devised. Here is a link to their current draft:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cu5DGrqcm9vYXRq2H2ir\\_rIGnFlF8TMTyIpgNLjxf74/edit?usp=s\\_haring](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cu5DGrqcm9vYXRq2H2ir_rIGnFlF8TMTyIpgNLjxf74/edit?usp=s_haring)

Jeff emphasized the following points. Most decisions of the Foundation have in the past been made unanimously. The bulk of funds is undesignated. Ideally, around one-third of funds would be dispersed to each of the three categories – current operations, greater Northfield community, world community – but this is not set in stone; up to half of the funds could be dispersed to any one of the three categories. Use

of funds should reflect the mission of the church. Ideally, St. John's members would be personally involved in funded projects. Ideally, fund expenditures would give St. John's some visibility. Currently expenditures of the Foundation must also be approved both by the Foundation and by Council.

This last point led to an extended discussion of possible procedures for applying for grants as well as for considering and approving them. Do grant applications run first through the Boards and Council, or do they run first through the Foundation? If both groups need to approve funding, how do we avoid delays and "over-bureaucratization," and how do we avoid any unsavory conflict between the two groups? The Foundation will fine-tune the procedures and test how well they work with some "trial-balloon" grant applications (see Action Items below).

b. Evangelism and Communication Board requested some clarification regarding their budget for 2025 (see Board minutes). Cheryl Buck offered clarification.

c. Benevolence and Social Concerns Board requested some feedback on the idea of creating St. John's t-shirts for volunteers and youth participating in summer camps for community outreach and congregational connection – possibly to be funded by a Foundation grant. Andrea Hoff expressed the desire to be able to give away the shirts (rather than sell them) and fund the expense with a Foundation grant. There was general consensus by Council on this matter, so the Benevolence and Social Concerns Board will proceed accordingly.

d. Worship and Arts Board asked that the Council discuss a preliminary suggestion for a Foundation grant to update the PA and streaming systems (see Board minutes). Brenda Nelson noted that the main goal was to be able to hear (and see) the service being conducted in the sanctuary throughout the church building. Council members noted that there is a speaker system functioning in various parts of the building, but few people know how to turn it on or adjust its volume. Perhaps some signage would be in order, or someone could be responsible for turning the system on at an appropriate volume on Sunday mornings. Also, it was noted that the live stream of the service from KYMN is, with the installation of some new routers, now available throughout most of the church. Brenda will convey this information to the Worship and Arts Board as they consider how they wish to proceed.

e. The Youth Ministry and Education Board had requested that the Council discuss LOFTY (Lights Out For The Youth), a congregational initiative to be funded by the Foundation, and, in part, executed by the youth of St. John's. Anika Rychner and Jeff McLaughlin introduced the concept of LOFTY, which advocates for homeless youth: it would encourage residents of Northfield to turn off their lights for one hour during Winter Solstice and give the money saved to youth programs such as The Key, Northfield Union of Youth, Wallflower House, etc. The Board is requesting \$5,000 from the Foundation for the first year. Council expressed support for the project and moved it to an Action Item (see below).

#### **4. Financial Report**

Update from Treasurer Judd Lohman (see addendum #1)

#### **5. Action Items**

a. Andrea Hoff offered a motion, seconded by Susan Lohmann, to approve the LOFTY grant from the Foundation for up to \$5,000 for the first year. Motion carried.

## **6. Pastors' Reports**

Updates from Pastors Fickenschier and Davis (see addendum #2). The pastors noted that the services during the Easter season were the most well-attended since before the pandemic. They also requested feedback from Council members about the timing and nature of the various services.

## **5. Old Business**

none

## **6. New Business**

a. Mortgage celebration update: the last check has been sent and plans are under way for a grand celebration between services on Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **7. Future Dates**

Spring Cleanup: Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 8-12 am

Women of the Church (WELCA event): Saturday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 10 am-12 pm

Board Night: Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm

Council Meeting: Tuesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm

Minutes submitted by Secretary Steve Reece

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## **Addendum #1: Treasurer's Report**

NOTES: St. John's March 2025 Treasurers Financial Report

With this March financial report we are fully back and up to date! There are no significant issues or concerns at this time.

Total Operating Income is (\$13k) below budget for the month of March and (\$36k) below budget YTD.

- Offering:

- o March offering was (\$10k) below budget.
- o YTD offering is (\$28k) below budget.
- o 2025 YTD offering actuals through March are slightly higher than 2024 offering through March.
- Other Income
  - o YTD “Other Income” is \$9k higher than budget. \$18k of interest from CDs was deposited in February. This amount was a bit higher than expected. (the principal amounts for these CDs were rolled over for another year). Also, due to the positive response of the Sustaining Grace Capital Campaign, funds have come in more heavily weighted in the first year. This has led to the checking account interest being higher than expected.
  - o Very few Designated and Foundation Funds have been released so for this year, these items are almost (\$18k) below budget.

Total Operating Expense is (\$5k) below budget for the month of March, and (\$35k) below budget YTD.

- Personnel is (\$22k) below budget YTD through March. There has been a lag in the reporting for 2025 salary increases. This is expected to be brought up to date, retroactively, in April.
- All other Board expense categories are close to budget as we are just three months into the year.

Net Income/(loss)

- The Net Income YTD through March is (\$2K) below budget.

There are no particular areas of concern through March.

## **Addendum #2: Pastors’ Reports**

Pastors’ Council Report for April 2025

### Official Acts

Memorial service for John Ferguson, March 28

### Worship Life

Worship is the whole story for this month. We had particularly strong attendance for Lenten Wednesdays all through the season this year. With Easter falling outside all the schools’ spring breaks, we centered more of our catechism and confirmation teaching around preparing youth for understanding Holy Week and the season of Easter.

We will switch to one service for the summer beginning on Memorial Day weekend, May 25.

### CYF

Programming is in the transition season as we prepare to celebrate the end of the year and work on summer engagement. We have just a few weeks post-Easter to wrap up Sunday School and Wednesday sessions. St. John's will host Vacation Bible School this year in the second week of June. Camp and Youth trip registrations are doing well and we are happy to see that the post-pandemic reluctance to do overnight camps seems to be fading.

### Facilities

We happily got our new routers installed to boost wifi in the Undercroft and Library this month. This will be helpful not only to our Council and committees but also to the many outside groups that use these rooms.

### Social Concerns

We were grateful for the timely update from Global Refuge/ LIRS on April 6. Our representative from Lutheran World Relief will be here on April 27 to preach and give a forum as well.

A community meeting in support of immigrants in Northfield met on April 7. Pastor Jonathan is on the small task force working to coordinate community support for undocumented neighbors and others who are living in fear now.