

Congregational Council
St. John's Lutheran Church
September 24, 2024

Members: Pr. Pam Fickenscher, Pr. Jonathan Davis, Ellen Ellickson, Jill Enestvedt, Dan Franklin, Daniel Hanson, Andrea Hoff, Tamara Jackson, Eric Johnsrud, Judd Lohmann, Elaine Nesbit, Rob Quanbeck, Alli Walters Mode, Michelle Kramer-Prevost, Pam Groves-Gaggioli

Present: Pr. Pam Fickenscher, Jill Enestvedt, Daniel Hanson, Dan Franklin, Elaine Nesbit, Ellen Ellickson, Michelle Kramer-Prevost, Maddie ODell (for Rob Quanbeck), Pam Groves-Gaggioli, Eric Johnsrud, Cheryl Buck (Evangelism and Communications), Alli Walters Mode, Andrea Hoff, Pr. Jonathan Davis, Tamara Jackson, Eric Johnsrud

Not present: Judd Lohmann, Rob Quanbeck

Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by Dan Franklin.

1. Opening: Pr. Jonathan opened us in prayer and led a discussion on Chapter 6 of When Church Stops Working
2. Motion to approve the August Council Minutes was made by Eric Johnsrud; the motion was seconded by Andrea Hoff; the motion passed unanimously.
3. The Financial Report had been submitted by Judd Lohmann, Treasurer. Eric Johnsrud made the motion to accept the treasurer's report; Jill seconded the motion; the motion passed.
4. Council Updates and Action Items
 - a. Nominating process:
 - i. The nominating committee has started connecting with the boards. They are beginning with executive committee and council slots.
 - ii. Participation on Boards:
 1. Number of people on the boards was addressed. At the end of the process it gets difficult to find people to fill slots. Vacancies can be addressed at the annual meeting.
 2. Participation in the work on a board was discussed. There is variation, but many of the board chairs expect board members to help carry the workload. Clarification of expectations and asking for help was encouraged.

- b. Personnel Recommendations:
 - i. PTO (Paid Time Off) One small change was made: The employee begins to accrue PTO immediately corresponding to the hours worked. This brings us into compliance with state law. After some discussion there was a motion to approve made by Eric Johnsrud; Cheryl Buck seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.
 - ii. Sabbatical Policy: Every five years of employment, (instead of six), a sabbatical is offered. Personnel board also requested funding in the budget for added expenses, (Travel, registrations, etc). Personnel recommended \$3000 in the budget in 2025 to establish a sabbatical fund, with the amount to be reconsidered each year. Motion to accept revised sabbatical policy was made by Eric Johnsrud; it was seconded by Cheryl Buck; it was approved unanimously.
5. Pastors' Reports
- a. Pr. Pam: (included in materials for the meeting)
 - i. Funerals are a mission of St. John's. People often enter St. John's for the first time, and sometimes even come to church services after experiencing a funeral here.
 - ii. Sundays and Wednesdays are back in motion. There is a shift toward more Sunday morning attendance than in recent years. St. John's Chorale is growing. Bell and children's choirs beginning rehearsals.
 - iii. The solar project is still in the last administrative phase of connecting to Xcel Energy. (Scheduled for October 2.)
Sunday school room tiles next project - bids are out.
 - b. Pr. Jonathan:
 - i. Education series: Rediscovering Genesis begins this Sunday. Seven week series of opening the pages of the Bible. Bible 101 class went well..
 - ii. Children Youth and Families: Welcomefest: About 150 attended breakfast. Everyone is invited.
 - iii. Stephen Ministers: Anonymous donor gave five communion kits so that Stephen ministers can bring them to those they visit. Stephen Ministers have been trained and bread will be consecrated on Sunday and used in the kits during the week.
6. Board Reports (included in materials submitted)
- a. Worship and Arts: Book Rack: they are proceeding with "economic" decision regarding book racks.
 - b. Children's Ministry and Education: Three people transitioning off of board including the chair, Alli. Nominating committee has met with them.
 - c. Faith and Health: One of the pastors will be serving communion at Parkview Retirement Community.

- d. Stewardship Board: Ministry Fair materials will be consolidated (but still available) to make room for the WELCA event.
- e. Property and Grounds: Clean up date is October 26; donuts and coffee will be available. Ash trees are scheduled to be removed on September 30.
- f. Benevolence and Social Concerns: Looking at potential projects for benevolence money: considering solar panels for our sister church in Tanzania; sister church in Colombia may have needs brought to us by Pr. Pam's visit. Meals on Wheels sign up is going well - all slots are filled.
- g. Evangelism and Communication: AV Volunteer team: We discussed funding and volunteer coverage. The AV Volunteer team is overextended. Their responsibilities are significant and there are a limited number of them.
 - i. How do we supplement the AV volunteer program with sufficiently skilled personnel so that the burden is shared?
 - ii. Should more funding go into the AV service? Ideas - Stipends for volunteers; Sponsorship expanded from KYMN to include the webstream. Discussion about pros and cons.
 - iii. Evangelism and Communication will continue to work on this issue.
- h. Adult Ministry and Education: Looking forward to the community led Bible Study for the entire congregation. The Advent book chosen is a devotional type. They are encouraging individuals and groups to buy it. It's entitled All Creation Waits.

7. New Business

- a. Pr. Pam's opportunity to go to Colombia. Katie Larson was at St. John's speaking about our partners in Colombia. ELCA Mission trip is planned to visit churches in Colombia. Pr. Pam is requesting partial support from St. John's. The total cost is \$3000. All agreed that the trip was very much in line with the Foundation's mission and purpose. Michelle made a motion to use \$3000 in Foundation funds to support Pr. Pam's ELCA mission trip; Alli seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously.
- b. Reconciling in Christ: Discussed the requirements of our Reconciling in Christ Ministry status with "Reconciling Works." It appears that changes are needed in our Welcome Statement to reflect an actively anti-racist intent. We need a congregational process to change it. We are also required to make a "meaningful contribution." Pr. Pam will contact the organization to clarify the changes needed.
- c. Dan Franklin reminded us of the request to help Leah get us registered (based on the new law about paid family leave.) She needs personal data of two additional lay leaders. Michelle Kramer-Prevost and Jill Enestvedt offered.
- d. We need to spend more from the Capital campaign: We've donated to Ruth's House of Hope. The next is HCI (weatherproofing for mobile home communities). Andrea

Hoff moved to release \$20,000 to HCI for that purpose; Cheryl Buck seconded the motion; the motion carried.

- e. Cannon Valley Conference - (which is the local part of our synod.) has made a proposal to gather together a series of anti-racism trainings next year. They are suggesting contracting with “Just Move,” who has done a lot of work on anti-racism training in the Lutheran Church. Just Move offers a grace filled space to work on this important issue together. We would need to decide by December 1, and it would begin in January. It would be offered to a mix of staff and lay leaders. Pr. Pam will disseminate the video, and we will consider and revisit the decision at the next meeting.
- f. Elaine Nesbit offered a motion to close the meeting; Michelle Kramer-Prevost seconded; the motion carried.

Dan Franklin ended the meeting at 9:03pm

We will discuss Chapter 7 of When Church Stops Working next week

Future dates:

Next Board Night: October 8, 2024, 7pm

Next Church Council Meeting: October 22, 2024, 7pm

Respectfully submitted by Elaine Nesbit