

Congregational Council
St. John's Lutheran Church
November 15, 2022| 7:00 p.m.

Members: Pr. Pam Fickenscher, Pr. Jonathan Davis, Paul Beck, Marilyn Calcutt, Rod Christensen, Mark Gleason, Candace Godfrey, Trish Goodrich, Kristy Harms, Tamara Jackman, Dennis Rinehart, Jane Rizzo, Kathleen Shea, Jerry Ugland, Steve Taggart

Present: Pr. Pam Fickenscher, Pr. Jonathan Davis, Rod Christensen, Kristy Harms, Marilyn Calcutt, Jerry Ugland, Jane Rizzo, Steve Taggart, Trish Goodrich, Candace Godfrey, Dennis Rinehart, Mark Gleason

Not Present: Paul Beck, Tamara Jackman, Kathleen Shea

Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm

1. Opening devotion and prayer led by Mark Gleason.
2. Motion to approve the October 25, 2022 Minutes made by Kristy Harms. Seconded by Marilyn Calcutt. The motion passes unanimously.
3. Financial Report - Jane Rizzo
 - a. Offering - currently at 77% of budget at the end of October
 - b. Jane recommends that Council discuss the remaining Foundation funds (see "Release from Foundation Detail" report included in the materials for this meeting). Council needs to approve the request from the foundation for these already allocated funds.
 - c. **Jane moves that we request \$8,800 towards Properties, \$8,000 for Discretionary Benevolence, and \$1,200 for Youth Summer Trips for release from the Foundation. Kristy seconds. Motion passes unanimously.**
 - d. The "To be allocated funds" for New Projects/Initiatives: if we don't request these funds by the end of the year, they are absorbed back to the Foundation. Suggestion from Rod Christensen: for the Boards that align with these five categories, please check with your Board members to determine how you could spend these funds; bring proposals to Council next month so that Council can vote by the end of the year.
 - e. **Rod suggests that Council requests \$4,260 from the unrestricted St. John's Fund from the Foundation to be allocated to the St. John's Hall Acoustic Project. Mark makes the motion, Jerry seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.**
4. Kristy Harms moved to approve the October financial report. Candace Godfrey seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.
5. Council Updates & Action Items
 - a. Acoustics Project update - supply chain issues are delaying the start of the project. Mark asked if Twin Cities Acoustics could delay the start of the project until after Christmas (between Christmas and New Year's). They agreed to the new target timeline.

- i. How do we handle requests for funding the remainder of the project?
Discussion that this is a lower priority as the Stewardship drive is going on right now. After Stewardship season, when we can properly position this project for donations, would be the appropriate time - especially before and during installation.
 - b. Staffing Update - Pr. Pam told Council that we have made an offer for the Facilities position, but it has not yet been accepted.
 - c. Budgeting Process - budgets have been submitted from all the boards
 - d. Safe Operating Update - committee hasn't met for a few months. There was one week last month where we did require masks as part of Rice County's elevated numbers. Do we switch to "highly recommended" from "required" when color is Red? Rod will send a note to Safe Operating Committee to see if they would consider readdressing this and consider language that is more reflective of what we are doing.
- 6. Pastor's Report
 - a. Pr. Pam - All Saints Day, Art Exhibit is up, Kristin Partlo has started an Adult Bible Study on Wednesdays during confirmation
 - i. PEEL Project - the photo portraits and poetry upstairs are a part of a Luther Seminary Project; they would like us to generate additional retreats as a part of their grant funding. Kristin Partlo is taking the lead on this.
- 7. Board Reports: included in the materials for the Council meeting. Additional notes:
 - a. **Properties & Grounds** - Fall Clean Up last Saturday morning had a good turnout.
 - b. **Faith & Health** - a reminder that they have about 50 prayer shawls on hand to distribute
 - c. **Stewardship** - Art Fair is a great success! Looking ahead to 2024 - we will probably do this in January/February when St. John's Hall isn't so busy
 - d. **Youth** - looking into a Holiday Party in December
 - e. **Children's Board** - snacks have increased in price, adjusted for next year's budget
- 8. New Business
 - a. Planning our Future Together Summary - see Addendum A
 - i. Feedback on the document
 - 1. Mark: we should consider using our Mission statement to help frame the report
 - 2. Pam - noticed that a thread through many of the points was a longing for communication to help and enhance connections
 - 3. This theme of "connections" was clear - both with each other and to the wider community
 - 4. Rod expressed that gratitude and wanting to share was the primary tone of the feedback
 - ii. How can this be used going forward? This will be an ongoing discussion.
 - iii. Kathy wants to use this at the new Council's retreat in February

Future dates

1. Boards: **Tuesday, December 13, 2022**

Please send notes of your Board meetings to Trish Goodrich within a week so she can have them prepared for Council meetings

2. Council: **Tuesday, December 20, 2022 | 7:00 p.m.** Prayer led by Marilyn Calcutt.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08pm.

Other Notes: none.

Respectfully submitted by Trish Goodrich

Addendum A

St. John's Lutheran Church: Planning Our Future Together November, 2022

Submitted by Rod Christensen, Congregation President

In October, 2022, members of St. John's gathered in 3 open sessions to discuss our programs and ministries, at the request of the Congregational Council. The intent was to gather ideas and impressions as we emerge from the pandemic, understanding that everything may not return to our previous "normal", that some of what we learned to do by necessity may be desirable to continue, and that this is a good time to consider where we focus our time, energy and resources.

Responses were recorded from small group discussions at each session, and others submitted their ideas independently. All told, over 100 members participated. Attached are the questions used to stimulate discussion. Here is a summation of the comments about our current state and possible areas to explore.

Gratitude for the many ways to connect.

This theme was mentioned again and again. There was widespread appreciation for the ability to participate in worship through the radio broadcast and live stream, and the desire for these options to continue. Many also mentioned the ability to participate in fellowship activities remotely at times, allowing even those living at a distance to join. Several mentioned how much the phone ministry and pastoral visits meant to them.

Ideas to explore:

- Some expressed concern if remote participation hinders us from returning to robust in-person participation. Should we more deliberately encourage a return to in-person worship?
- Could we provide a shuttle service for those with transportation challenges (e.g. elderly, college students)?
- Can remote and in-person participation be combined, whether simultaneously in the same activity, or by alternating in-person and remote gatherings for some types of activities?
- Can more outdoor activities be developed?

Worship.

Many people expressed their appreciation and delight for the quality of our worship experience. Pastoral leadership and preaching, music ministry, and lay participation were all emphasized. Access to the Sunday worship folder was appreciated. Child care during worship is very helpful.

Ideas to explore:

- Should single service Sunday worship be used more often, allowing the sanctuary to be filled, and making different kinds of education and fellowship activities possible?

- Some mentioned expanding the types of services and music we offer; others hoped that services would continue with the current musical styles and content.
- Could outdoor worship continue at times?
- Can special music be more common at second service?

Fellowship activities.

Many specific group activities were called out, including fellowship over coffee, Bible studies, quilt ministry, pub theology, prayer shawls, Advent fair, softball, and young adult gatherings. Specific mention was made of the great support and value derived from youth activities, especially when connections were so hard early in the pandemic. The shared Sunday morning Fun Run was called out.

There was particular enthusiasm for the Wednesday night meals and the Christmas dinner, and the fellowship opportunities they provide for both members and the surrounding community.

Ideas to consider:

- Can intergenerational connections be strengthened?
- How can people be more aware of the various activities and be invited and welcomed?
- Can more gatherings without agendas be created?
- Can we use CCB better for activities and volunteering?

Social justice.

Many people mentioned the various opportunities to focus on racism, and especially the leadership of WELCA. Our ongoing benevolence was encouraged, as well as local initiatives including the Blessing Box, Meals on Wheels, Cyan, and our support of local agencies. Several were thankful for our role in support of the residents at Viking Terrace. There were positive comments about our openness to being challenged and thinking together.

Ideas to consider:

- Could St. John's take a greater role in supporting immigrants, as we have in the past?
- Can we continue to strengthen our relationships with community organizations and other like-minded congregations? Could we partner with St. Dominic's in supporting the Hispanic community?
- Can we make it clearer to others that we are open to new ideas, and are addressing issues like racial, economic and climate justice with humility?
- Could we serve as a resource to teach justice and reconciliation skills (emphasizing being together and listening), and about inclusion and diversity?
- How could we effectively partner with congregations in the inner city? Can we learn by visiting?

Climate justice.

There were comments supporting our current efforts to bring these issues forward.

Ideas to consider:

- Can St. John's generate energy efficiently through solar panels?
- Can we be better stewards by conserving more effectively (heat, air conditioning, light)?
- Could we improve our use of water, including storm runoff?
- Should we stop using plastic bottles?
- Should we deliberately lead by example, or instead make changes when they make more practical sense (when replacements are due, for example)?
- Could we compost better?
- Should we buy shares in a local farm to support our meal ministry?

Facilities.

Generally, comments about our facilities and how they work were positive. Appreciation was shared for the upcoming St. John's Hall acoustic improvements. Several people mentioned that it is good to allow others to use our facilities, both for community support and because bringing people in the doors is a way to make them aware of our congregation.

Ideas to consider:

- Can the parking lots be made safer (ice prevention, lighting)?
- When the parking lots are repaired, are there better ways to use the land and meet the parking requirements?
- Can our kitchen and St. John's Hall be used even more, including by the community?
- Can some spaces be made more usable with simple solutions like different furniture?
- Could St. John's be a community resource in new ways (e.g. Turkey Trot)?
- Could we be a site for an outdoor shower/toilet for public use?
- Could we have a generator so we could be a resource during power outages?
- Could our facilities be used by those providing day care for elders in need?
- Could we serve as an emergency shelter?
- Would "tiny housing" be possible on site?
- Could we have a community garden?

Welcoming.

Many mentioned the desire to be welcoming to our neighbors and the community, and some new members mentioned how welcome they felt, in many ways.

Ideas to consider:

- How could Wednesday meals be an opportunity to connect with those seeking information?
- Should we publicize Wednesday meals and similar opportunities more?
- Could activities like Pub Theology be designed for those interested in learning more about St. John's and the Lutheran faith?
- Can we be more welcoming to college students?
- Can we be more welcoming to single/working adults?
- Is our message to the community clear—that we walk with people wherever they are?

–Can we become a more diverse congregation?

–Can our website be more aligned with our message? Can we enhance our internal and external communications?

Long-term stability.

Many expressed thanks for the steady, generous support provided for the ministries of St. John's.

Ideas to consider:

–Could there be more transparency about budgeting and financial performance during the year?

–Could we provide more information and encouragement to support the St. John's Foundation?

–Should we study more formal relationships with other congregations in sharing activities, resources or even merging?

–Could the use of our facilities (especially the kitchen) generate revenue through rental, or at least recover cleaning costs after use?

–Can we utilize volunteers (recently retired and youth were specifically mentioned) to help share the work that falls to staff?