

Congregational Council
St. John's Lutheran Church
September 27, 2022 | 7:00 p.m.

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

Present: Pr. Pam Fickenscher, Paul Beck, Marilyn Calcutt, Rod Christensen, Mark Gleason, Candace Godfrey, Dennis Rinehart, Tamara Jackman, Jerry Ugland, Kathleen Shea, Steve Taggart.

Not Present: Pr. Jonathan Davis, Kristy Harms, Trish Goodrich.

Rod Christensen called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Rod R. welcomed Steve Taggart, chair of Building and Grounds, to the Council.

Rod R. offered a meditation on the book *Second Nature* by Karen Armstrong. The book provides perspectives and insights regarding ways that various world religions think about and relate to the natural world and environment as a sacred gift.

1. **Minutes.** Motion by Jane Rizzo to approve minutes from August. Seconded by Marilyn Calcutt. Dennis Rinehart. Motion carried unanimously.
2. **Financial Report.** The report was provided by Jane Rizzo. No items needing special attention at this time. Percentage of yearly giving is at approximately 65%, similar to 2020 and 2021. Utilities will increase by \$8-15K in 2023. Salary savings from open positions may help to cover the increase. Jerry Ugland moved to approve the financial report. Tamara Jackman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
3. **Council Updates and Action Items.**

A. Pledged funds to Hillcrest Village. In addition to the initial donation to CAC Hillcrest Village, St. John's approved an additional \$10K, at a rate of \$2500 per year. Following a summary of the funding history, Rod C. moved that St. John's accelerate the pledge amount, paying all of the \$10K this year. J. Ugland asked how the payment would affect other projects, including the acoustic upgrade of St. John's Hall. Pr. Fickenscher noted that the \$10K would come from Grace Overflowing benevolence, which cannot be used for capital or non-benevolence purposes. Rod C. called for a vote on the motion, which was approved by voice vote, Jerry Ugland opposed.

B. CYAN. Council approved \$5000 in 2022 and \$5000 for 2023, the 2023 amount to be raised by the Youth Board. Youth Board will need to assess its ability to raise the funds. Jane Rizzo recommended that the Church make the 2023 payment to CYAN, and that the Youth Board reimburse the Church as it raises the funds. Tamara Jackman said she would share the recommendation with the Youth Board and report back to Council in October.

4. **Pastor's Report.** Pr. Fickenschcer noted that her full report can be found in the Council agenda booklet. She reported that Pr. Jonathan Davis is returning from his sabbatical, just in time for the busiest time of year, October 1 to November 15. Rod C. offered thanks to Pr. Pam for providing leadership and support for staff and church during Pr. Jonathan's sabbatical. Council members showed their appreciation of Pr. Fickenschcer's effort with applause.
5. **Board Reports.** Board chairs referred Council members to written board minutes contained in the Council meeting booklet. Dennis Rinehart, Faith and Health, noted that the Board will be looking for additional volunteers for the healing ministry.
6. **New Business.**
 - a. **St. John's Hall Acoustic Improvement Project Report.** Mark Gleason reported that thus far ESI engineering has confirmed the square footage (2450) needed in the hall; and Twin Cities Acoustics (TCA) has confirmed the cost of the installation of the square footage. Architect and St. John's member Nathan Knutson has recommended a design concept for installation: sound panels 13' 3" high and 4' wide will be used, positioned from baseboard level up to the upper windows. Discussion of the concept raised questions related to additional costs that may be incurred due to positioning panels and cut-outs to provide access to electrical outlets and air intakes, and to provide clearance related to exit signs/strobe lights. Mark G. said he would ask Nathan K. and TCA about complications and costs the project might anticipate in implementing the panel-design installation. Rod C. summarized the sense of the Council in conveying support for and endorsement of Nathan K.'s design concept, pending identification of possible cost complications. If there are no additional costs, the Council will not need to revisit its August approval of moving ahead with the project. Mark G. will work with Rod C. and Pr. Fickenschcer is developing updated communications and graphics related to an October fundraising effort in support of the project.
 - b. **Budget Process of 2023.** Rod C. invited Council members to consider continuation of the Budget process, schedule, and planning used in 2022. Discussion indicated support for the process and continuation of the process for 2023. Pr. Fickenschcer noted that the process will involve recruitment of two chairs of boards, in addition to chairs of Building and Grounds, Stewardship, and the President-elect (Kathy Shea).
 - c. **"Planning Our Future Together."** The process for church-wide planning related to generating a vision and direction for the church will involve meetings between services on October 2 and 16 and one on Wednesday evening, October 26. Council members attending a session will help facilitate the visioning discussions. Materials related to possible topics will be provided to Council members. Questions for discussion will likely include "What is working for you at St. John's?", "What are the challenges you see ahead?", and "What is your vision for the future?"
 - d. **Personnel Committee.** Kathy Shea reported on the committee's interviews with staff, who are generally happy in their work at St. John's. Staff also notes the need for attention to improved communications, especially in a post-covid work environment.

Staff also notes the need to communicate with and recruit volunteers as the church revives its programs in 2022-23.

- e. **Board membership.** Pr. Fickerscher noted that the Nominations Committee members will be identifying new members to replace chairs and board members who will be rotating out of service. Mark G. moved approval of Eric Sponheim to replace Melissa Pelinen, who is resigning from ECB. Jerry Ugland seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.
- f. Council will meet in October on Tuesday, October 25. Boards will meet on October 11th.

Rod C. led the Council in prayer and adjourned the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38pm.

Other Notes: none.

Respectfully submitted by Mark Gleason, ECB