

Minutes

Congregation Council

St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, MN
March 15, 2016

Present: Brent Nystrom, Ruthie Neuger, Michael Berger, Bill Carlson, Pr. Jon Davis, Pr. Pam Fickenscher, Andrea Hoff, Bill Malecha, Lynette Marks, Alyssa Ness, Jane Rinehart

Absent: Dan VanTassel, Joe Gasior, Sara Redetzke

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Brent Nystrom.

Opening Prayer

Devotion and prayer: Ruthie Neuger

2. Future dates

- a. Boards – **Tuesday, April 12**, 7:00pm; Fellowship and Treats – *Executive Committee provides treats and Devotion*
- b. Council – **Tuesday, March 26** (one week early), 7:00pm; prayer – Executive Committee

3. Consent Agenda Items for Council

- a. Treasurer's Report; January 2016. Bill Carlson presented the Treasurer's report.
- b. Minutes from the February 23rd. 2016 meeting. Reviewed as submitted.
- c. Disbursal of funds from Benevolence Fund:
 - i. \$500 to Bread for the World
 - ii. \$1000 to the Lutheran Disaster Response fundRuthie Neuger made the motion to approve. Michael Berger seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Council approved consent items.

4. Pastors' Reports

Refugee Resettlement

Emergency Planning – update for various existing plans to address recent incidents occurring in impacted areas.

5. Congregational Mission Visioning and Discussion

Reconciling in Christ (RIC): Discussion addressing the general reaction to RIC during the Annual Meeting identified 1) confusion about RIC; 2) discomfort about calling out GLBT relationships; and 3) development of a Welcome Statement. The Board asked for clarification around the role of the Council related to RIC for the congregation.

Identification as an RIC congregation results in identification of St. John's to the list of churches that are intentionally welcoming LGBT parishioners. Andrea noted that some people have left churches because they were shunned as a result of their sexual orientation; the purpose of RIC is to welcome people who have been disenfranchised. This includes people who have not felt welcome for a variety of reasons, including sexual orientation. The outcome of becoming an RIC

congregation would be an open, respectful environment.

Jane asked for guidance on development of a welcome statement. Brent has recommended that the Council be involved with development of the Welcome Statement and discussions with the congregation to address questions and concerns. Bill recommended that the Welcome Statement be developed soon.

Recommendations for Development of Welcome Statement

1. Invite members of congregations that have become RIC to address a forum and share their congregational experience in the journey with St. John's.
2. Council charges RIC committee members at St. John's to develop a Welcome Statement, with the guidance of the Council. Bill made the motion to approve development of the Welcome Statement by the RIC Committee members.
3. Discussion on whether the final decision for the Welcome Statement is a congregational decision or a Council decision will occur at a future meeting.

6. Action Items and Updates for Council

a.

b. Thrivent Dollars Designation.

The Council approved the following designation:

Children & Youth – 40%

WELCA – 40%

Capital fund – 20%

Brent called for a vote for this motion. The proposed designation passed unanimously.

c. Insurance proposal: Three options for insurance coverage were presented to the Council.

The Business Management Board recommended \$25,000 deductible to reduce the insurance premium. Following discussion, Bill moved to accept option 2. Kristy seconded the motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

d. Refugee partnership update: designated structure required by last months' motion is in place. Christ Church will have a final decision in the very near future. A Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) has been developed for release to the congregation.

Bill proposed acceptance of \$4,000 from the Foundation, with acceptance of donations from private donors to seed a refugee fund. Following discussion that included acknowledgement of all of the special program funding undertaken by the congregation, the following motion was made:

Designate \$2,000 from the Foundation for refugee resettlement, with solicitation of additional funds from the congregation.

Motion amended: Designation \$4,000 from the Foundation for refugee resettlement.

Kristy made the motion to accept the amended motion. Michael seconded the motion. The amended motion passed by majority vote.

Jane proposed an amendment to the motion: Proposal to accept up to \$4,000 from the Foundation for refugee resettlement, with solicitation of additional funds from the congregation.

Bill recommended committing encumbered funds from the Foundation, building on congregational contributions, up to \$4,000.

Motion failed.

Final motion: Designation of \$4,000 from the Foundation for refugee resettlement, with

congregational contributions to build the fund. Motion passed by majority approval.

7. Other Business

- a. Foundation update.
- b. Continuing dialogue between Council and Staff.

8. A closing prayer was offered by Brent Nystrom, and he led us in the Lord's Prayer.

9. Meeting concluded.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Harms