

**Minutes**  
*Congregation Council*

St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, MN  
October 25, 2016

**Present:** Brent Nystrom, Ruthie Neuger, Bill Carlson, Pr. Jon Davis, Pr. Pam Fickenscher, Andrea Hoff, Lynette Marks, Dan Van Tassel, Jennie Sorensen, Jane Rinehart, Katherine Norrie

**Absent:** Joe Gasior, Alyssa Ness, Anita Helle, Bill Malecha

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Brent Nystrom.

**1. Opening Prayer**

Brent led us in devotion and an opening prayer.

**2. Future dates**

- a. Board reports stretch goal to get to Leah by **Wednesday November 23, 2016**
- b. Boards – **Tuesday, November 15**, (due to Election day on 11/8/16) 7:00pm; Treats – Youth Ministry. Note – Fellowship and treats at 6:45p.m. Meeting begins at 7:00 pm
- c. Council – **Tuesday, November 29**, (due to Thanksgiving holiday) 7:00pm; prayer – Joe Gasior
- d. Annual Meeting – **Sunday, January 22**, following second service

**3. Consent agenda items**

- a. Treasurer's Report – October 2016. August and September offerings exceeded historic experience. Currently the deficit exceeds the projected deficit for the 2016 budget. Giving is a bit ahead of 2015 giving but behind budget. Expense is beating budget.
- b. Operating Reserve Policy and Year End Cash Policy – Explanation for each of these newly drafted policies was provided to the Council. Policies provide the framework for the way that finances are handled. The Business Management Committee spent time developing these policies to give formal guidance on these important issues.
- c. Minutes from 9/27/2016 Council Meeting.

Motion to accept Consent Agenda items made by Ruthie. Motion seconded by Andrea. Motion carried unanimously.

**4. Pastors' Reports**

Pr. Fickenscher and Pr. Davis provided a written report.

- a. The Manna and Mercy workshop drew around 50 people from across the synod.
- b. The new Stewardship brochure was shared for review. The goals for the Stewardship drive are to 1) increase the submission of intent cards; and 2) increase the amount of gifts from parishioners. A challenge grant has been established with the goal of encouraging submission of intent cards.
- c. The WELCA event hosting Austen Hartke on October 6 was successful and drew 130 participants. In addition to offering testimony to the power of intergenerational community in building faith and the importance of providing safe spaces for youth, the event drew protests. Advance notice of the protest and good advice from Northfield police resulted in

honoring free speech to the protesters, while assuring hospitality for guests attending the event.

- d. The Personnel Committee has a better understanding of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) requirements and the implications of the Act on St. John's. Changes required to comply with the December 1 deadline include reclassifying one employee, setting up improved time sheets to record hours for non-exempt employees and moving to a 4 week pay period (13 per year, vs. 12).
- e. The Executive Committee has been secured for 2017 and the Nominating committee will continue to identify the right people to fill open spots on the Council and Boards for next year.
- f. New Columbarium unit was installed in October and will be dedicated on November 6 (All Saints Sunday).
- g. Exterior Sanctuary windows: painting has begun and will continue through the end of October, weather permitting.
- h. Foundation Requests
  - i. ELCA College Scholarships
  - ii. Seminarian candidacy fee for Henry Burt
  - iii. ASL Interpretation for Thomas Kaiser

## 5. Congregational Mission Visioning and Discussion

- a. Needs vs. Wants: Budgeting vs. Borrowing. Brent proposed that the Council should prioritize what projects should be funded by borrowing the money and that potential income sources for other projects should be identified. The 150<sup>th</sup> planning group has identified multiple pieces to the celebration that would use the money borrowed, then raised. The categories with potential projects is below:

### Celebration

Stained Glass  
Special worship  
New Commons furnishings

### Mission/Outreach

Local Project

### Maintenance

Windows  
Tuck pointing  
Interior Signage  
Pew refinishing

Bill noted that deferred maintenance projects should be prioritized to identify what needs to be done, so that maintenance needs do not “nibble” away funds.

Jennie noted that the Property & Grounds board and other boards collaborated to identify projects following receipt of financial settlement funds. The Council agreed that a small group should be identified to review the existing catalogue of pending maintenance projects to prioritize the projects.

Borrowing funds to pay for projects requires congregational approval (annual meeting item).

Andrea noted that waiting for 2019 to complete the interior signage project is not realistic. Brent volunteered to get the small group going.

## 6. Council Action Items and Updates

- a. January Board and Council meeting schedule
  - i. Council Meeting – January 10, 2017
  - ii. Annual Meeting – January 22, 2017
  - iii. Board Annual Report submission deadline – By Thanksgiving. Annual Board report submitted by Board Chair to Leah Garlie for inclusion in the Annual Report.
- b. RIC update – use of the spectrum survey to determine final steps (vs. use of a ballot).
- c. Evangelism & Communications: Monitors for Commons and South West entrance update.

Daniel Edwins helped to select the system. Costs: Monitors - \$4,063. Electrical updates - \$500.00. The St. John's Media fund currently has \$439.31 available for this project. Andrea will talk to Mike Skunes and Joe Gasior to determine if funds in the Youth Ministry fund (\$1041.19) could be used toward this project.

- d. Foundation Fund Authorizations.
  - i. Youth Board: distribution of funds for students will occur following confirmation by students attending ELCA colleges. \$2,200 will be distributed following confirmation. Dan Van Tassel made the motion to act on this proposal. Bill Carlson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.
  - ii. ASL interpretation – Signing resource for new member. It was proposed to fund this resource through Community Social fund for the balance of the year. \$500.00 is needed to pay for ASL services for the rest of 2016. Pastor Pam recommended requesting \$392.26 from the fund. Brent made the motion for this action. Ruthie seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
  - iii. Seminarian Candidacy Fee for Henry Burt
- e. Visit to Tanzania sister congregation. Pam will be visiting our sister congregation in Tanzania as part of a Synod trip. Trip dates are March 10, 2017 – March 23, 2017. Another member may join Pam for this trip. Funding through St. John's Foundation is a consideration for this 2017 trip.

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

**8. Meeting concluded at 9:12 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Harms