

# Minutes

## *Congregation Council*

St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, MN

January 10, 2017

**Present:** Brent Nystrom, Pam Fickenscher, Ruthie Neuger, Andrea Hoff, Bill Carlson, Alyssa Ness, Jonathan Davis, Dan Van Tassel, Todd Mennsen, Jane Rinehart, Lynette Marks, Joe Gasior  
**Guests:** Bernie Renander, Rob Quanbeck/President-Elect  
**Absent:** Jennie Sorensen, Bill Malecha

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Brent Nystrom.

### **1. Opening Prayer**

Andrea Hoff offered devotion and led us in an opening prayer.

### **2. Future dates**

1. Boards – January 24, 2017. This will be Board orientation night for the new board members beginning with pizza at Fellowship and treats at 5:45 pm. Regular Board meeting to start at 7:00 pm.

Reminder: Please call or e-mail your board members prior to the meeting and remind them.

### **2. Annual Meeting – Sunday, January 22, 2017**

3. Boards – **February 7, 2017** 7:00 pm. Fellowship and treats at 6:45 pm. Evangelism & Communication to provide treats and Devotion. Meeting at 7:00 pm. This is one week earlier than the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday (2/14).
4. Council – February 28, 2017 7:00pm; Board Chair, prayer

### **5. Consent Agenda Items**

1. Treasurer's Report, December 2016 and Year End
  1. December giving exceeded historic experience. Ended year positively, resulting in balanced budget for CY2016.
  2. The only borrowed funds for CY2016 are for the Columbarium
2. Minutes from the December 20, 2016 meeting: The Minutes were missing from the Council packet. Kristy apologized for missing document. Minutes will be sent to Council via CCB on 1/11/17 for review and approval. Approval decision will be added to Minutes for this meeting as an addendum.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's report as submitted and to review the December Council Minutes after the fact made by Ruthie, and seconded by Andrea. Motion carried unanimously.

### **6. Pastor's Report**

Worship: Christmas services were well-attended. The time change for the Christmas Eve family service had the desired effect, with attendance more even between the 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm services.

Members and visitors expressed gratitude for the music provided for these celebratory services. Staff works extraordinarily hard to enhance the worship experience.

Benevolence: St. John's end of year giving was particularly high in every category. Giving exceeded the goal for ELCA World Hunger Appeal. Additional gifts for refugees and record-

breaking offerings for the end of year to greatly reduce our operating deficit occurred. This month we will turn to our global partners and will be meeting with our Mission Partner team to talk about special needs in that category.

RIC: Pr. Pam and Pr. Jonathan have engaged in a number of informal and intentional conversations about the RIC process. There will be ongoing questions and conversations about how we live into welcome. The grace and concern displayed, whatever the opinion held, has been gratifying.

Pr. Pam and Pr. Jonathan attended a two day SHAPE conference, followed by a winter drive back to Northfield for this evenings' meeting.

Mike Skunes preached at St. Olaf chapel today.

Thank you: As we close the year, the Pastors express gratitude for Council commitment in leadership this year. Thanks to outgoing council member Joe Gasior and to Jennie Sorensen for stepping in during our time of need. Special thanks to Brent Nystrom for steady and unwavering focus and partnership as President in 2016. We close the year stronger as a congregation and excited for the year ahead.

## **7. Council Action Items and Updates**

1. 2017 budget discussion and approval (Bernie and Ruthie)
  1. Ruthie presented 2017 budget items. Staff, benevolence, property & grounds are the categories that represent change for 2017.
  2. Staff salaries were given special consideration. There has been an overall 3% increase for staff.
2. Bernie - pledges are still being received. Increase of about 16% over 2016. Only two budgets were revised. The Benevolence budget was decreased, and Property & Grounds was increased to address deferred maintenance projects.
3. St. John's cannot assume any further debt servicing than the load currently held. Need to reserve some of our borrowing ability in the event that the chiller unit in the furnace fails and requires repair.
  1. Bernie recommends pulling together a small, select group to review and discuss debt solutions to determine what plan of action to pursue.

Motion to recommend submission of the proposed, amended budget to the congregation proposed by Ruthie and seconded by Kristy. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Reconciling in Christ conversation and vote
1. Summary of survey results and other information
  1. 221 surveys were completed and submitted. 94.1% of responses approved the Welcome Statement and supported the decision to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation. The survey response volume was in line with recent votes to confirm pastoral call decisions. The survey response result was more supportive of the decision to become an RIC congregation and adoption of the proposed Welcome Statement.
    1. 88.2%/195 respondents Strongly Agreed with this decision
    2. 5.9%/13 respondents Generally Agreed
    3. 1.4%/3 respondents were Neutral
    4. 1.4%/3 respondents Generally Disagreed
    5. 3.2%/7 respondents Strongly Disagreed
2. Individual sharing and discussion: Council members present shared their thoughts about the results of the survey. It was decided that Brent would reach out to the two Council members absent to solicit their input and thoughts on the results of the spectrum survey.

The Council agreed that the results of the spectrum survey and the results of the Council vote on the survey results should be communicated to the congregation as soon as possible. It was recommended that an email/electronic notification be sent to the congregation this week.

3. Are we comfortable and ready to vote on becoming RIC? The Council members present agreed that a vote on the results of the spectrum survey was appropriate.
4. Voting
  1. Council members present voted unanimously to approve the decision to become a Reconciling in Christ congregation and to approve the Welcome Statement.
  2. Brent will follow up with Bill Malecha and Jennie Sorensen to solicit their comments and recommendation, and share the information with the Council for the purpose of a full Council recommendation
    1. January 11, 2017 addendum to this item: response from Bill and Jennie resulted in unanimous Council approval of the RIC decision and approval of the Welcome Statement
5. Next Steps: the Council articulated concern that this decision be handled in a manner to assure that the feelings and opinions of all congregants are acknowledged and respected.
6. **Other Business**
  1. Bill Malecha has submitted his resignation as Chair of Property and Grounds Board. Bill stepped into this position to fill an earlier vacancy. His time and talents have been greatly appreciated.
7. **A closing prayer was offered by Brent Nystrom, and he led us in the Lord's Prayer.**

**Meeting concluded.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Harms