

Minutes

Congregation Council

St. John's Lutheran Church, Northfield, MN

February 21, 2017

Present: Ruthie Neuger, Rob Quanbeck, Sue Brockman, Alyssa Ness, Nancy Ordahl-Kmoch, Andrea Hoff, Jennifer Edwins, Jonathan Davis, Pam Fickenscher, Ralph Yernberg (for Dan Van Tassel), Anita Helle

Absent: Kristy Harms, Bill Carlson, Jane Rinehart, David Legvold, Dan Van Tassel, Jenny Nystrom

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Ruthie Neuger.

Comments from Ruthie: Ruthie shared that she is a stickler for starting meetings on time. While there may be times when people need to be late, meetings will begin at 7:00 pm. It is important for all voices to be heard, and we should be mindful of the conversation and discussion that will move the Council forward. Ruthie wants meetings to be fun and enjoyable.

1. Opening Prayer

Rob Quanbeck led us in an opening prayer.

2. Future dates

- a. Board Retreat – Saturday March 4, 2017 from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm
- b. Board meetings – Tuesday March 14, 2017 7:00 pm

Worship and Arts Board - Treats and devotions. Fellowship and treats at 6:45 pm.

- c. Council Meeting – Tuesday March 28, 2017 at 7:00 pm

3. Pastors' Reports

- a. Christy Hall-Holt has returned to her position as Shared Ministry Coordinator. We are grateful to Mary Kelvie for assuming this position temporarily while Christy was gone.
- b. Worship attendance has been at around 300, which is a decrease from the historic pattern of about 360. There are no apparent factors to explain this difference in attendance for Sunday worship.
- c. The Manna and Mercy Mondays have had between 14-20 people attending. Making Sense of the Cross will be discussed in five small groups during Lent. The confirmation exchange with St. Dominic's had been successful.
- d. The building has been used by various groups, including 350 people who attended a Town Hall forum on Monday, February 20.
- e. Pastor Pam, Kristin Partlo and Terry Gilbertson, along with others from our Synod, will travel to Tanzania in March. Dates are March 10-23, 2017.
- f. The program staff had a retreat for team building and to consider how St. John's will structure ministry with families for next year.

4. Treasurer's Report

- a. Treasurer's Report: Giving is up by over \$16,000 for January 2017, compared to January 2016.

5. Consent Agenda Items for Council

- a. Candidate for Stewardship Board – Council will not vote on this item at this time.
- b. Refugee Sponsorship- there may be a future need for additional funds for the family since Paul lost his job. Further discussion will occur, when needed.
- c. Pastoral Housing Budget – Motion proposed by Rob to approve amounts for pastoral housing allowance for 2017. Motion carried unanimously.
- d. Minutes from January 28, 2017 meeting. Rob moved to approve the Minutes. Motion seconded by Andrea. Motion carried unanimously.
- e. Business Management – Andrea moved to appoint Brent Mueller chair of the Business Management Board. Motion seconded by Sue Brockman. Motion carried unanimously.

6. Action Items and Updates for Council

- a. Thrivent dollar dispersal for 2017 – Ralph indicated that the churches that he has worked with through Thrivent have received far more income from Thrivent than St. John’s is receiving. St. John’s usually receives \$3,000 - \$5,000 from Thrivent. Thrivent funds recommendation is for dispersal to Children’s & Youth – 40%, WELCA – 40% and capital fund – 20%. Rob moved that the Council accept the dispersal of funds as recommended. Ralph added an amendment to the motion to include “as recommended, up to a maximum of \$5,000”. The motion and amendment were seconded by Andrea. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. Funding and budgets for 2017 and 2018 – Pam reviewed the 2017 mission commitments that were part of the Stewardship appeal:
 - i. Strengthening Ministry Excellence – 2017 budget includes salary and benefits increases and continued mission support to the synod.
 - ii. Inviting and Welcoming – 2017 budget includes purchase and installation of informational monitors, but does not include full funding for signage, website improvements, or Commons furnishings.
 - iii. Feeding our Community – 2017 budget includes a paid dishwasher and kitchen repairs, but does not include a paid kitchen monitor.

Pam stressed the importance of keeping our priorities in mind when considering funding requests. She reviewed other needs not included in the budget:

- i. Capital needs – There is an ongoing list of needs totaling over \$250,000 for repair of our building and property.
 - ii. Benevolence needs – There may be additional funding needs for our refugee family.
 - iii. Continuing sign language interpreter
 - iv. The income beyond operating funds was reviewed, which includes:
 1. St. John’s Foundation funds (\$25,000 is available to the Council for dispersal upon request)
 2. Undesignated memorials
 3. Thrivent funds
 4. Bequests and special offerings
- c. Reviewed request from Evangelism and Communication Board for funding to update St. John’s website to apply new graphic identity. A motion was made to designate \$939.31 from the Media Fund from St. John’s Foundation funds to initiate the project to update the website. The motion was made by Andrea Hoff and seconded by Sue. Motion carried unanimously. The Council recognizes that there will be a request for additional funding at a subsequent meeting when other sources/partners for funding are identified.
 - d. Preliminary Youth Fundraiser update – To date, over \$6,000 has been received for the Youth Fundraiser. Pam indicated that money usually continues to come in during the weeks following this event. Mike and Julie worked very hard to make this event happen in February. Depending on when Easter occurs, April is a better month for this event.

7. Mission and Visioning

- a. Plans for implementing the 3 identified stewardship/ministry goals from the Stewardship drive for 2017 were discussed. Ralph talked about our participation in the stewardship plan offered by the Synod. St. John's is participating, along with other Synod congregations, and we have benefited from the expertise of this program. At the Board meetings on March 14, the Stewardship Board requests that each Board do the following, and turn the information in to the Stewardship Board. The information/stories from Boards will provide material for the Stewardship Board to develop and tell the stewardship story for St. John's to the congregation:
 - i. Review the Stewardship/ministry goals
 - ii. Identify what your Board is doing/can do to help meet that goal.
- b. Laura Baker Respite Program – program is available on Saturdays for children with special needs and their families. Laura Baker staff will be on duty, but they welcome help from interested community members.

8. Other Business

- a. Lenten Soup suppers begin on Ash Wednesday, March 1.
- b. Several committees are at work planning for the 150th Anniversary for St. John's. This will be discussed more next month.
- c. Council retreat is Saturday March 4 from 8 am to 12 pm.
- d. Katie Luther Tea is Saturday March 4 at 1 pm
- e. Anita offered a list of proposed improvements for St. John's Hall. Pam recommended that the list be turned over to Property and Grounds Board. Many of the items on the list are included on the Property and Grounds list of projects.
- f. Anita and Ralph spoke about Thrivent Action Teams, which can offer grants to St. John's groups. These small grants of up to \$250.00 can help purchase materials or cover other expenses for projects or activities.

9. Closing Prayer.

A closing prayer was offered by Ruthie Neuger and other Council members. Ruthie led us in the Lord's Prayer.

10. Meeting concluded.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Thanks to Jennifer Edwins

Respectfully submitted,

Kristy Harms