

St Stephen's Lutheran Church
Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: 13 May 2015/Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Location: Lounge at St. Stephen's Church

Attendees (Absent): Dave Bergeson, Mike Bonk, Jessica Donahue, Brent Harms, Patrice Katzenmaier, Patty Longard, Dane McKenzie, Darcy McKenzie, Steve Morganson, Cassie Nault, Tanisha Pikula, Debbie Pirkl, Lori Ritt, Doug Schmitt, John Snider, Dan Youness, Laura Vitelli, Justin Woods, Sitraka Rakotoarivelo

Agenda

1. Devotions -
2. Adopt minutes from April Council meeting
3. Q & A on Committee Reports
4. New Business
 - a. Council Elected members to Nominating Committee
 - b. Slate of Officers for Election
 - c. Agenda for Semi- Annual Meeting
5. Old Business:
 - a. Marketing Team - survey
6. Adjournment – Lord's Prayer

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting: Sunday, May 17th 9:40 a.m.

Next Parish Council Meeting: Wednesday, June 17th, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Discussion of Agenda Items:

1. Devotion -- Pastor John led us in discussion regarding Paul's writings should we continue in sin in order that grace abounds
 - a. Does the church hold us captive or set us free?
 - b. Do not be afraid because you can't love if you're afraid.
 - c. What keeps us from sinning?
2. Motion to adopt April 2015 Council minutes was made by Jessica, seconded by Mike and approved unanimously by voice vote
3. Discussions Relating to Committee Reports
 - a. No discussion regarding committee reports
4. New /Business
 - a. Council Elected members to Nominating Committee
 - I. Three member stepping down
 1. Sandra Paton
 2. Vicki Jackson

3. Lisa Ellison
 - II. Looking for recommendations
 1. Committee members brainstormed and identified numerous candidates
 2. Pastor John will contact candidates to see if they are interested in serving
 3. John to provide list of interested individuals to Debbie by next Tuesday so that they can be added to ballot for Sunday's semi-annual meeting.
 - b. Slate of Officers for Election
 - I. Debbie provided listing of slate of officers, committee chairs, and nominating committee
 1. listing is not included with these minutes as they are not yet formally approved
 2. listing will be included in minutes of the semi-annual meeting
 - II. Motion was made by Doug to move the slate forward; motion was seconded by Dane and approved unanimously
 - c. Agenda for Semi- Annual Meeting (Included as attachment at end of Parish Council Committee Reports)
 - I. 50 individuals constitutes a quorum
 1. Sign-in sheet will be passed among the congregation to have each individual sign-in
 2. Listing of attending members will become part of the minutes
 - II. Treasurer's report will address the revenue shortfall and request help in overcoming this deficit
 1. Three large gifts that usually occur have not yet occurred
 2. Last year we had a "lego campaign" that provided ~ \$11K
 - a. Do we need a funding campaign this year?
 3. Expenses are also lower than planned so that is helping
 - III. Significant part of the meeting is the election of officers and addition of member-at-large to the nominating committee
5. Old Business
- a. Marketing Team – Survey
 - I. First meeting of task force was held last Monday
 1. First task is to get background on St. Stephen's
 - a. Amy Lewis, outside consultant who is leading task force, provided questionnaire to get additional information regarding what makes St. Stephen's a great place
 - i. Will be emailed to existing council members for completion
 2. Next meeting will be held first week in June
 - b. Lori Ritt requested that we look again at moving to one service starting next fall
 - I. Very difficult finding volunteers for 10:45 service

1. We need to look at what is our model for attracting volunteers – how do we cast our net wider?
 2. People are reluctant to commit too far in advance
- II. Subject remains on the table, but it is a big step moving to only one service

6. Adjournment – Lord's Prayer
 - a. John led us in the Lord's Prayer
 - b. Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM
7. Committee Reports that were received this month and that are included with these meeting minutes
 - a. Stewardship
 - b. Missions
 - c. Pastor's Report
 - d. Worship
 - e. Finance
 - f. Associate Pastor's Report

Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Semi-Annual Meeting: Sunday, May 17th 9:40 a.m.

Recorded and Submitted by
Doug Schmitt,
Council Secretary

Attachments to May 2015 Parish Council Meeting Minutes

I. Committee Reports:

May 2015 Stewardship (Laura Vitelli)

- Thank you committee had its initial meeting. Discussed things we love about St. Stephen's and the impact our ministries have on members and community.
- Decided to table continued thank you committee work until the marketing plan is complete to assure internal communications plan thank you committee is developing is on-brand and in alignment with external messaging.
- Contributions are at 81% of plan, year to date.

Laura

Missions Committee (Patty Longard)

We did not meet in May. There was a wonderful turn out and participation in Missions Sunday, I have not yet heard the final totals from our mini-boutique.

We plan to discuss Gods Work Our Hands in June. We will also be welcoming a new committee chair at that meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Patty Longard

Pastor's Report (Pastor John Snider)

April 13, 2015

I have the privilege and occasionally the challenge of serving as a **volunteer West St. Paul/Mendota Heights Police Chaplain**. We only get called when there is great tragedy, which was true on Sunday night, April 10 when I was called to be with a pregnant woman and her family as they mourned the unexpected death of her 33 year old husband of 4 months. Do you know what we have to offer? What we have learned together: that God loves us, that God is with us, and that we will stand with each other; quietly, lovingly and in prayer. What we have is golden. It's the power of the community of faith. How blessed we are to be part of one. How important it is for us to recognize the gift we have been given.

It is to this community of faith that we welcomed **27 new members this month**. The youngest of our new members, 5 week old Connor Johnson was immediately surrounded by the power of a faith community. Our young brother in Christ was baptized at the U of M in preparation for heart surgery. His extended family gathered for prayer and we surrounded him with this community of faith's prayer chain: happily Connor is now home.

It was heartening to meet with **leaders of Dakota County** and learn that what is needed for the social welfare of this county is present and working well in the communities of faith. Whether it is education, nutrition, fair housing opportunities, poverty, hunger, health issues our values and behaviors and concern for the neighbor are precisely what everyone needs. Jesus has taught us to change pronouns from "me" to "we" and together we bring the light of Christ, feed in community, to a needy world.

The power of this sense of community is carried with our **clergy and lay callers** as we bring communion and prayer to homebound and hospital patients. It is remarkable to see the faith we have at work bringing comfort and hope.

This has been a month when this community of faith has been **seeking new leaders**. We are excited and grateful for the leaders who have said yes, to those who are staying, and grateful to those whose time of service has ended. It is a significant task to work preserving, growing, nurturing a community of faith. When we encounter unrecognized faith in the world, unexercised faith, its helps us celebrated faith active in our lives.

One of the gifts this community of faith gives its pastors is a **3 month sabbatical** every 5 years. This does renew our faith! This summer **Pastor Cassie** will be the recipient of this well-deserved gift. While she and her family will be missed we know her sabbatical will return her refreshed and full of new ideas and her passion for ministry.

Looking into the summer I am excited to return to two worship services every weekend, Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 9:30. It is always good to be together. We also look forward to **implementing the plans for improving the sound in the sanctuary and the spacing between the pews**. All with the intent of strengthening the faith we share together and carry into the world.

Celebrate the power of this community of faith as it strengthens you and your ministry each day.

Pastor John Snider
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
1575 Charlton Street
West St. Paul, MN 55118
651-457-6541

"I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit." Ephesians 3:16 St. Stephen's verse of the month.

Worship Committee (Lori Ritt)

May 2015

Welcome Janell Woods to the worship committee. We are so glad you have joined us.

Other members: Pastor Cassie, Lori Ritt and Mary Brunkow.

Possibly other members: Brenda Geiser and Eliza. Will get emails and invite to next meeting.

Would like to get enough committee members to spread out the services so one person does not need to be at all three services.

Bridge –
8:30 am – Mary Brunkow attends

10:45 am -

Current theme: Magnify the Lord – introduced after synod assembly – 3 magnifying glasses distributed and moving around congregation. Received about 8 responses so far. Looking at ways to display results.

Volunteers: Still having difficulty in obtaining volunteers for the services. Currently assigning people to service they usually attend. Some only come when scheduled, others call and cancel at last minute, other people don't show.

Using Sign up Genius for the Bridge.

Looking at creating a sign up for the summer months. (June completed already- Looking at July and August) Ushers, lectors, communion servants

Hymn of the month: no favorites at this time

Summer worship –Have special music at 1st and 3rd Sunday of the month –not every Sunday.

Future events:

June 7 – Graduation Sunday

June 21 - Barbary Coast

October 25 - Confirmation

Lori Ritt

Even a simple gesture, - a smile, a touch, a kind word, can brighten someone's day.
Let your love flow freely today.

Finance Committee (Mike Bonk)

The Finance Committee met on Thursday, May 7. In attendance were Sue Clark, Dave Bergeson, Mike Butala, Beth Hostager, Pastor John, Abra Gilman and Mike Bonk.

Following is a brief recap of the meeting :

April Financial Results

April revenue of \$34,800 was \$19,600 or 36% less than budget and was also down \$10,000 from April of 2014. Envelope offerings were \$16,000 less than plan primarily because of two large contributions made in April of 2014 that were not repeated in 2015. We are hopeful that both contributions, totaling \$15,000, will still be made this year. For the year-to-date contributions of \$134,000 are \$30,000 less than plan. In addition to the two large April offerings totaling \$15,000, we did not get a special plate offering of \$5,000 received in February of 2014 and have also not received any special

offerings to replace \$5,000 contributed to the Lego campaign through April of last year. If we adjust for the \$25,000 just mentioned, contributions received would still be down 3% from plan. It appears that a special contribution campaign will be necessary in 2015.

April expenses of \$44,900 were \$4,900 favorable to plan and helped to offset the revenue shortfall. For the year-to-date expenses of \$193,000 are \$6,000 or 3% less than plan. Abra will adjust almost all of the mission budgets so they are spread equally throughout the year. Right now the mission budgets are divided to fall in the last month of each quarter.

Thru April our operating deficit of \$39,000 is \$26,000 more than our planned April YTD deficit. The shortfall in contributions is the primary reason for the additional deficit .

Other Discussion

The committee discussed what it might do to help St Stephen's deal with the increasing deficit. As you know, over time a deficit will use up dedicated funds and reserves. The group discussed coming up with some new expense guidelines that would help the church operate more close to breakeven in 2016. If the finance committee could present these to the council in the near future then the council would have more time to think about how to operate the church within the new guidelines. More to come.

Respectfully submitted
Mike Bonk

Associate Pastor's Report (Pastor Cassie Nault) May 2015

My Sabbatical: I thank you all for your support as I leave on sabbatical this summer from June 2nd-August 25th. I have been told that we will likely receive sabbatical support from the synod: \$500 for our congregation to assist with guest preachers/speakers on the topics of stewardship and reaching out to our neighborhood. I've shared my proposal with you in the attachment (Secretary's note: attachment is reproduced at end of the Associate Pastor report). I will also share with you my more mundane tasks: painting my house, garage, and shed after years of neglect—and planting some new full-sun plants in our front yard (made possible by cutting down a 60ft cottonwood last fall).

Yes, a sabbatical is a time for the pastor's personal renewal: however, it is also an opportunity for the congregation to grow and experiment with a change of pace. A great gift in the previous two sabbaticals I've covered has been the variety of people that step forward to help, guide, and lead. I thought last summer was particularly fun as we got to hear the voices of some guest preachers to challenge us. I look forward to seeing what God shows us during this summer's change of pace.

Confirmation/Education News from the Associate Pastor

For Fall 2015, we have altered the Confirmation Program slightly, to rely more on Retreat ministry, including a Fall Service retreat and a Spring retreat at Camp Wapo. We'll be including an intergenerational component for our Wednesday evenings, involving a month of intergenerational learning (parents and families expected to attend along with their student). *If you know of anyone who would be a good Confirmation, Grade School, or Preschool Wednesday Bible School teacher, please let me or Sitraka know.*

May 20th 6-9pm Council Mini-Retreat

I'm looking forward to our mini-retreat next Wednesday from 6-9pm. We'll enjoy dinner together, do some team-building work, and get encouragement (God's Word) to live out our vision and mission. ***Please let me know if you have any dietary restrictions or if you are unable to attend.***

Peace,
Cassie

Pastor Cassie Nault
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
1575 Charlton Street West St. Paul, MN 55118
(651) 457-6541

Pastor Cassie Nault Sabbatical Support Fund Proposal Saint Paul Area Synod May 5, 2015

How I plan to spend my sabbatical: This summer I am grateful to be taking a 12 week sabbatical, which will last from Tuesday, June 2nd through Tuesday, August 25th. This sabbatical will allow me some much-needed family time; my husband and I and our two children will especially relish these weekends we get to spend together.

I'm planning to explore three main areas while I'm on sabbatical, all of which I've wanted to do for some time, but have struggled to find time for in the full life of pastor. My hope is that these three endeavors will renew my spirit and strengthen me for my return to service in the fall:

Photography: I purchased a decent camera a few years ago before a trip to Holden Village. Our family delighted in taking photos of the mountain scenery and our adventure traveling there and back. The camera hasn't gotten out much lately. With smartphones and two children and the gear that goes with them, we often leave the camera behind. I hope to take many pictures of everyday life during sabbatical, mainly to enrich my visual work in preaching. I've been told that some of my sermon images stick in people's minds (someone recently mentioned they still think of one of my sermons when they see the "Look Up and Live" sign on the Lafayette Bridge work.) We live in a visual culture--and I'd like for some of my preaching images to be on the screens that St. Stephen's invested in last year. I find photography relaxing, challenging, and something I love to do. I am looking forward to spending some time improving my skill.

Reading: Over the past several years, I've attended several continuing education opportunities, but when I get back to church, the daily grind and all of the weekly commitments prevent me from getting to reading and reflecting on topics that would enhance my ministry. I look forward to taking some time to focus my attention on catching up on reading and also on planning how to apply what I learn to my ministry with St. Stephen's upon my return. (I'm currently reading some great Leadership books on team building and *Better Than Before: Mastering the Habits of our Everyday Lives*. I look forward to finishing these up and writing notes on how to apply what I've learned. Socializing with People apart from ministry colleagues: THIS is the part I'm asking for help funding: Recently I heard Pastor Margaret Kelley preach about her congregation, Shobi's Table, "Jesus was all about dinner parties, so that's what we do: dinner parties." I like this idea and I'd like to host dinner parties this summer to get in touch with the world around me.

I went to college in Minneapolis, I have many relatives in the Twin Cities, and I have many friends that live near me. My husband and I enjoy hosting dinner parties. Even so, we end up rarely having people over to our home. Between evening meeting schedules, student loan debt, and long commutes to and from work, we never seem to have the time nor money to entertain at our home. When we do entertain, it is usually for ministry purposes: having colleagues over for a lunch meeting; hosting a stewardship dinner for congregation members; or having our Faith Formation volunteers over for an appreciation celebration. During my sabbatical, I'd like to change that. I'd like to host at least 5 dinner parties over the course of the summer that have little to nothing to do with ministry. I imagine I'll learn something valuable from socializing with people who have faith traditions, political views, and life situations much different from my own. This keeps in line with Jesus' ministry, breaking bread with people that would've been considered "outsiders." I think it will be refreshing to get a new perspective on life and faith from hearing new voices. I expect to spend between \$50 and \$100 on the food and beverages for each dinner party--and I expect to host between 5 and 10 gatherings, which would use the \$500 of Sabbatical Support funds. How my congregation will spend my sabbatical: St. Stephen's is departing from the lectionary this summer; after 2 academic years on the Narrative Lectionary, we plan to return to the Revised Common Lectionary this fall. For the summer, our Senior Pastor plans to do a few sermon series to try something new and is looking forward to welcoming in a few guest preachers (including Bishop Patricia Lull and a neighboring congregation's Intern Pastor). Since we do not have guest preaching in our budget, we would use the \$500 Sabbatical Support Funds toward inviting in 2 additional guest preachers this summer to focus on the topics of reaching out to our neighborhood and being good stewards of what we've been given. These are two areas that we struggle with as we work together: seeing our surrounding neighborhood change, but the makeup of our congregation remain the same. Like many congregations, we struggle with seeing the gifts God has given us and instead often focus on the hurdles we face in funding our ministries. While both pastors and seminary students have preached on these topics from our pulpit, having guest preachers with some authority would go a long way. We need some outside inspiration to help us look outside our walls and figure out how to minister to our neighborhood as it changes and grows. Our CYF

Minister, Sitraka Rakotoarivelo, our Senior Pastor, John Snider, and I are working on figuring out who we will invite to preach and teach in this way.

II. SEMI-ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING AGENDA

May 17, 2015

- 1) Call to order; verify quorum (Debbie, Doug)
- 2) Opening prayer (Cassie)
- 3) Approve Agenda (Debbie)
- 4) Review and adopt minutes from May 2014 meeting (Debbie)
- 5) Treasurer's Report (Dave)
- 6) New Business
 - a) Member-at-Large to Nominating Committee
 - b) Election of Officers/Nominating Committee
 - c) Other New Business
- 7) Old Business
 - a) Other Old Business
- 8) Pastor's Comments (John)
- 9) Closing prayer (John)
- 10) Adjournment (Jessica)