

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting October 20, 2021
7:15 PM – through Zoom

Attendees (Absent):

Pastor John Snider, Pastor Tim Thompson, Merrill Ziemann, Jackie Hanson, Jolene Sather, Debbie Pirkel, Joy Stenhaug, Sara Ruff, Beth Hostager, Diane Meyers, Eric Donahue, Jessica Donahue, Kim Richter, John Anderson, Mary Jo, Tracy Westman, Mark Rogosheske, Vicki Jackson, Christine Davis, Hannah Ruikka

AGENDA

- Opening Prayer – Pastor John
- Minutes approval 9/16/2021: Thank you Kim for taking care of minutes last month
- Updates from Executive Committee
 - Copyright statement
 - Planting Hope - ELCA

Committee Reports/Updates: If possible please e-mail prior to meeting

- Pastor Reports – see pages 3 and 4
 - Ann regarding “how much work to have a community garden”
 - Hannah/Tim/Pastor John – meeting with Young Life. Young Life is planning an event using Noreen Center in November.
- Safety
 - We continue to mask inside building
 - Lock-in for youth has been approved with guidance that was outlined.
- Vision Action Team (VAT) – Sara
- Property Management – no report
- Christian Education – Christine
 - See page 5
 - Game night was very fun
 - Problem solved regarding McDonalds gift cards
- Youth and Family – John
 - See page 6
- Finance – Diane/Beth
 - See page 7

- Stewardship – Kim
 - See page 8
- Missions – Vicki
 - See page 9
- Worship and Music – Mary Jo
 - See page 9
 - Christmas Eve 3:30 and 10:30 / Christmas Day 9:30a / Sunday 9:30a
- Fellowship – Sara
 - Potluck brunch this Sunday after service (23OCT21)
 - Planning a game night Thursday Nov 18th
- Inviting – no report
- Nominating – no report

Other business or announcements

Next Church Council Meeting ----Wednesday, November 17 at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Joy Stenhaug

Pastor John Report
October 20, 2021

“My teacher, let me see again.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed Jesus on the way. (Mark 10: 51b-52)

This is from this coming Sunday’s gospel. It is a prayer from a blind man to ***see again***. This prayer isn’t only for a blind person. This is for all of us. May we see God’s glory all around. May we see the love of Jesus in generous and self-sacrificing acts. May we see the Holy Spirit in the love and connections among us. What a different view this is! It’s a view we can’t get enough of. It begins to change everything.

This prayer is for more than eye-sight but for heart-sight. It is like the prayer of King Solomon who pleased God by asking, ***“Give to your servant an understanding heart.”*** (1st Kings 3:9)

We are about so many things these days. So much is happening among us from stewardship to the VAT committee; from renewal in worship volunteers to the new gift policy; from the Foundation restructuring, the ministries of our funeral committee, Faith Formation and the Open Forum, just to name a portion.

Can you see God in these efforts? For me this prayer is most clearly answered when I see the tender-heartedness and sensitivity in how we work together. When our interest and effort is outside of ourselves and focused on others. When we welcome and share the unique gifts each of us has been given. When in the center of all the activity there is a foundational sense of peace.

I hope we see God in our midst as we serve together at St. Stephen’s. It is a prayer Christ is delighted to answer when asked, so let’s ask, ***“My teacher, let me see again.”***

It’s interesting what happened in this case, Jesus told him to go, his faith had made him well, but, ***“Immediately he regained his sight and followed Jesus on the way.”***

He didn’t go. The only response to such sight is to ***following Jesus on the way***. And as we follow his way we will see again and again, sometimes amazingly clearly, God at work in our midst, opening our hearts to a new way of seeing.

Thank you for all of your efforts, here and everywhere! God is in them all.

Pastor John

Pastor Tim Report October 20, 2021

Council Members -
Cc Staff, Peter Reuss

By way of a report I just want to share with you the attached draft of a report I'm preparing for the VAT team. It's a summary of the results from the recent feedback request we made to the congregation about the Mission, Values and Ministry Result Areas" we've been assembling.

See you tonight!

TT

**Summary of Congregational Feedback
on Draft Mission Statement, Core Values and Ministry Result Areas**

The Vision to Action Team (VAT) recently shared a document with the congregation asking for comments and review. The document contained draft versions of a revised Mission Statement, list of Core Values, and proposals for four Ministry Result Areas to be used in planning. We received a total of 21 responses from the congregation, including both paper and online submissions, over a three week period.

The responses show that there is strong support in the congregation for all three parts of the draft. This will allow the Team to move forward into the next part of the process which will involve developing Goals and Outcomes around each of the four Ministry Areas.

In addition to the general support for the drafts, there were also a number of helpful questions and observations shared from the congregation. The themes from those comments are represented in the list below. These will be especially valuable in shaping the way the Goals and

Objectives are formed since that is where the Mission and Values will be expressed in actual plans and priorities.

- Ensure that we make a public witness to faith in Jesus as we engage in service to our community.
- Be willing to make genuinely bold and courageous moves that reflect the momentous changes in both Church and society that we are all experiencing.
- Expand our use of technology and online resources to make congregational life more accessible and engaging.
- Be especially mindful of our value of Inclusion when considering how the congregation can engage with social issues in order to respect differing political perspectives.
- Pursue opportunities for the formation of small groups and Bible studies that are not dependent on the pastors.

The VAT will now begin the exciting and challenging work of drafting Goals and Objectives in concert with the Church Council. Once this work has been completed and reviewed by the Congregation, the completed Mission, Values and Plans will be presented to the Congregation for final approval.

Please reach out to any member of the Team with your questions and comments.

John Anderson	Merrill Zieman	Jessica Gregory	Pastor John
Mary Molumby	Pastor Tim	Sara Ruff	

Oct 19, 2021

Education Committee Report 10/20/21

1. Love in a Ziplock Bag (November 17th) - The Sign Up Genius has been given out and people are starting to sign up. A box to collect donations will be set up Wednesday. The owner of the McDonalds on Robert St. and Dodd Rd is again willing to match our funds for gift cards. We would need to purchase 50 and 50 will be donated. However, it has come to our attention that we used the Thrivent grants incorrectly in the past. We cannot use the grants to purchase gift cards. I am working on writing an appeal to both congregations to be sent out via email to raise the extra funds.
2. Game night - Tomorrow, **Wednesday, October 20th**, will be game night at Faith Formation. Everyone is welcome, whether you have a child in Faith Formation or not. Starting at 6 pm; hope to see many of you there!
3. Advent/Christmas - We are still in the planning stages but there are lots of fun ideas in the works! We will meet next week to decide what we want to do.

Thanks,
Christine

It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness.

Youth and Family Committee Meeting Minutes

10-18-21

- The Youth Group for 9th-12th grade students is up and running. At present, Hannah reported a solid 4-5 students attending. The group has completed 3 tie-blankets for the baptism families. Hannah and the Youth Group are going to be inviting the 8th grade students to start joining the group. Hannah is going to communicate this opportunity with emails, text messages and possibly *Discord*. She is also encouraging general attendance through text messages. Soon Larry Longard is joining Hannah with the Youth Group on Sundays.
- Meatball Dinner Fundraiser, Sign-up Genius for volunteers is being sent out by Hannah for the event on 10-19-21. All tickets and sales must be turned in by 10-27-21. Then Jeff Kubat will be placing the orders for the supplies. The funds for the event will be run through the Men of St. Stephen's account. The event takes place on November 6th with preparation on the 5th and any final distributions on the 7th.
- "Lock-In" at SSLC, is scheduled for Friday, December 10th at 6:30PM including 6th-12th grade students, 6th-8th grade students would go home around 10:30 PM. Jessica Donahue is planning on preparing breakfast on the morning of the 11th for the participants.
- The committee is also exploring the idea of putting together a youth music group. Hannah is going to reach out to a couple of in-house musicians to help direct a youth music group. We also are looking into surveying the youth to find out what musical talents the students have. Discussed putting together a holiday production.
- Other ideas discussed were; a date night fundraiser, homework help night with high school students helping younger students, and sermon note helpers once a week (older students helping younger students).

John Anderson

The Finance committee met on Thursday, October 14th.

Attached is a summary of the financials for the month of September as well as September YTD.

On a year-to-date basis, total income is below budget by \$15,860 while expenses are below budget by \$38,420.

We have a year-to-date deficit (expense exceeds income) of 17,960 however, this deficit is roughly \$22,560 less than the budgeted year-to-date deficit of \$40,517 because expenses are down more than income.

The income shortfall relative to budget is driven by general contributions while the favorable expenses relative to budget are driven by Property & Maintenance, Salaries, and Computer Hardware & Repair.

Please let us know if you have questions.

Sincerely,
Beth and Diane

Stewardship minutes:

We met on 10/11 to finesse our goals, theme and approach for the campaign this year. We settled on a theme of Growing Connections as that is the prime concept behind the direction we hope for in our church. We recognized how successful last year's campaign was, and have faith that will continue to be blessed with fruit from it. Our 2022 goals were also firmed up with the following summary which needs your review/blessing:

The Stewardship Committee has listened to the feedback from the Vision and Action Team and identified 3 goals for the 2022 Campaign.

- **Connect people to St. Stephen's.** This goal is a continuation of our 2021 goal of hiring a Communications and Media Coordinator. Garrett Masters will oversee the implementation of a new website platform and then use it to improve our communication methods in the social media world. We are also looking into launching a St. Stephen's cell phone app to easily find resources, calendars and make online donations.
- **Build deep connections outside of our walls.** This goal will allow us to explore ways to invite the community to gather using the parking lot, patio area and green spaces (ex: Night to Unite, Community Garden, Game Nights). We also want to listen to the needs of the community and respond in service to others where the need matches our mission.
- **Improve ministry space.** We know our building needs to be updated to be safe and inviting for all people. Our goal is to raise the funds needed to begin the process by engaging with an architectural firm for ideas of potential updates to the entrances, gathering area and bathrooms.

To achieve these goals, we hope to raise \$15,000 in additional intentions during the fall campaign.

The committee respectfully requests that you review the goals at the next meeting so we can move forward with printing materials. Your feedback is appreciated.

More work is in progress

In peace and hope,

Kim Richter, Chair

Debbie Pirkl

Missions Committee report for October 2021

The missions committee sponsored two events in September. On Sunday, September 12, which was God's Work. Our Hands Sunday, a small group of people from St. Stephen's went to the local WSP police station to bring them treats and to thank them for their service to our community. Then on Wednesday, September 15 we sponsored a packing event at Feed My Starving Children. 52 people of all ages participated and packed over 14,000 meals for starving kids.

Our committee plans to meet next week.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Jackson

Worship Team Report for October 2021

We are trying a new way to for people to sign up for volunteering to usher, Alter set up/clean up and readings.

Jan set up the Worship team on Sign up Genius. (Thank you!) She also posted basic position descriptions for the Worship Team duties. Once we are out of the Covid threat, I will update the descriptions to include tasks that we are not currently doing. Such as serving communion and collecting the offerings.

We now have an Usher for every Sunday through the end of December. I am hoping to find someone for alter set up and clean up for the month of November.

I have also reached out to folks for the Sunday and Thanksgiving readings through November 21, 2021. Folks can still sign up via the Sign Up Genius for the first Sunday in Advent (November 28, 2021) through the end of the year.

Mary Jo Martinek

Isaiah 43:1
*"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine."*