

**St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting November 17, 2021
7:15 PM – through Zoom**

Attendees (Absent):

Pastor John Snider, Pastor Tim Thompson, Merrill Zieman, Jackie Hanson, Jolene Sather, Debbie Pirkl, Joy Stenhaus, 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

* Minutes approved 10/20/2021 –

* Updates from Executive Committee

- Gift Policy: Made a few updates for review. Team did get together to run thru the policy which would be presented for congregation approval. Council recommends this policy be presented to congregation at January 2022 Meeting.
 - Debbie motion / Diane 2nd /discussion / motion carried.
- Planting Hope - \$3,500 was sent from St. Stephen's. Looking for 1 person to attend training session Planting Hope. Please contact Merrill if interested.
- Solar Information coming in with the help from Norm Goetzke.
- Cell Tower: We continue to get contacts for new lease. No changes at this time.

Committee Reports/Updates: If possible, please e-mail prior to meeting (Reply All)

* Pastor Reports – see page 3

* Safety – Merrill

- Increase in COVID in MN.
- In person Fellowship is small group at this time. Easy to practice social distance.
- Funerals: Currently allowing food/drink. This is being reviewed.
- Christmas Service: sign-in returns in entry way.

* Vision Action Team (VAT) – see page 4

* Property Management:

- Thermostat – Excel visit this week to review options.
- Water fountain to be removed by main office.
- Looking for a fountain/bottle water filler for lower level.

* Christian Education - Tracy

- About 100 Love in a ziplock bag were put together tonight.
- See more on page 5

* Youth and Family – see page 6

* Finance – see page 7

* Stewardship – Debbie

- Working on Letter & visual on giving & budget for 2022.
- Letters have been sent, some should have received.

* Missions – Vickie

- Collecting warm clothes for Moreland and Garlough School. We have been contacted by schools and could use these clothes now. Please bring donations to church.
- See more on page 8

* Worship and Music – No report

* Fellowship - Sara

- We hosted a potluck brunch on October 24. Numbers of people participating in fellowship hour have been down. Many people are understandably reluctant to gather, with the surge in COVID numbers.

* Inviting - Mark

- The Inviting Committee has not met. However, would like to get a head start on the Manger set up in same location as last year. This will take some volunteers to haul the parts up. I will look for a couple of dates and we will ask for help soon. We would set the actual figures up closer to Christmas.

* Nominating – No report

Other business or announcements

Next Church Council Meeting-Wednesday, December 15, 2021 at 7:15p via zoom

Adjourn

Respectfully submitted: Joy Stenhaug

Pastor John's Report
November 17, 2021

We are not passively waiting for something to happen in this community of faith and I thank God and you for that. God's mission has a church and you've said yes to being that church here at St. Stephen's. We are meeting these days of pandemic change head on! And whatever the future holds we'll be in a much better place for the work we're all a part of.

Everywhere we look we can see God's hands at work. Some of the efforts may be a little less visible than our day to day ministries so I want to remind you of them.

I'm thinking of the continued improvement of our **communication** through our social media presence, the broadcasting of our services and the hybrid nature of our meetings and education. We have taken some very big steps and are continuing to! (Did someone say "church app"?)

How about the **Values into Action Committee** whose work of articulating the identity of this congregation and our missions has been consistently pursued? This work is continuing fully speed. It is listening closely as it develops mission outcomes that will guide us in ministry for years to come.

One of our challenges has been how to use the monies we've been blessed with. How to use them in ways that benefit our neighbors. How to be the best stewards we can be. The **Gift Policy** committee is ready to have the Council recommend these changes to the congregation. This will make both our commitments to community, the Foundation and our ongoing ministries much clearer and fruitful.

The **St. Stephen's Foundation** is also taking this time to clarify and refine its mission and processes. Recommendations will be put forward that increase the impact of the Foundation, helping it be a more vital partner with our ministries.

Our **Stewardship** efforts have never been stronger thanks both to our excellent committee and working with a consultant now for almost 2 years. Last year we celebrated unprecedented growth in the number of giving intentions. This year we have the blessing of growing our intentions, encouraged by a gift matching all growth dollar for dollar up to the first \$15,000.00! How blessed are we?

All in all we are working in some major, foundational areas which will grow our connections. We are working together well. We are keeping our eyes on the Lord and following God's will as best as we can.

Thank you all!

Pastor John

Vision Action Team (VAT):

We are now in the process of developing goals and objectives for each of the four Ministry Result Areas. The team has created what we are calling "candidate objectives" for the first two areas, and we are organizing meetings for two focus groups to get feedback on these from the congregation. For each area, we are first arranging a date for the meetings that will work for several people we know will be especially helpful in looking at objectives for that area. Once the date has been set, we will be publicizing the focus group meetings to the congregation at large so that it will be open to participation for everyone. We are hoping to have these meetings completed before Christmas. Using the input from those meetings, the team will create a draft Ministry Plan for each area and present it to the Council for review.

We will be following a similar process for the last two areas (Facilities and Worship) and I think we'll be having focus groups for those areas in January.

Pastor Tim

Education Committee Report 11/17/21

1. The Education Committee met on October 26 to discuss Love in a Ziplock Bag, Advent/Christmas planning, and future activity nights.
2. Reverse Advent was very popular last year and will be repeated this year.
3. Our family activity night on December 15th will be Christmas caroling. This was very popular two years ago and we are excited to do it again! The location is still to be determined; we are talking to Salem about caroling in their neighborhood. We have talked with Sara (Fellowship) about providing cookies and hot chocolate.
4. Faith Formation will be teaming up with the new Youth Group for a fun learning experience we are calling "Christmas Around the World". Children will rotate through stations where they will learn about ways that Christmas and other holidays are celebrated around the world. (December 1st)
5. Those who attend the 3:30 Christmas Eve service will have the opportunity to participate in our "No Stress, No Fuss, Christmas Program". Each person will be given a brown bag with a prop inside that will let them know which character they will portray. As the Christmas story is read, they will join in when their part comes up. It will be very relaxed, no practice needed. We are looking forward to this lighthearted and entertaining way to build community!
6. The gift traditionally given out at the 3:30 service will this year be a candy cane with a bookmark that tells the story of the candy cane's Christmas connection.
7. The Faith Formation kids had the chance to vote on where to donate some extra funds. The two choices were the Tanzania Education program and helping our Afghan Allies who have been relocating. The vote was almost equally split, so that's what we are doing with the funds.
8. We are hoping to do fleece blanket tying for our January activity night. We will need donations of fleece and lots of hands, so if you or anyone you know is interested in participating, please let Christine or Tracy know!
9. The Education Committee will meet again in January to plan for Lent and the remaining activity nights.

Thanks,
Christine

Youth and Family Committee Meeting Minutes on 11-15-2021

- Meatball Dinner Fundraiser, was a great success thanks to all the volunteers and participants. A special thanks to Jeff and Reid Kubat for all their expertise and hours of cooking. Preliminary numbers show approximately \$1,000 raised from the event.
- This coming Sunday, 11-21-21, the Youth group is invited to sing along with Faith Formation students during the service. Hannah is sending out the invite to her students.
- “Lock-In” at SSLC, is scheduled for Friday, December 10th at 6:30PM pending the Safety Committee approval. Hannah is sending out the invite, through a Sign-up Genius by 11-20-21. She is putting a limit to the number of participants to maximum of 20. Jessica Donahue is planning on preparing breakfast on the morning of the 11th for the participants with the help of John Anderson. Possible campfire to start the evening off.
- Calvin Mullett has accepted in helping put together a youth music group focusing on the “band” type instruments. Next, Hannah is asking Calvin to start looking for a piece of music to practice. Hannah is also going to reach out to Byron Dockter for help with “string” type instruments. The goal is a March/April Sunday performance.
- Hannah reported that the youth participants are interested in a mission style trip. However, after much discussion we decided to fundraise for an additional year and promote a BWCA style trip for this year. Fundraiser ideas are a pancake breakfast on Palm Sunday, rent a youth in the spring and car washes.
- The next committee meeting is scheduled 12-9-21 at 6:30 at SSLC.

The Finance committee met on Thursday, November 4th.

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

On a year-to-date basis, total income is below budget by \$16,046 while expenses are below budget by \$40,733.

We have a year-to-date deficit (expense exceeds income) of 22,682 however, this deficit is roughly \$24,688 less than the budgeted year-to-date deficit of \$47,370 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

	MARCH			MARCH YTD		
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	Change	BUDGET	ACTUAL	Change
General Envelope	<u>35,100</u>	<u>31,664</u>	<u>(3,436)</u>	<u>115,050</u>	<u>108,454</u>	<u>(6,596)</u>
Total Income	<u>40,727</u>	<u>37,612</u>	<u>(3,115)</u>	<u>130,526</u>	<u>121,861</u>	<u>(8,665)</u>
Total Expenses	<u>46,487</u>	<u>40,227</u>	<u>6,260</u>	<u>141,368</u>	<u>134,441</u>	<u>6,928</u>
Income Less Expense	<u>(5,760)</u>	<u>(2,615)</u>	<u>3,145</u>	<u>(10,842)</u>	<u>(12,579)</u>	<u>(1,737)</u>
NOTES:						
General Envelope : Received a \$5,000.00 donation in March(actual) where it was budgeted in April.						
	with out \$5000.00	35,100	26,664	(8,436)		
<u>Expense Summary better than Budget</u>						
	Snow Shoveling	1,000	-	1,000		
	Gas Charges	4,180	2,830	1,350		
	HVAC	2,417	-	2,417		
	Maintenance & repairs	1,042	213	828		
				<u>5,595</u>		

Missions Committee meeting minutes

The missions committee met on Sunday, October 24, 2021. Those present were Diane Merrill, Jenny VanPelt, Pastor John, Vicki Jackson.

A check for God's Work Our Hands, in the amount of \$100, was sent to the church. We had no expenses for GWOH. It was decided the best use of those funds would be to give them to Feed My Starving Children.

Memorial money for Steve Morganson, in the amount of \$305, was received by the church. The missions committee was asked to decide where to direct this gift. We decided to give it to Loaves and Fishes as Steve was a loyal volunteer with that ministry.

The family support worker at Moreland Elementary School contacted the church asking if we could help them provide warm winter clothes, such as coats, boots, mittens, etc. for their students. Many of them are from economically-disadvantaged families. We've done similar collections for Garlough School in past years. We decided to collect for both schools. Vicki will contact both family support workers and will also get information in the Update. Diane and Jenny will set up collection point in narthex. We will be collecting in November and December.

Diane will work on promotion for Neighbor's, Inc. food shelf and their greatest needs over the holiday season.

The meeting concluded and was immediately followed by gift policy meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Jackson