

**St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting March 16, 2022
7:30 PM via Zoom**

Attendees (Absent):

Pastor John Snider, Pastor Tim Thompson, Merrill Zieman, Jackie Hanson, Jolene Sather
Debbie Pirkel, 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 approve 2/16/2022
- Possible New Phone System
- Foundation update..... Information sent prior to the meeting
 - Jolene presented update.
 - Would like to have a committee of 6-8
 - 1st six months might meet 1-2 times a month to get things started
 - Please connect with Jolene or Pastor John if you are interested in joining
- New Phone System request. Details sent via email prior to meeting
 - Estimated initial cost \$4,255. Estimated monthly fee \$181
 - Motion to approve initial cost paid via Foundation
 - Motion by Mark / 2nd by Sara / discussion / motion carried
- Gift Committee update... Information sent prior to the meeting
 - Pastor John presented email letter regarding distribution recommendations
 - Motion to approve gift distribution as listed in email
 - Motion by Christine / 2nd by Jolene / discussion / motion carried

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATES: see reports on pages 2-7

- Pastor reports
- Safety
- Vision Action Team (VAT)
- Property Management
- Christian Education
- Youth and Family
- Finance
- Stewardship
- Missions
- Worship and Music
- Fellowship
- Inviting
- Nominating

- Council position Terms – Deb
 - Congregational Meeting May 2022 will be voting on new committee members
 - Please let Pastor John know if you are continuing if your term expires

OTHER BUSINESS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEXT CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING.....Wednesday, 4/20, 2022 at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Joy Stenhaug

Pastor John March 2022 Report

Thank you for your faithful efforts in the Lord’s vineyard, here at St. Stephen’s and in all the areas of your life. We are blessed to share this vision of life’s purpose, promise and calling.

Here are a few updates:

1. **Staff Connections.** I’m being sure to spend at least 2, twenty-minute periods alone with each of our staff members a month. Listening. Checking in. Making sure communication is clear.
2. Our efforts on the **contract for Montessori** will be ready by the end of March. They have asked for a more industry standard contract. Ted Zinner, a practicing real estate attorney, is preparing a better contract for us. If we are concerned about the income, he recommends we check with the lease rates of other congregations in similar situations. Clarity about liabilities will also be included in the new contract.
3. **Salem and St. Stephen’s.** We have been doing Faith Formation together, finishing our 4th year this spring. Their president and current bridge pastor met with Merrill and me and we’ve taken a couple of additional steps together. All of these are simply to share the gifts we have and enhance each other’s ministries.
 - Pulpit exchange Sunday, March 20. Pastor Scott Jackel will be here, I’ll be there. Both services are at 9:30. Anyone want to come with me?
 - We’ve invited men from Salem to join us for our breakfast group. 4 individuals and Pastor Scott have attended the last two sessions. It’s been fun.
 - St. Stephen’s is invited to their senior’s group: OWLS (Old Wise Lutherans) on **Tuesday, April 12, 1 p.m. at Salem.**

4. The **Gift Committee** will present their recommendation to the Council for the specific recipients of our “catch up tithing” as approved by the Congregation. There is great joy and a lot of work to faithfully share our blessings.
5. **Lenten Update:** besides encouraging people to read part of the Luther’s Small Catechism each day in Lent, check out Morning Moments. Either Pastor Tim or I have recorded a brief devotional message that are being well received.
6. **Faithful Connections.** Among the many great blessings we’ve received are Chris and Linda Becker as members. They are organizing a group of callers to help people experience the belonging that is theirs in Christ. Including visits to homebound members, it extends to visits of all kinds, in person, on the phone, email, TXT, letters, to and from a wide range of people. (They are encouraging our high schooler to get involved.) There will be a training event on **Saturday, April 2, from 9-11:30 a.m.** This is significant for a number of reasons:
 - It represents an “adaptive change” for us. We are a congregation committed to being connected and this is a practical way to make progress on a profound level. Such change requires new relationships and mutual understandings.
 - While I visit many members, especially on the weeks I’m not preaching, it will ensure a systematic way, and a more theologically correct way, to have the congregation be connected to each other.
7. **VAT.** (Values into Action Team) has been meeting weekly to make progress on our long range plan. And the team has! There are exciting, concrete, congregationally based, and bold recommendations being readied for Council.
8. **Safety Committee** has approved a return of **choir** (masked, as all worship leaders are to be) with Bryon Dockter planning the first rehearsal for **Monday, March 21, 6:30 p.m.**

We are blessed with so much more! I trust that we’ll consider and celebrate those details in the reports of our leaders.

Again, thank you for your faithful service!

Pastor John

Pastor Tim
March 2022

Friends -

Pastor John has already updated you on the great things going on for Lent this year and the progress in the Vision team work so I'll just add two quick notes.

I've been eager to find an opportunity to share more of my experiences with the congregation about my Civil Rights Tour and it's looking like I'll be able to do that in one of our upcoming Open Forums.

Darcy McKenzie recently alerted me to a presentation on Christian Nationalism which I think could be a perfect way to offer some education on this to the congregation. We're going to be looking at dates, likely in the summer.

Blessings!

Pastor Tim

Education Committee Report 3/16/22

1. Our Lent activities this year are focused around the GEMS in Luther's Small catechism. Faith leaders are teaching on a weekly topic from the catechism and then we all attend church together where the topic is reinforced.
2. The 8th grade Confirmation class has a visit to the synagogue coming up at the end of April. We are looking into a possible visit with a Pastor who is from an indigenous background.

Youth and Family Committee Meeting Minutes on 3-10-2022

- Youth group has been meeting in person for the past 3 Sundays following the church service at 10:30. Hannah L. reported she has been having 4-5 youth attending. The youth will be attending the Open Forum on 11-13-22 titled Faithfull Connections.
- The tubing event at Buck Hill was changed to sledding at Two River High School on 2-25-22. We had 10 youth participants with hot chocolate to follow in the fellowship hall. Fun was had by all.
- Hannah L. is meeting with Bryon to see how students can possibly join the Saint Stephen's Band. At this time we have 1 or 2 youth interested in participating.
- Hannah L. and Garrett M. are attending a youth leadership conference, Ignite, in Des Moines on 3-11-22 and 3-12-22.
- Feed My Starving Children is scheduled on Saturday, March 26th at 7 PM in Eagan with 11 spots reserved. Hannah is sending out an email invite on 3-16-22.
- Hot Cross Buns sale/fundraiser is being planned for 4-10-22, Palm Sunday. We are planning to supply the fellowship gathering with Hot Cross buns on Palm Sunday for a suggested 2\$ per bun donation. We are looking into whether the fellowship committee would be able to provide beverages and fruit for the Palm Sunday coffee gathering. We also will have a limited supply of packaged buns for sale after the service. With preparation on 4-9-22 at SSLC. Sales would take place after the Palm Sunday service.
- The next Lock-in is scheduled for May 6 2022. Possibly starting the night off with bowling.
- The next committee mtg. is scheduled for 4-6-22 shortly following the Lenten service.
- Hot Cross Buns sale/fundraiser is being planned for 4-10-22, Palm Sunday. With preparation on 4-9-22. Sales would take place after the Palm Sunday service.
- The next committee mtg. is scheduled for 3-10-22 at 7:30 pm.

Finance Committee met on the 8th of March.

Currently, the monthly budget is not available.

Here is the high level of the February financials :

Total Income	\$48,881.38	General Envelope	\$29,742.70
Total Expense	\$50,728.89	Most of the expenses: Salaries & Property M. (Gas Charges \$7,600)	
Net Income	(1,847.51)		

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hostager and Diane Meyers

Stewardship team

Stewardship team met over zoom on Monday, 3/7 @ 2 pm, along with Garrett M, to discuss ideas and process around our storytelling initiative and some other ideas as spring/summer approaches. Last Tuesday, Garrett, Debbie and I created a test video to flush out the questions/interview/flow, which ended up being a pretty fun experience with Garrett's cool videography toys. :)

We also attended the Faithful Connections open forum on Sunday. Was exciting to hear how this initiative can inspire and create connections both in and outside our congregation and possibly be a pathway on our storytelling initiative also. The Beckers are incredibly inspiring and faithful - fun to get to know them. Was especially interesting to hear how they have felt on the outside of our congregation since they joined us, but I think they, and we, are on the right path now. :) Made me look at my own perspective on how I connect with others.

Our storytelling task force meets this Thursday in order to fulfill homework due for the workshop. We will work on creating structure around the process and determine how to build interest in participation.

Thanks!
Kim

Missions committee report for March 2022

The missions committee met on March 13. Present were Diane Merrill, Jenny VanPelt and Vicki Jackson.

Minnesota FoodShare is ongoing during March. Diane will get totals of pounds of food and dollars donated to Neighbor's.

We have typically observed May as mission's month. This year a pastor from Tanzania will be at St. Stephen's on May 8.

➤ Email from Moreland Elementary School (partial email)

I just wanted to reach out again and say thank you so much for orchestrating St. Stephen's very generous donation to support Moreland families. I can't tell you how powerful it has been to have access to funds to help families and kiddos in need without jumping through a bunch of hoops. It's been amazing to be able to easily provide the random things that caregivers come to me needing. Or sometimes when families meet with me I suspect they have additional needs that they are too shy to request so I've just been able to offer it to them without them having to ask. Families have been SO GRATEFUL! I've used the donation to buy hygiene and cleaning products, diapers and wipes, grocery and gas gift cards, books, and so much more! I'm very grateful for our partnership and just wanted you to know that I've put the money to good use.

Worship Committee

For the Worship team (Alter Guild, Usher and Readers) I have no updates other than Lori and I have been talking about preparation for Easter and planning for this summer.

See you all on Sunday
Mary Jo

Fellowship Committee met on March 9 and discussed the following:

We have returned to in-person coffee hour each week.

We are planning two events:

1. May 8 potluck lunch in the fellowship hall following worship
2. June 4 ladies' luncheon (salads and desserts)

Thanks!
Sara.