

St Stephens Church Council

September 21, 2022

Attendees: Pastor John, Tim Gibson, Diane Meyers , Vicky Jackson, Abby Vavra, Jackie Hanson, Kim Richter, Mary Molumby, Merrill Zieman, John Anderson, Pastor Tim

- **Opening Prayer**
- **Minutes approved 8/17/2022** – approved as written. Contact Abby with any suggested edits.
- **Executive Committee update**  
(Capital Reserve Fund)  
Definition: Capital Reserve Fund intended for unplanned and unexpected expenses for major projects; unexpected losses or other capital needs consistent with feedback from the synod on use of funds.  
Recommendation: Release funds at time of need rather than at the end of the year. Finance Committee would be given authority to do this and track use of funds. We will communicate the use of reserves to the congregation.  
**Executive committee and Finance Committee will meet to review the definition.**
- (Ministry Plan)  
Each committee would look at their mission statement and purpose; intentionally connecting it to St. Stephen’s Mission Statement and Ministry Plan.
- **Safety Committee update**  
No changes to procedure at this point
  - **Pastor Reports**  
***"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness!"*** (Psalm 100:1-2)

In the press of getting things done it’s hard to take the time to savor all the blessings that surround us. There has been and will be, so much we can be grateful for! I’d like to highlight a few of them, knowing there are many, many more.

Our whole response to **West St. Paul Days**, from the Open House, the Parade, to our **“Give Away”** has been profoundly in tune with our Ministry Plan: Turn to the neighbors. It continues with Pastor Tim’s excellent leadership of our Fall Giveaway. It was also expressed in our work on the **Renter’s Workshop** which 48 people attended and our community’s involvement set the high water mark for Homeline, the nonprofit serving renters. Our efforts are the center of their newsletter this month! With 60% of West St. Paul’s housing being rental, most in the Metro, we are providing ministry for a significant number of our neighbors.

What a great response we can celebrate with **God's Work, Our Hands!** Thank you! Apple picking for our neighbor, support for our 1<sup>st</sup> Responders, Feed My Starving Children and our delayed blood drive (now Tuesday, October 4, 1 p.m.)

Something good happens when people's passions respond to need and we can be grateful for that very thing happening in the forming of a **Landscape Taskforce**. We are grateful for Lynn Kubat, Brett Culver, Jane Lerbs, and Andy Ruff who gathered around the passion to make our building to look "loved"; to make a good first impression. They have recently trimmed a lot of trees, arranged for new flower pots at both doors and are meeting with contractors to make a comprehensive landscaping plan.

How grateful we can be for the work of the **Fellowship Committee** creating another **Patio Party** on September 8. The turnout was amazing and included lots and lots of young families and their children. They came to see the renewed Noreen Center and because they were invited. What a response! We need to find ways to continue to provide ministry to this age group.

We can anticipate a lot of gratitude in the coming weeks as we faithfully participate in so many ministries, including:

1. **Open Forum**. This Sunday we'll have a discussion about gun safety following on our **"Coffee with a Cop"** this past Sunday. October will focus on the theme, **"Getting to Know Our Neighbors."** 10.2 Tour of our Building with introductions to Montessori, the Boy Scouts and the After School Program. 10.9 The Executive Director the Dodge Nature Center, Jason Sanders. 10.16 West St. Paul Mayor, David Napier. 10.23 Kae Jae Johnson, Executive Director of ROCC (Residents of Color Collaborative). 10.30 Ms. Brittany Miller from New Challenges, the group home kitty corner from us.
2. **New Member Orientations** will be Tuesday, September 20 or Saturday, September 24. New Members will be received on Sunday, October 2.
3. **Loaves and Fishes**, October 11, 5-6 p.m. Last month our crew feed 266 individuals. A new record. They need our help! Let's find ways to help "many hands make light work".

**There is always so much to be thankful to God for, including each of you! – Pastor John**

As Pastor John mentioned, we're offering another **Giveaway Event** to the community. This will be on **Saturday October 15th, 2-4pm** in the Wentworth parking lot. At this time, we have 12 car spaces reserved and one half-table spot which is very good considering we're still 4 weeks out. If you would like to reserve space for the things you have to give away, you can do that here: [bit.ly/SSLCFallGiveaway](http://bit.ly/SSLCFallGiveaway) We will soon be putting up posters to advertise the event and it will be a featured article in the September issue of the St. Paul Voice newspaper where we have also placed an ad. If you are on Facebook, please visit [the Event Page](#) there and share it on your timeline. At present, 14 people have responded "Going" with 53 as "Interested" on that event page. The vast majority of these people are \*not\* members of St. Stephen's! I think it's likely that we'll want to offer this twice a year going forward, Fall and Spring, so we'll be watching to see the involvement in October to help confirm going that direction.

**Morning Moments** continues to run weekly although I am not aware of what the current viewership metrics look like. Pastor Aaron of Salem will now be a regular contributor for MMs,

and I'm working on establishing a regular rotation of hosts with equal representation between men and women. – Pastor Tim

- **Property Management –**  
Potential future expenses – flat roof and HVAC
- **Christian Education** - There are 22 families registered for faith formation and 5 of those are new to faith formation.

We have 26 kids: 3 Wee Wonder, 6 in preschool/Kinder, 5 in 1st/2nd, 6 in 3rd/4th/5th, 2 in 6th/7th and 4 in 8th.

September 14th was our first night, it was a great success.

The third week of every month we will be meeting at Salem for dinner and an activity.

*Upcoming activities:*

October- we will be making small tie blankets for our littlest ones. We are looking for donations of fleece in square yardx2 for the blankets.

November- we are going to make “Ziploc bags of Love”

December- we will be Christmas caroling, please join us for fun and fellowship.

On Wednesday’s there is a faith growing opportunity for all ages, even adults! Please come and check it out!

Submitted by Mary and Tracy

- **Youth and Family –**  
New Youth Group times are now on every 1st, 2nd, and 4th Wednesdays of the month from 7-8pm. Youth are also encouraged to participate in the community meal and large group service at 6pm. Homework time is then scheduled from 6:20 to 7pm in the newly painted youth room. On the 3rd Wednesdays of the month the youth group will be participating in the Activity Night at Salem starting at 5:30. Youth group ages are 9th graders and up.  
  
- A Swedish Meatball and Gravy fundraiser is scheduled for Nov 12th with preparation on Nov 11th. A planning meeting is scheduled for September 29th at SSLC at 7pm.  
  
- On Oct 22 the youth group will either make a trip to Valley Fair or have a Lock-in. Hannah is going to get input from the group on which event they would prefer.  
  
- Hannah has sent out a tentative year-long schedule to the youth and to Jan.  
  
- The next committee meeting is scheduled for Oct. 12th at 6:20 at SSLC.
- **Finance** - The Finance Committee met on Thursday, September 8th and reviewed August YTD financials. The August YTD deficit of \$76,540 is \$20,000 larger than YTD budget. YTD income is \$13,600 below budget while YTD expenses are \$6,000 higher than budget.

**Please note on the attached financials there is a NOTE that says Salaries & Benefits includes a budgeted amount of \$10,000.00, for a consultant for the remodeling of the Narthex, during August the amount spent on this was -0-.**

YTD general envelope contributions are \$18,000 below budget. This shortfall is mitigated by Plate and Misc Rent income which combined are \$2,600 higher than budget.

YTD gas costs have been consistently over budget throughout the year despite the annual budget being \$7,300 higher than 2021 actual gas costs. Elevated HVAC costs are also contributing to the expense variance.

- **Stewardship** – Stewardship has met a few times this month. We have had two meetings to develop our fall campaign for 2023 - Connections in Action! Thanks to the efforts of everyone this year, we have much to be excited about and incorporate into our campaign. We welcome partnership ideas around storytelling and involvement, so if you have some ideas, let us know!

We have also met with Finance to discuss communication ideas around the spike in the budget around unanticipated expenses.

We are considering the timing and communication ideas around updating the website with the new Vanco giving platform. It is consistent with our plans for our new website so we hope to make a decision soon on the best timing for it.

It's going to be a busy fall season for us again as we attempt to create our own campaign from all we have learned the past two years.

- **Missions** – The missions committee sponsored a school supplies drive for Moreland School. There was a good response to this and all supplies have been delivered.

September 11 was God's Work. Our Hands Sunday. That day treats were brought to local first responders to thank them for their service to the community. On Tuesday, Sept. 13 a group of St. Stephen's members participated in a Feed My Starving Children packing event. We helped pack enough food for 6696 meals for starving kids in Haiti.

A Red Cross blood drive will be held at church on Oct. 4.

- Worship and Music – no report this month.
- Fellowship – successful patio party
- Inviting - The Inviting Committee has no report this month.
- Nominating – no report this month.

Other Business or Announcements

Adjourn