

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Council Meeting

10-19-22

Attendees: Mary Jo Martinek, Mary Molumby, Gary Westman, Tim Johnson, Diane Meyers, John Anderson, Vicky Johnson, John Snider, Abby Vavra, Sara Ruff, Beth Hostager, Eric Donahue, Merrill Zieman

1. Opening Prayer –
2. Approved meeting minutes from 9-21-22
3. **Executive Committee report** –
Will be covered in other reports
4. **Safety committee** –
Meeting monthly, no new news
5. **St Stephens Foundation report** –
 - a. Operating board – Pastor John, Andy Ruff, Merril Zieman, Mark Rogosheske, Jolene Sather, Gary Westman
 - b. Review bylaws, investment structure
 - c. Interviewed 3 entities for investments – want to align investments with the mission of the church and the ELCA
 - d. Funds available for the council to request
6. **Pastor Tim report** – video of Giveaway; Opportunities to connect to West St.Paul;
The Giveaway was a great success in so many ways, thanks to the wonderful work of a huge number of volunteers! In addition to five of us on the Organizing Team, we had twenty-three people involved in running the event and our custodial crew (SOOO thankful for their hard work!) which amounted to a total of 31 people working together!

Because of these people, we were able to accommodate 26 cars and offer 45 tables filled with items to our community, not to mention the lawnful of toys from the nursery!

To estimate the number of people served, we handed out over 200 “Welcome Cards” to folks as they entered the Giveaway. Allowing for children and people who didn't take a card we must have served closer to 250 people.

One of the best parts of the Giveaway was the way nearly everyone was smiling throughout the event. In these days when so many people have hard feelings and distrust for the Church, it was just a blessing to be a part of giving people a good experience with followers of Jesus. One story

I heard illustrates this perfectly: A couple asked one of our volunteers as they were leaving if the church had services. “Yes, we do!” was the response, “9:30 on Sunday mornings!” to which the couple replied; “Oh, good! Because we got a very good vibe from this place.”

In the after-event review we collected lots of great ideas for next time, and there will be a next time in the Spring. One especially good ideas was to include Spanish language material in our promotions!

Then, to top it all off, Mary Jo opened up a great conversation with the Mayor after the Open Forum that connected to the Giveaway. Initially, he thought that she was asking another question about how the city can listen to our concerns, when in fact she was asking how we could *help* and partner with the city in serving the community. In that conversation, we realized that we could offer our Giveaway as an opportunity for the city to connect with a huge number of residents – perhaps as a listening post, or to provide information on city services etc. So, when we begin our planning for the Spring Giveaway, we will be following up with a member of the city staff so that they can do their own planning with a good amount of lead time.

I’m taking note here that this will be (at least) the third substantial connection in partnership between St. Stephen’s as West Saint Paul: Pastor John’s service on the Equity Board; working together in advocating for tenant’s rights; and now coordinating around our Giveaway events.

As I talked with the Mayor, one more opportunity occurred to me. He mentioned that having the city staff be the key drivers for the Explore West Saint Paul Days events, rather than various independent volunteer groups, had been helpful, but had been a huge burden on top of their regular responsibilities. It would be a huge help to the city next year if the city staff can have some volunteers to help them in the planning and prep phase for the events. I think St. Stephen’s should look at intentionally recruiting some of our folks to step up for this work as it comes around next year.

So much great stuff going on!

Blessings – Pastor Tim

7. **Pastor John report –**

- a. Ministry result areas –
 - i. ongoing work with renters, city manager, 2 council members, HomeLine
 - ii. met with Pastor Kelly Chapman, - IDI assessment; ½ day retreat with the council in January
 - iii. Augsburg University’s Neighborhood engagement program
 - iv. Building accessibility – establish committee to lead the transformation, brainstormed potential participants
- b. Future reports to the council – have a template, report through the lens of the church mission and ministry areas. Pastor Tim will draft a template for us

8. **Property Management –**

Noreen Center entry lighting is being replaced;

Prepping for winter

9. Education –

- We've had great attendance on Wednesday nights. Things are going well!
- Tied 14 blankets at Salem tonight
- November's activity is Ziploc bags of Love.
- December- we will be caroling! Please join us!

10. Youth and Family –

- New Youth Group times are now Sunday mornings following the service from 10:30-11:30. Hannah has determined that more of the youth were available on Sundays instead of Wednesdays. On the 3rd Wednesdays of the month the youth group will be encouraged to participate in the Activity Nights at Salem starting at 5:30 pm. Youth group ages are 9th graders and up.
- A Swedish Meatball and Gravy fundraiser is scheduled for Nov. 12th with preparation on Nov. 11th. Hannah is sending out a Sign-up Genius for the event. Tickets are now available through Jan and a number of volunteers.
- On Friday, Oct. 21-22 the youth group will have a Lock-in at SSLC. Hannah is also sending out a Sign-up Genius for this event as well.
- On Dec. 11th, at 10:30-2:00 Hannah is planning to take the youth shopping for a needy family. Then return to church to wrap the gifts, a Christmas movie and some lunch.
- Tentative Lock-in in January. First, have a mini golf game with families at Can-Can Wonderland. Then back to SSLC for a lock-in with the older students.
- Young Life dinner last night – consider growing role with them

11. Finance –

The Finance Committee met on Sunday, October 9th. Abra, Sue, Jackie, Beth and I were present. We reviewed the process of the bank reconciliation.

The September financials were reviewed and communicated thru email.. The September YTD deficit of \$88,482 is \$24,025 larger than YTD budget. YTD income is \$19,100 below budget while YTD expenses are \$4,900 higher than budget.

Please note on the attached financials there is a NOTE that says Salaries & Benefits includes a budgeted amount of \$10,200.00, for a consultant for the remodeling of the Narthex, during September the amount spent on this was -0-.

YTD general envelope contributions are \$24,000 below budget. This shortfall is mitigated by Plate and Misc Rent income which combined are \$5,000 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

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hostager and Diane Meyers

12. Stewardship –

No meetings for stewardship just plenty of work toward production of our Connections in Action campaign! Will leave it to my team members to provide the highlights.

13. Mission –

The missions committee met virtually on Oct. 7. Diane, Jenny and Vicki were present. We discussed a project for the Christmas season. We decided to again this year collect warm winter gear for students at Garlough and Moreland schools.

A big shout-out to the Loaves and Fishes crew. This month they served 261 meals in one hour! Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make this possible.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Jackson

14. Worship and Music –

- Possibly someone new to help with worship;
- Via de Cristo – looking at hosting in October 2023. The weekend begins Thursday pm and goes through Sunday afternoon: multiple presentations, worship, praise, growing. What is needed from St. Stephens: – Noreen Center for sleeping, Fellowship Hall for meals, Youth rooms for gatherings, first floor hallway, lounge, nursery.

15. Fellowship –

Potluck on Sunday October 30th, after church

16. Upcoming Meetings:

- a. Date for finance, stewardship, and council – October 26, 7:00 pm virtual
- b. Next Council Meeting: Wednesday, November 16th