

**St. Stephen's Lutheran Church**  
**Parish Council Meeting November 20, 2019**  
**7:15 PM – 8:15 PM**

**Attendees (Absent):**

Pastor John Snider, Pastor Tim Thompson, Gary Westman, Merrill Zieman, Sue Clark, Debbie Pirkel, Joy Stenhaus, Mary Molumby, Teresa Tschida, Sara Ruff, Joanna Mead, Beth Hostager, Diane Meyers, Dave Paton, Eric Donahue, Jessica Donahue, Kim Richter, Lori Ritt, John Anderson, Annette Youness, Tracy Westman, Ali Schloesser-Brecht, Mark Rogosheske

**AGENDA**

**1) Opening prayer / Devotional (Pastor John)**

**2) Minutes approved – October 16, 2019 meeting**

**3) Updates from Executive Committee (Gary)**

- a) Rededication of the Noreen Center will be Sunday February 2, 2020
- b) Safety/Security Task Force has received 4 bids. Bids range from \$13,000-56,000.
  - i) Dave Paton mentioned they hope to have something to present in Dec or Jan 2020.
- c) The \$25,500 Wentworth assessment fee will be paid on time
- d) Pamela Beard house is moving along. We have received a couple bids & working on details of sale.

**4) Committee Reports/Updates**

- a) Pastor Reports
  - i) Pastor John – please see page 3
  - ii) Pastor Tim – please see page 4
- b) Property & Maintenance – Jessica
  - i) Noreen Center facelift in wrapping up.
  - ii) Working on water fountain near main office.
  - iii) Wentworth parking lot appears to be finished. Concern regarding west side of lot. Questioned if a guard rail of some sort could be installed.
- c) Christian Education – Mary & Tracy
  - i) Love in a Ziploc bag went very well.
  - ii) New Life Band from Tanzania provided music at worship tonight. The offering received was \$641. This offering will go toward their mission to build a girls school in Northern Tanzania.
  - iii) December the youth will be making sandwich lunches for folks staying at church via Matrix.

- d) Youth & Family – Ali
  - i) 2 youth attended North Carolina Youth Summit. This was paid by ELCA to attend. They had a great time and looking forward to sharing what was learned.
  - ii) Lock-in was a great success. 23 kids attended.
  - iii) Working on plans for Youth Sunday in May.
- e) Finance – see page 5
- f) Stewardship – Kim
  - i) Envelopes are slowly coming in with 2020 giving plan.
  - ii) Working on new envelopes for those who do not use online giving.
- g) Missions – Dave
  - i) Received \$5,000 donation from a person that wishes to remain anonymous.
  - ii) The coat rack is up and has some coats hanging in the nartex. These will be donated to Garlough Elementary School in WSP.
  - iii) Walk to End Hunger is at MOA on Thanksgiving morning 7a-11a.. All are welcome.
- h) Worship & Music – no report
- i) Inviting
  - i) Working on security for manager scene
- j) Fellowship - Sara
  - i) There will be treats after the Thanksgiving Eve service
  - ii) Church Basement Ladies play is this weekend
- k) Nominating – no report

## 5) Important Dates

- a) December 5: Let's Talk is at Dane and Darcy McKenzie's home from 6:30-9p.
- b) December 18: Council Meeting will be a holiday gathering. Possible location will be Kim Richter. More to come on this event.

## 6) Adjourn

**November 20, 2019**

**As I look back over the past month here are a few of the many things stand out:**

- ***Removing the carpet from the Noreen Activity Center. There were lots of hard working volunteers, and working together is another way of creating relationships. Also, Jessica and Eric are terrific leaders, both by example and with technical skills. Thank you both for the amazing work you have done on that massive project!***
- ***The adult class on Wednesday evenings while the youth are learning. We studied the 4 Gospels in 3 nights. At least 10 people were at every session. It was a fun and inspiring time as we shared out understandings and grew together. Experiences like these remind me of the importance of learning in our Christian life and growth. What is feeding your soul?***
- ***Our new members were striking because 2 of the families were young families with children and the third was a neighbor from the group home kitty corner from the church. I was pleased that all of them found us welcoming.***
- ***We had funerals for two very faithful members, Cal Kellerman and Geri McArdell. Though sad in some ways we are at our best with worship proclaiming the Good News of eternal life; Jan's gracious hospitality in preparing the services; and all the kindness around Lynn Kubat and the army of volunteers who prepare the reception, providing a place family and friends need so much. Another thank you!***
- ***The Executive Committee has been doing an excellent job overseeing the Pamela Beard home we were given. Thank you to Gary for reminding us to always personalize the gift; to remember with gratitude Ms. Beard and her gift. Also a special thank you to Debbie and Joy for endless hours working in the house and preparing the sale.***

**Looking forward a few of the many things which stand out:**

- ***Our new Stewardship year calls on all of us to think about our giving practices. Financial giving is a core part of our Christian faith. Kim and the Generosity Committee are giving each of us a chance to think of our practices, not based on peer pressure but in a faithful response to our God. We have growing ministries at St. Stephen's, particularly in our youth and music programs. We have an excellent staff. Our stewardship is what frees our church to be our fullest self. Also, giving is a spiritual blessing, it reminds us that this is God's world and not our own.***
- ***Let's Talk will be hosted by Darcy and Dane McKenzie on December 5 at the McKenzie's home. Like last year we'll be welcoming our Muslim friends to share with us our Christmas celebration. We'll sing Christmas carols and talk about the meaning of Christmas to Christians. If you haven't had a chance to experience one of these "bridge building" events, this would be a good one to attend. It'll be a Lutheran potluck, minus pork and alcohol.***

**Thank you for the way you are faithfully responding to God in your life and commitments!**

**Pastor John**

# Update for Council

Pastor Tim November 2019

I'm continuing to work on giving more attention to discipling people individually and in small groups, rather than developing more programmatic offerings and then trying to get people to attend them. As a part of that, I will be doing some 1-1 conversations with various people to get a clearer sense of what kind of discipleship engagement would actually make sense for them where they are at right now. If anyone on Council would like to join me in a conversation like that, please let me know!

Online videochat meetings are a tool that I have been using for many years now, and it's very helpful. Much easier to find a time to "meet" and a lot less driving involved! I am planning two offerings that will make use of that way of connecting, to see if it's more accessible to people.

The Advent Excursion. This is the cover article for the December newsletter so please watch for that. It's simply an agreement to make use of the brief, daily online devotional "Pray As You Go" during the season of Advent, and then have conversation about it once a week. One conversation will be offered by videochat on Saturdays from 9 to 9:30am. The other will be at a table in the fellowship Hall after worship on Sundays. I hope you will consider participating!

Manna and Mercy Reading Group. Many people have been delighted recently to discover the book Manna and Mercy, which gives a very accessible introduction to the Bible narrative with winsome and insightful illustrations. So I will be offering an videochat conversation for people who want to read through that book together with me. This has not been scheduled yet, but I expect it to be rolled out after the holidays. (The monthly breakfast Bible study "Rooted in the Word" is also looking at this book, so there is an in-person opportunity available for people there.)

DIY Directory. Congregational photo directories are a huge asset (especially for people like me who struggle to remember names!) and also a huge headache to coordinate. I've wanted for years to take a shot at making a "DIY Directory", and that is in the works for January, to coincide with the Annual Meeting. In a nutshell, we have some volunteers available after worship with smartphones to take quick pictures of anyone willing to participate. Those photos are emailed to a volunteer (not Jan!) who renames the files to reflect the people in the picture. The photos can then be made available online, password protected, to the whole congregation. Printed directories can be produced as needed simply by selecting and printing the photos on a kind of "contact sheet" format. Debbie Pirkle has agreed to help me with this. 😊

A friend of mine has developed and launched a six-week program that helps people explore their values and practices around money. This is not a stewardship program per se, but will strongly support good stewardship. I am planning to test drive this resource, and if it's as good as I think it is, begin offering it to the congregation. I will be reaching out to the Stewardship Committee to keep them informed and see if they want to explore it with me.

Lastly, I'm delighted to share that I was recently invited to participate in a five-day "think tank" retreat, which happens to be meeting in Hawaii! The organizer is Professor Thorsten Moritz, who is developing a school for theological education that is not focused solely on the seminary model and the work of preparing pastors for ordination. I'll be away November 30<sup>th</sup> through December 6<sup>th</sup>.

Blessings! Pastor Tim

## FINANCE

The Finance Committee met on Thursday, November 14th. Merrill Zieman, Abra Gillman, Sue Clark, Pastor John, Diane Meyers and Beth Hostager attended.

Debbie PirkI joined us to discuss the Stewardship focus for 2020 and the new envelope system.

We will discuss the preliminary 2020 budget at our December meeting.

We reviewed October financials. Following is a summary of the October month and YTD financial results. The YTD deficit is \$57,000 which is \$7,000 higher than the YTD budget. Income is \$9,000 below budget and expenses are \$2,000 favorable relative to budget.

	Month of October			YTD October		
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance
Contributions	24,545	30,437	(5,892)	324,304	333,898	(9,594)
Other Income	1,913	5,252	(3,339)	40,462	39,860	602
Total Income	26,458	35,689	(9,231)	364,766	373,758	(8,992)
Total Expense	36,190	37,940	(1,749)	421,936	423,971	(2,035)
Income less Expense	(9,733)	(2,251)	(7,482)	(57,170)	(50,213)	(6,958)

If any of you would like Diane and me to walk through the monthly financial statements and committee expenses with you, please let us know.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Hostager and Diane Meyers