

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
Parish Council Meeting May 13, 2020
7:15 PM – 8:15 PM – through Zoom

Attendees (Absent):

Pastor John Snider, Pastor Tim Thompson, Gary Westman, Merrill Zieman, Sue Clark, Debbie Pirkl, Joy Stenhaug, 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 – April 15, 2020 meeting

3) Updates from Executive Committee

- a) Semi-Annual Meeting Update -
 - i) Recommend suspending until we can gather safely.
 - ii) Motion to postpone semi-annual meeting to a more appropriate time when gathering is safe
 - (1) Motion by Sara / 2nd by Deb / motion carried
- b) Election of Officers – all are continuing positions – thank you!
 - i) Looking for 3 nominating committee. Please submit names to Pastor John
 - ii) New positions begin Sunday May 15
- c) Paycheck Protection Program Loan/Grant Application
 - i) Approved for \$43, 200 loan
- d) Cell Phone Tower Lease
 - i) Negotiating a new lease. Changing from \$1400 down to \$800 per month. We are still reviewing. Possible contact legal advice.
- e) Wentworth Parking Lot
 - i) Pastor John has been in contact with county. Wentworth parking lot, east
 - ii) School district has indicated a school bus cannot turn around.
- f) Coronavirus Response
 - i) Waiting for guidelines how to best open.
 - ii) It will be recommended if you can watch from home, please do.

4) Committee Reports/Updates – Please email updates in advance of meeting

a) Pastor Reports

i) **Pastor John:**

- Update to licenses' for live & recorded services
- Reviewing service structure. One possible option is to shorten # of verses song in a hymn
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We are **9 Sundays** into the COVID-19 era and we have been changed already. While the virus is horrible our response as a church been inspiring and transformative.

During these **69 days** we have been part of the Body of Christ finding new ways to love and serve. I am very impressed and inspired by our **lay leaders** who have stepped into the challenges and found new ways to minister; our **volunteers** whose commitment to help in whatever way they can, whether at the sound board or in the flower gardens, is steadfast; our **members** who have watched worship in new ways, continued to be generous, and doubled our contribution to Minnesota Foodshare; our **staff** whose work and hours have increased even as their creativity, flexibility and mutual support have. Just before we were hit by this virus Steve Morganson told me, *“Give people half a chance and they will impress you.”* He couldn't have been more right!

These are transformative times and we are only at the beginning of the transformation. Have you noticed your neighborhood filled with kids, creating their own fun? Will we ever go back to the hurried pace again? Have you begun to sense the increased importance of others and given them more of your time and attention rather than rushing past them as we did just **three months ago**? Have you experienced times of deeper reflection about your life, relationships and spending habits? These are deep questions and not all bad.

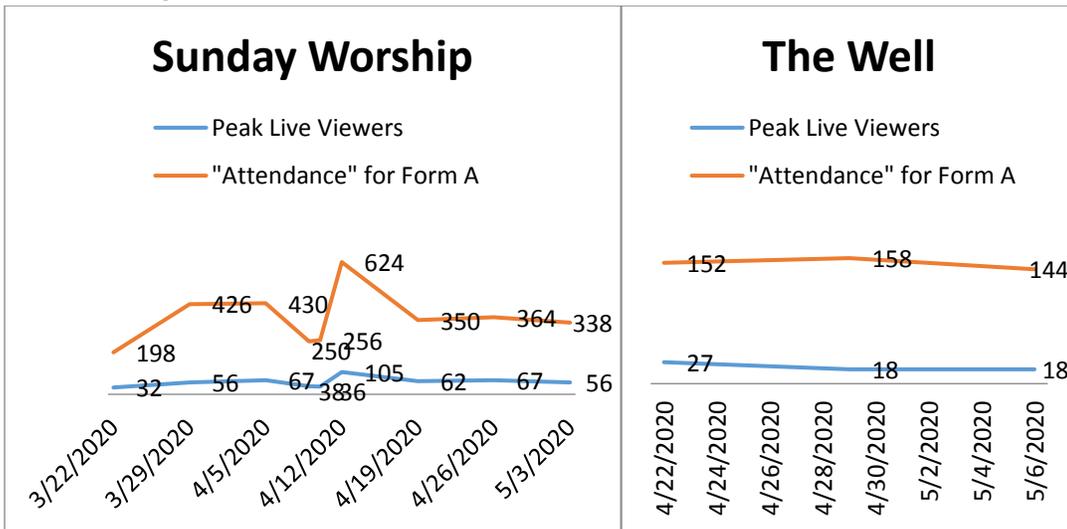
I'd encourage you to engage a medieval monk in a conversation about these days. A study of **Meister Eckhart: Mystic-Warrior for Our Age**, by Matthew Fox, will begin on Wednesday, May 27, from 7-8 p.m. on Zoom as part of our Contemplative Prayer and Study group. His call to deep prayer and deep actions for justice is exactly what we need in these days. Get a copy of his book and join the conversation.

Exactly what getting back together again will be like is unknown. We are trying to find our way, but in renewed ways. I'm sure we will bring some of the good things with us from these days. **Exactly how** we will be when we get back together is known: we will continue surrendering to God's love and finding ways to share that love with all others.

ii) **Pastor Tim – Report to Council – May 13, 2020**

Most of my time now is going to the creative and technical work of **producing The Well** each week. I'm so grateful for the people who have produced a growing library of recorded music performances that I can use for this! Those who are viewing it are finding it very valuable, in part because of the shorter time frame (15-20 min). I'm also scheduling and recording the **lectors for Sundays**, and I've submitted an application to Facebook for us to be registered as a non-profit, which will allow us to have a prominent **"Donate Now" button** on our page. I've begun collecting the **"attendance" metrics** for both Sunday and The Well from Facebook. There are two numbers we are tracking now. One is the "peak live viewers" during the time that the service is running. In my opinion, that's the most significant and clear thing to track. The second number is the one the ELCA has asked congregations to report as the "attendance" for online services. It is an attempt to represent the fact that people do view the recording of the service after its first run, and that one "viewer" may actually represent a couple of people viewing together. So they ask us to take the number of views a recording gets within the first week after its first run, add that to the number of peak live viewers, and then multiply by 2. That number is called "Attendance for Form A." The charts are below. The two **book groups** I've been leading are wrapping up this month and my online huddle/discipleship group continues to meet twice a month.

Looking ahead, I have been thinking a lot about **the time between** now and the day we can return to full gatherings in the Sanctuary. My belief is that this time will run for *many* months, and that during that time there will be a gradual increase in the size of groups that are ok to assemble in. So perhaps it will initially be groups of 10, later on groups of 50 and so on. I believe that we should be thinking about **how to re-assemble the congregation in parts over these months**. This is an incredibly powerful opportunity to greatly deepen the relationships among the people and their faith. For example, imagine the impact on a group of three households that spent two or three months gathering together weekly for a Sunday morning "watch party" time of worship together. I think we should be thinking about how we could encourage and support such gatherings arising on the congregation as soon as the distancing restrictions allow.



b) Property & Maintenance –

- i) Water in maintenance room – still looking into
- ii) Auto lighting has been installed in restrooms

c) Christian Education: Mary - Education Committee Notes 5/13/2020

- In faith formation we discussing Luther's Small Catechism for the next three weeks.
- Tracy will continue to send out the faith formation emails until the last week. Her last email will be May 25th
- The teacher are still doing Zoom meeting and the last meeting will be May 27th.
- Tracy has done a Zoom children's sermon for many of the classes.
- Tracy is attending a meeting on Saturday, with people from Salem and St. Stephen's to discuss VBS. Will we have it or not? If so, we will be joining with Salem.
- Tracy will send out a survey to parents regarding their experience this year in faith formation. It will be asking how they felt the year went (both the first 2/3 and last 1/3). Did parents feel like they were supported and did they like the weekly emails from Tracy?
- We will also be sending a survey out to the teachers and asking how they felt this Faith Formation year went and of course will you teach again next year!
- Sunday June 7th we will honor the graduates.

d) Youth & Family

i) Ali:

Youth Sunday was great! We had 8 youth involved in it. If you have not watched it you definitely should. Dylan did an amazing job!

May 30th at noon is our next zoom activity.

I am currently buying hostess cakes to do ding dong ditch with Tracy for our faith formation families! Will be delivered next week.

May 15th is our next update about camp... not cancelled yet.

We are still planning on a mission trip. If we cannot actually go we will still do something that week. (July 26 to 31)

Additional question: Can youth gather is a group under 10 people at church?

- Executive council will review options and get back to Ali.

e) Finance – 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)

Expense Summary better than Budget

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>

	APRIL			APRIL YTD		
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	Change	BUDGET	ACTUAL	Change
General Envelope	<u>33,150</u>	<u>29,274</u>	<u>(3,876)</u>	<u>148,200</u>	<u>137,728</u>	<u>(10,472)</u>
Total Contributions	<u>37,667</u>	<u>30,159</u>	<u>(7,508)</u>	<u>156,175</u>	<u>140,543</u>	<u>(15,632)</u>
Total Other Income	<u>4,387</u>	<u>2,078</u>	<u>(2,310)</u>	<u>16,405</u>	<u>13,555</u>	<u>(2,850)</u>
Total Income	<u>42,054</u>	<u>32,237</u>	<u>(9,817)</u>	<u>172,580</u>	<u>154,098</u>	<u>(18,482)</u>
Total Expenses	<u>43,270</u>	<u>35,845</u>	<u>7,425</u>	<u>184,639</u>	<u>170,285</u>	<u>14,353</u>
Income Less Expense	<u>(1,216)</u>	<u>(3,608)</u>	<u>(2,392)</u>	<u>(12,059)</u>	<u>(16,187)</u>	<u>(4,129)</u>

NOTES:

General Envelope : Received a \$5,000.00 donation in March(actual) where it was budgeted in April.

Expense Summary better than Budget

Snow Shoveling	1,025	700	325
Gas Charges	2,850	1,956	894
Electricity	1,250	924	326
HVAC	916	-	916
Maintenance & repairs	1,042	163	879
Music \ Worship	1,669	638	1,031
Office Expense	1,659	698	961
			<u>5,333</u>

f) Stewardship – Kim

- 1.) Sent out a letter to about 40 members, targeted specifically to those whom we know have given in the past, used envelopes mostly for contributions, and whom we think may not be as connected or able to access envelopes or new electronic options. Attaching letter here. (might have been a couple of edits since this version was sent out for review).
- 2.) Working on our Stewardship for all seasons concepting; have received great notes and ideas from the task force. Hoping to organize a meeting end of May or first part of June.
- 3.) Considering doing a temple talk encouraging the concept of generosity during these tenuous times. Working thru some thoughts around the message we should send.
- 4.) Thanks JAN for getting the Stewardship Tab updated on the website! Looks so great! Our ultimate goal is that we merge the stewardship tab w/the giving tab to keep it more seamless, since we do offer a number of great options. Also, want to consider in the future adding language w/other stewardship concepts, such as estate planning, budget assistance, Thrivent, and being good stewards of our planet and resources

g) Missions: Dave

I hope that our Mission Sunday FB effort was appreciated. We tried to give you all an idea of how much good your church (and your dollars) are doing around the world and I hope it worked! Thanks to all who are helping compile and coordinate all that goes into our church services during this time.

Your Missions committee continues to hurry up and wait while Government keeps us all locked down... with WI opening some and more to come, I hope our Governor will become a little more objective about this but that's for another day. MN Foodshare is the annual event (among others) where your church really shines. We're walking the walk as we follow the Ten Commandments as God teaches us "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' there is no commandment greater than these." I know that the total for this year was 22,226 dollars/lbs of food... I'll tell you tonight what last year's was just to keep the suspense high.

Anyway, next up, depending on how long we're confined, might be "God's Work, Our Hands" in September. I'll keep you advised as time goes along... please let me, or Jenny or Vicki, know of any questions or comment.

Thanks for your support and prayers from your Mission Committee!

Vicki, Dave, and Jenny

h) Worship & Music – Lori

- i) Team has not meet. Suggested shortening hymn during live service

i) Inviting Teresa / Mark

- i) Sent out postcards to community around us at Christmas and wanted to do for Easter.
- ii) Sending out again
- iii) Taking pictures while worship, post to FB and on personal FB page

- j) Fellowship – Sara
 - i) Committee meet via Zoom
 - ii) Coffee hour via zoom a couple times. It has been fun. There is a different group via zoom vs fellowship hall. Group dropped off treats and puzzles to some folks
- k) Nominating – no report

5) **Important Dates**

Next Council Meeting – June 17 7:15pm

6) **Adjourn**