

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church
Parish Council Meeting April 14, 2021
7:00 PM – 7:30 PM – through Zoom

Go to <https://zoom.us/>
Click on Join a Meeting
Enter 380-950-620
PW 55118

Or, call-in at (301) 715-8592

AGENDA

Called to order at 7:03 pm

- 1) Opening prayer / Devotional (Pastor John)**
- 2) Minutes approved – March 17, 2021 meeting (Gary) – M/S/C**
- 3) Updates from Executive Committee**
 - a) Status of Communications Coordinator & Dir of Children & Youth Formation positions
 - Comm & Media Coord has offer out to a candidate, accepted, waiting for background check and reference checks to come back to finalize the offer.
 - Youth Activities Coordinator interviews this week with 4 candidates.
 - b) Coronavirus Response – Safety Committee – Merrill
 - Waiting for all worship volunteers to be vaccinated before in-person worship resumes.
- 4) Committee Reports/Updates – Please email updates in advance of meeting**
 - a) Pastor Reports
 - PJ – clean out the catacombs, meeting with Salem to discuss past and future of our partnership with Faith Formation; Nominating committee meeting 4/25, please send suggestions to PJ; Let's Talk working with community organizer to engage in a broader way.
 - TT - The Well is back up and running on Wednesday evenings; will be transferring tasks to new Comm & Media Coord so will have time open to pursue other things (racial justice, Christian nationalism)
 - b) Property & Maintenance: report attached
 - c) Christian Education
 - d) Youth & Family
 - e) Finance: report attached
 - f) Stewardship: report attached
 - Updated the Donations page on the website;
 - g) Missions: report attached
 - Drive-By Food Drop off in March received 400+ pounds and \$1,300 for Neighbors
 - h) Worship & Music
 - i) Inviting
 - j) Fellowship
 - Looking at switching the Coffee Hour to a time for Devotions; Puzzle swap planning in process
 - k) Nominating – Meeting 4/25

5) Important Dates

Living into a Culture of Mission & Action – A Bold Vision for St Stephen’s – Sunday, April 18,
10:30 am

Next Council Meeting – Wednesday, May 19, 7:15 PM

6) Adjourn Council meeting at 7:30 pm

**7) Living into a Culture of Mission & Action Committee – Long Term Planning Training Session with
Pete Reuss**

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie PirkI

Pastor John Report
April 14, 2021

“If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peacefully with all.” Romans 12:18
“Let mutual love continue.” Hebrews 13:12

There are so many people working at St. Stephen’s these days, some in new, short term projects and others in continuing faithful efforts. We have lots of plates in the air, lots of moving parts. Not only am I grateful for how many different people are serving here, more importantly I am grateful for the way we are relating to each other. (See scriptures above.) Faith at work helps us see each other, even under pressure, as beloved children of God, as brothers and sisters. During busy times, whether at church or elsewhere, it’s helpful to think about God’s Will as a slip stream of the Holy Spirit, we lower ourselves into it and go with that flow!

First just a few schedule highlights to look forward to:

Saturday, April 17, 9 a.m. Church Toss Out. Thank you to the **Donahue’s** for leading this effort. If there’s something to toss please mark it by this Wednesday with a sticker from the office. Once we determine how much stuff is getting tossed, we may call for some morning volunteers. Saturday it goes!

Sunday, April 18, 10:30-11:30. Vision and Action Congregational meeting. We hope all chairs will attend and will encourage their committee members as well. A big steam for our planning.

Thursday, April 22, 7 p.m. New Member Class.

Some exciting ministry events since we met:

First Communion for 3 families, videotaped separately for Maundy Thursday. Palm Sunday palms, crosses, communion kits handed out and gifts for MN Foodshare received, outside, at the foot of the cross. Baptism classes online and videotaped to be placed in Sunday services. The slow return to homebound calling.

Short Term Ministry Teams in action:

St. Stephen’s Vision and Action Team (S. S.V.A.T.) **Sara Ruff (chair) Pastor Tim, Jessica Gregory, Merrill Zieman, Mary Molumby, John Anderson, and me.** Thanks **Jan, Dean and Shirley** for getting our devotional material in the mail and online.

Communications and Media Coordination Hiring Team: **Kim Richter (chair) Gary Westman, Pastor Tim, Keith Gregory, Debbie Pirkel, Jan Perkins and me.** Three zoom interviews and two second interviews in person.

Gift Policy Team: **Sue Clark, Diane Meyers, Merrill Zieman, and me.** We have meet with ELCA consultant Becky Palmgren. We are working with her to form a policy on gifts that we will present for your approval and the approval of the congregation.

Activities Coordinator of Children, Youth and Family Faith Formation Hiring Team: John Anderson (chair) **Merrill Zieman, Joy Stenhaus, Larry Longard, Tracy Westman, Abra Gillman, Mitchell Gillman and me.** John Anderson is lining up zoom interviews of four candidates.

Conversations with Salem Lutheran Church. After three years of doing Faith Formation together we are bringing 3 people from each church to a meeting to evaluate how things are going. The question is, *“Are there areas we can enhance Christ’s ministry by working together?”* Tracy Westman, Merrill Zieman and I will meet with their president, chair in charge of youth and their pastor on Thursday, April 29, 4 p.m.

Nominating Committee: **Lynda Bergeson, Brenda Gieser, Abby Vavra, Vicki Jackson, Andy Ruff, Jeff Kubat and me.** Thank you to all who serve in leadership at St. Stephen’s. Whether staying for another term or stepping down, know that you have made a difference for which the whole church is grateful. This committee is planning its first meeting in preparation to present a slate of officers at our congregational meeting, **Sunday, May 25.**

Update on Let’s Talk:

For 8 years we have been meeting with Masjid At-Taqwa in pursuit of mutual understanding of our religions as well as relationship building; combining faces with faith. It remains a rich commitment from both groups. We are now holding a series of conversations with a community organizer from the Minnesota Council of Churches who is working with congregations and mosques on the eastern side of St. Paul. She is holding one-on-one discussions with participants from Let’s Talk and from our Understanding Racism group. She will be guiding conversations about how we can work together for the common good.

This is a very busy season for us. Let’s embrace it and enjoy serving together in the Lord’s vineyard. Thank you for your faithfulness!

Blessings!

Pastor John

Council Update – April 2021

Pastor Tim Thompson

My report this month is just like Pastor John's, except he has WAY more plates spinning than I do! 😊

The **Hiring Team** for the Communications and Media Coordinator has completed first and second round interviews and I am confident we will have the position filled very soon!

The **Visioning Team** is up and running with Sara Ruff and I helping to coordinate the process under the direction of our consultant. Jan did a terrific job in getting the devotional booklet out to the congregation and our Congregational Conversation will take place this Sunday. Shortly after that we will share an online survey with the congregation to get additional input. It's encouraging to see that this is moving along so quickly.

The Well resumed on April 7th and I included a request for people to fill out an online survey to provide feedback for us. Unfortunately, no one has responded to my request. I intend to continue asking for two more weeks. After that, Pastor John and I – and hopefully our new Communications staff person – will give some thought to what to do with The Well going forward.

My **Virtual Home Group** team went on hiatus for Lent and is reconvening this Saturday. These three people and I are collecting resources and test-driving ideas for small, independent groups that could meet virtually and/or in homes as the pandemic eases up.

When the communications person comes on staff I will be able to start handing off a number of things that I have been tending. I've been reflecting on **where best to invest my time** after that and continue to think about how to engage with current issues of Racism and Christian Nationalism. I'd be happy to hear any thoughts you may have on priorities in the area of Discipleship going forward.

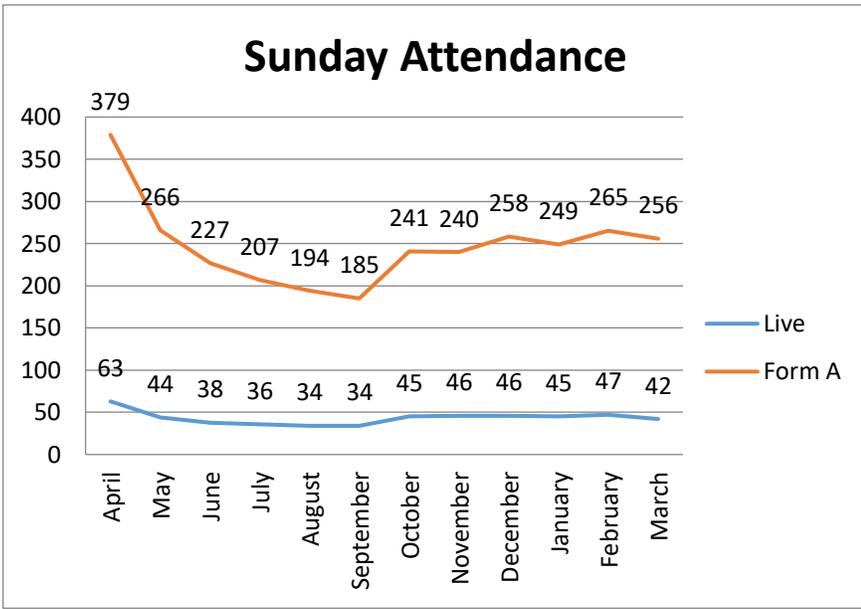
Below are the updated Facebook metrics.

Blessings!

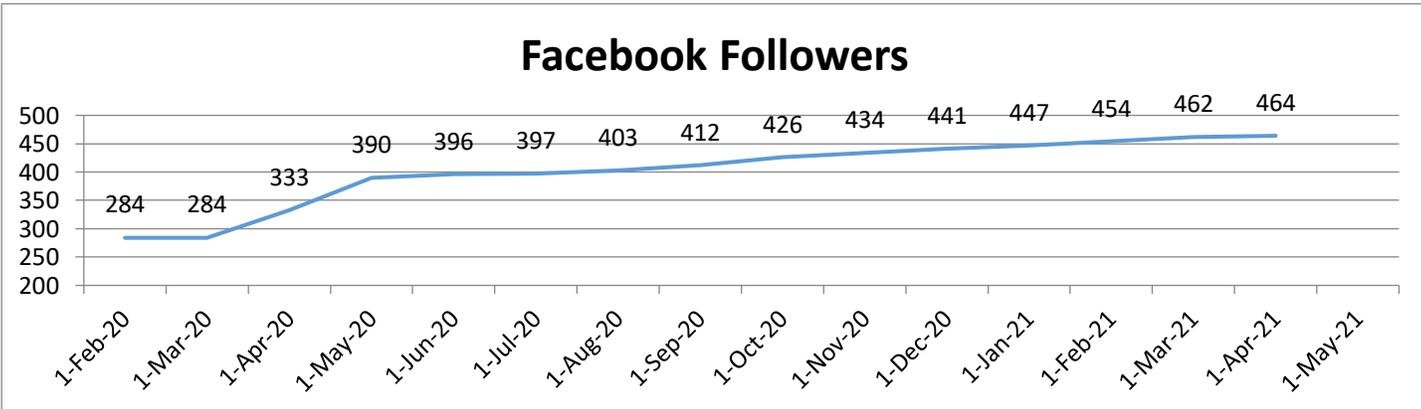
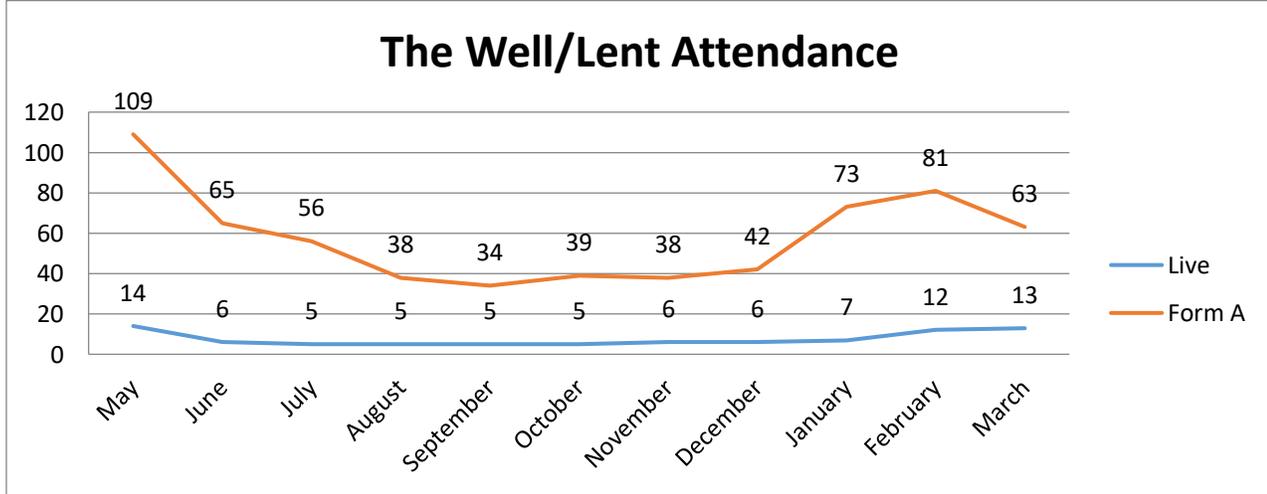
Pastor Tim

Facebook Metrics through March 2021

NOTE: The "Form A" figure is the number that the ELCA has asked us to report for the online services in lieu of head-count attendance in worship. It is based on a formula that counts both live views as well as views in the first week after a service is live. However, I believe that the formula is double-counting the live viewers and thus providing an overestimate of the number of people actually viewing a service. Without getting into the



details of the formula, I'd suggest that the "Average Weekly Sunday Attendance" for August is actually closer to 126 rather than the Form A number of 194. This does not include people attending the second, parking lot service.



The Finance committee met on Thursday, April 8th at 7:00 pm. In attendance was Abra, Sue, Beth and Diane.

Attached is a summary of financials for the month of March as well as March YTD.

On a year-to-date basis, total income and total expense are both approximately \$8,440 and \$18,546 respectfully, below budget.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth and Diane
Finance Co-chairs

	March 2021			March YTD 2021		
	BUDGET	ACTUAL	Change	BUDGET	ACTUAL	Change
General Envelope	39,000	34,880	(4,120)	111,150	101,751	(9,399)
Total Contributions	39,625	34,969	(4,656)	132,025	123,579	(8,446)
Total Other Income	10,756	11,035	279	17,458	17,465	7
Total Income	50,381	46,003	(4,377)	149,483	141,043	(8,440)
Total Expenses	47,739	37,503	10,236	137,872	119,326	18,546
Income Less Expense	2,642	8,501	5,859	11,611	21,718	10,106

Stewardship

The stewardship committee has primarily been focused on the call committee for the new communications position. All three of us are on the call committee and that has been a big part of our focus. You will receive an update on that tonight.

We are planning an update based on quarterly results to share with the congregation. This would include a statement mailing and a status report along with encouragement for giving and joyful gratitude for the place that we are in. We have much to be thankful for and have ideas to spring into our connections.

Our new year with SAS kicks off the first week in May. We look forward to working hard and connecting all of our dots in the coming months.

God is Good!
Thanks!
Kim and team

Property and Maintenance

Good afternoon all,

Well even though we live in the same house, time as been at a minimum lately. But truly we are just addressing the small needs as they come up on the "list of fix it problems". Our biggest project will begin this week as we assess the catacombs and purge. So we will be hauling out on Saturday those items that need to go to bye bye. It is amazing how many things end up down there.

have a great day

Jess and Eric

Missions

The mission committee met via Zoom on April 14. Present were Pastor John, Diane Merrill, Jenny Van Pelt and Vicki Jackson.

We discussed the Mission Sunday events we've done in May of previous years. We will attempt to have a video to be shown during church on 4 Sundays in May. These videos will highlight some of the organizations we support through our benevolence giving.

God's Work. Our Hands Sunday is Sept. 12. We will talk with the inviting committee to see if we can work together to reach out to our local community. We discussed setting up a Feed My Starving Children event some day or early evening the week before Sept. 12.

Respectfully submitted,

Vicki Jackson