

St Stephen's Lutheran Church  
Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: September 17th, 2014/7:15 p.m.

Location: Lounge at St. Stephen's Church

Attendees (Absent): Dave Bergeson, Mike Bonk, Jessica Donahue, Brent Harms, Patrice Katzenmaier, Patty Longard, Dane McKenzie, Darcy McKenzie, Steve Morganson, Cassie Nault, Tanisha Pikula, Debbie Pirkel, Lori Ritt, Doug Schmitt, John Snider, Dan Youness, Laura Vitelli, Justin Woods, Sitakra Rakotoarivelo

Agenda

1. Devotions - Jessica Donahue
2. Adopt minutes from August Council meeting
3. Q & A on Committee Reports
4. Old Business
  - a. Alternative Worship Music Minister Hiring Committee & Candidates
  - b. Changes to sign (Steve M)
  - c. Property Project List
5. New Business:
  - a. Other New Business
6. Adjournment – Lord's Prayer

Discussion of Agenda Items:

1. Devotions (Pastor John)
  - a. Devotions given by Pastor John during temporary absence of Jessica
2. Motion to adopt August Council minutes seconded and approved by voice vote
  - a. Debbie requested that all committee reports submitted for a particular month be attached to the Council meeting minutes for that month
  - b. Commencing this month, committee reports will be attached to the council minutes
3. Q & A on Committee Reports
  - a. Youth Committee (Tanisha)
    - i. Holiday boutique will be similar to last year
    - ii. Still waiting for response/commitments from handcrafters
    - iii. Bake sale – looking to replace with a waffle breakfast
    - iv. Unsure if a chili cook-off will be held this year
    - v. Sibley homecoming parade
      - St. Stephen's will be offering hot dogs and chips for a free will offering
      - Will be held in-doors in the event of rain
  - b. Stewardship (Laura)
    - i. Committee met for first time last week
    - ii. Laura provided a summary of her background (non-profit fund raiser) and a bit of her philosophy
      - People give for impact
      - Give to make changes
      - Donors want feedback
      - People need to know what it will take to get an effort done (includes funds required) and what are the gaps
      - Stewardship needs to be a shared responsibility
    - iii. Draft plan provided (attached)
      - Pledges are lagging (actuals vs. commitments)

- Initial campaign plan outlined
  - iv. On-line giving capability is ready to go on-line
  - v. Mike commented that reserves are being used to balance budget
    - Short term (through 2015) deficit is acceptable but not sustainable over long run
    - Discussed ideas for how can we recover costs associated with Wednesday activities
  - c. Finance (Mike)
    - i. Have signed on with Vanco For Simple Giving for on-line giving
      - Template of Giving Webpage was provided during meeting
      - Very easy to add special payments
      - Have been assigned a QR code that takes one right to webpage if application is downloaded on smart phone
      - One could do auto-pay from bank, but it is more convenient for accounting to use Vanco
      - Awareness campaign to be held prior to general rollout
4. Old Business
- a. Alternative Worship Music Minister Hiring Committee & Candidates (Debbie)
    - i. Three applicants have replied to on-line position description
    - ii. Will continue to have PD posted on-line in an attempt to get additional applicants
    - iii. Interview questions being generated by hiring team for interviewing of candidates at end of month.
  - b. Changes to sign – no report given
  - c. Property Project List (Justin)
    - i. Listed projects will be prioritized by small sub-group (John, Debbie and Justin) on Wednesday, 9/24
    - ii. Kitchen freezer/refrigerator
      - Freezer is now working
      - May be an electrical circuit issue rather than freezer problem
      - Not ready yet to make a final recommendation regarding replacement of freezer and refrigerator.
5. New Business:
- a. Lutheran Mideast Development Film (John)
    - i. A film describing Lutheran church activities/missions in Mideast will be held at Riverside theater
      - 21 Oct starting at 5:00 pm
      - Meet actors/film makers over refreshments starting at 6:30
      - RSVP by 15 Oct
    - ii. Poster to be posted and announcements will be made at weekly Services
6. Adjournment – Lord's Prayer
- a. John led us in the Lord's Prayer
  - b. Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM
7. September Meeting Minute Attachments
- a. Committee Reports
    - i. Missions Committee (Patty Longard)
    - ii. Youth Committee (Darcy McKenzie)
    - iii. Stewardship (Laura Vitelli)
    - iv. Associate Pastor (Cassie Nault)
    - v. Worship (Lori Ritt)

- vi. Finance (Mike Bonk)
- b. Stewardship Draft Campaign Plan

Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 at 7:15 p.m.

Recorded and Submitted by  
Doug Schmitt,  
Council Secretary

# Attachments to September Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Missions Committee (Patty Longard)

Youth Committee (Darcy McKenzie)

Stewardship (Laura Vitelli)

Associate Pastor (Cassie Nault)

Worship (Lori Ritt)

Finance (Mike Bonk)

Stewardship Draft Campaign Plan (Laura Vitelli)

## Missions Committee Minutes (Patty Longard)

Missions Committee Meeting - Tuesday September 2nd 6:00pm

1) God's Work, Our Hands - We spent our meeting finalizing plans for God's Work Our Hands. In the end, the event was a great success! As you've seen in the Update, we had prayer warriors, we had mountains of baked goods donated and transported to the police and fire departments in thanks, we had 10 women complete 10 tie blankets to be taken to our homebound members (with enough donate fabric left over to make as many more blankets at a future date), and, with all donated sandwich supplies, 22 people joined forces to create 319 sandwiches to be distributed to the homeless in the Twin Cities through MDH 363. Thank you again to everyone for their support of this event!

Patty

## Youth Committee Report (Darcy McKenzie)

Youth Committee Meeting Report

Calendar set for entire Church school year. To follow are the highlights:

- 1) Four Youth Fundraisers scheduled: Meatball Dinner & Silent Auction 11/8, Holiday Boutique 11/15, Parent's Night Out 12/05 and Palm Sund & Youth Pancake Breakfast 3/29
- 2) Youth Sunday scheduled for November 23rd, Children's Sunday will be February 8th.
- 3) A Community Building Social Event for parents is scheduled for January 10th. Hosted by us Youth Committee co-chairs, Darcy & Dane McKenzie.

We will providing hot dogs and chips (9/19) Friday night for the Henry Sibley Homecoming Parade participants. Free will offering accepted.

Devising an ELCA Youth Trip (July 2015) Planning Committee is being contemplated.

---

***Darcy McKenzie***

***1415 Cherry Hill Rd, Mendota Heights MN 55118***

***c) 651-261-3439 h) 651-554-0572***

## Stewardship (Laura Vitelli)

St. Stephen's Stewardship

Monthly Report

September 14, 2014

- Contributions to date are at 97% of budget (\$9300 behind goal)
- Continued research and conversation with leaders about current stewardship

- Stewardship meeting September 15; discussed 2014 campaign plan
- Preparing for September 21 adult forum

### Associate Pastor Report (Cassie Nault)

Associate Pastor's Report  
September 16, 2014

**Good News:** One of our high school youth, Rebecca Steffen (daughter of Bob and Michelle Steffen), has been selected to represent our synod at the Youth Summit in Detroit this November. <http://www.elcaymnet.org/YouthSummit> Please congratulate Rebecca if you see her and pray for her as she prepares to serve the church in this way.

**Confirmation:** We welcomed 9 new students to the Confirmation class this last Wednesday and we will be confirming 10 students on October 5<sup>th</sup> at the 10:45am service. The Confirmation students will be sharing their faith statements with us in the Adult Forum on Sunday, September 28<sup>th</sup> in the sanctuary. We hope to see many of you there!

**Prayer Partners/Intergenerational Ministry:** I'm working on connecting our families with the rest of the congregation. In the past, I'd tried to connect individual students with a "prayer partner," but I've learned that gets tedious. I will be working on connecting each family in the WILD/JOY program with prayer partners (a member or family that has children in another age group). Watch for more information about this in the coming months.

**Mentors:** Several of our confirmation students are in need of mentors. If you are interested in serving in that role or know someone who is, please contact me.

**Welcoming New Members (and welcoming them!):** Pastor John and I have been talking about ways to connect our new members with the rest of the congregation...and really to connect our congregation with one another. I'm hoping to organize a welcome event (a dessert and coffee/tea in someone's home) scheduled for later this fall or very early in the new year that would connect our new members to the ministries of St. Stephen's that they might be most interested in. Let me know if you're interested in helping.

**My weekly day off:** Over the summer I ended up switching my day off to Monday. It has worked well, so I'm going to continue with that.

Peace,  
Cassie

Pastor Cassie Nault  
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church  
1575 Charlton Street West St. Paul, MN 55118  
(651) 457-6541

## Worship Committee (Lori Ritt)

St Stephen's Lutheran Church  
Worship Meeting

September 4, 2014  
7:15 p.m.

Present: Pastor Cassie, Lori Ritt  
Not Present: Mary Brunkow, Brenda Geiser

Worship Assistance:

Discussion: Have one person assigned to each service.

Saturday 5:00 pm Brenda Geiser

Sunday 8:30 Service ?

Sunday 10:45 Service ?

Person will be responsible for overseeing service. Check to see volunteers in place or put people in place for coverage. Will talk with Mary to see which service she would like.

Worship Committee will meet every other month.

Check calendar in October for upcoming training of new or refresh volunteers. Looking at Communion assistants, altar guild, lectors, ushers, sound board, etc. Will go over duties of each position for whoever comes. Need more volunteers in all areas.

Over next month – work on scheduling volunteers for October. Will incorporate new volunteers from in November/December schedules after training sessions.

Looking for new volunteers for committee – contacted nominating committee for assistance.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 at 7:15 p.m.

## Finance Committee (Mike Bonk)

The Finance Committee met on Wednesday, Sept 10. In attendance were Sue Clark, Dave Bergeson, Mike Butala, Abra Gilman and Mike Bonk.

Following is a brief recap of the meeting :

### August Financial Results

August revenue of \$27,600 was \$6,000 or 18% less than budget and was also down \$2000 from August of 2013. Envelope and plate offerings continued to trend down in August. For the year-

to-date envelope and plate offerings are \$20,000 or 7% less than plan and are also down \$10,000 or 4% from last year. The variances were partially offset by the \$12,000 special Lego Bridge campaign. Our Finance committee estimates that if the revenue trend continues we will fall an additional \$20,000 to \$25,000 short of plan for the remainder of the year. The Council will have to consider another special campaign to raise additional revenue.

August expenses of \$40,500 were \$1,500 favorable to plan and helped to offset the revenue shortfall. For the year-to-date expenses are \$3,000 or 1% less than plan

Thru August our operating deficit of \$41,000 is \$7,000 more than our planned August YTD deficit. If the revenue short fall continues our year end deficit could be \$25,000 more than plan.

#### On-line Giving

St Stephen's is now linked into Vanco's Simple Giving program and members will be able to set up a one-time donation, recurring donations and pay for special programs on-line. As of today we are still working on the St Stephen's donation page in the Vanco website. We are satisfied with Vanco's security as they are PCI level 1 compliant. Before we begin making the congregation more aware this new electronic capability we need to finalize the content on the donation page. I will bring a copy of the page to the Wednesday Council meeting for review.

Respectfully submitted  
Mike Bonk

## **Background**

In recent years, St. Stephen's has had sufficient funds to operate with its current staff and ministries. The budgets have been balanced and total contributions have been relatively flat since 2008 (increasing 2%). Securing the funds, especially annual pledges, has required a challenging annual campaign followed by a second ask.

Looking forward, there is a desire for growth in staff and ministries to fulfill the vision articulated in the strategic plan, requiring an increase in financial resources.

## **Vision**

Ample resources to offer all the ministries envisioned by St. Stephen's leaders

### 2015 Goals

150 households make annual pledges

2-3% increase in contributions over 2014 budget

\$313,000 pledged at January 1, 2015

\$403,000 total offerings

Every member of the staff and volunteer leadership is able to incorporate gap messages into conversations and presentations

8 active members of stewardship committee by 8.1.15

## **Strategies**

- Communicate with members about importance of payment of 2014 pledges, meeting contribution expectations for
- Fall/Winter Campaign for 2015
  - o Personalized solicitations with specific ask amounts
  - o Impact language
  - o Incorporate well-articulated gap and units of service
- Increased promotion of online giving options
- Stepped up efforts to acknowledge donors (e.g. additional hand-written thank you or call at time of pledge; thank you for first payment; thank you when pledge is paid off; recognition lists on website or in Update; thank you event)
- Regular reports on impact of gifts-incorporate into quarterly statements, other communications, worship
- Conduct listening sessions and one on one meetings with members throughout year • Incorporate stewardship / giving / financial messages into communications throughout the year • Training / practice at council meeting
- Evaluate annual campaign practices; assess things like timing, messaging" etc.

## **Actions**

### September

- 2015 campaign plan • Adult forum listening session
- Determine gap and units of service
- Develop theme and core messages
- Communications plan (e.g. mail, Update articles, bulletin announcements, emails, web content, social media, presentations, phone calls)

### October

- Pledge reminders with quarterly statements drop 10.14 (Combine with announcement about new online giving system? Soft asks to renew pledges for 2015 online?)
- Copywriting-letter, Update articles, bulletin announcements, emails, web content, social media
- Develop list with ask amounts
- Messaging practice for Council • Execute communications plan-2014 giving / 2015 pledging

### November

- Initial letter drops 11.3
- Implement pledge acknowledgement process
- Continued execution of communications plan, including efforts to collect on 2014 pledges and increase 2014 giving • Assess progress; adjust plan as needed

### December

- Continued execution of communications plan, including efforts to collect on 2014 pledges and increase 2014 giving • Follow-up mail / email / calling

### January

- Celebrate / report to congregation on giving / pledging and what it has made possible / will make possible