

St Stephen's Lutheran Church
Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Date/Time: 18 November 2015/Meeting called to order at 7:15 p.m.

Location: Lounge at St. Stephen's Church

Attendees (Absent): Ann Anderson, Dave Bergeson, Jessica Donahue, Beth Hostager, Patrice Katzenmaier, Dane McKenzie, Darcy McKenzie, Diane Meyers, Steve Morganson, Cassie Nault, Kathy Packer, Tanisha Pikula, Sitraka Rakotoarivelo, Lori Ritt, Doug Schmitt, Brett Scribner, John Snider, Laura Vitelli, Amy Wilson

Agenda

1. **Opening Prayer**
2. **Adoption of October minutes:** Review and adopt October council meeting minutes
3. **Q & A committee reports:**
4. **Sanctuary Renewal Follow-up on Progress:**
5. **Finance (Beth and/or Diane):**
 - a. **Recommendations for deficit reduction (preliminary projection)**
 - b. **Communication to congregation – stewardship**
 - c. **Pastor Cassie's hours**
6. **Outline congregational meeting agenda for January 2016**
7. **Adjournment: - Lord's Prayer**

Discussion of Agenda Items

1. **Opening Prayer** – Steve and Pastor John led us in opening prayers
2. **Adoption of October minutes:**
 - a. Motion was made and seconded to adopt October council meeting minutes
 - b. Minutes were approved by unanimous vote
3. **Q & A committee reports:**
 - a. Giving Tree
 - i. 21 November will be decorating the Giving Tree
 - ii. Will be writing out the blessing tags on 21 December
 - iii. Gifts need to be back by 6 December
 - b. "Let's Talk" Pot Luck
 - i. 6:00 pm, 19 November
 - ii. Muslim – Christian fellowship
 - iii. Discuss religion and violence
 - c. Meatball dinner -- Approximately 325 attendees

d. Silent Auction brought in \$2090

4. Sanctuary Renewal Follow-up on Progress:

- a. Doors are on order
 - i. Look at hardware this Friday
 - ii. Will be completed before Christmas
- b. Have not yet started the Children's Prayer area
- c. Roof leaking
 - i. Have been having leaking along center aisle front of sanctuary
 - ii. Contractors have been called and were on-site does not appear to be leaking today
 - iii. Installed copper flashing around cross
- d. Having plumbing issues in Noreen Center
 - i. Plumbers were out and corrected the backed-up drain problem
- e. Rodent issues
 - i. Received one quote but it was deemed to be too expensive
 - ii. Members of the congregation have volunteered to place traps and remove any rodents; we will try this approach
- f. Lights and Electrical
 - i. Some complaints that it is too dark
 - ii. We are continuing to work the issue
 - iii. Lights are on order
 - iv. Working on fuse panel
- g. Sound – no status update

5. Finance

- a. Recommendations for deficit reduction (preliminary projection)
 - i. Trying to get to balanced budget position over a three year time frame – currently looking at \$70K deficit
 - ii. Currently are right on track for expenses
 - iii. Add some information in the Update bulletin reflecting the need for additional contributions to reduce deficit
- b. Communication to congregation – stewardship
 - i. Members to speak in front of the congregation on how St. Steven's has affected their lives and/or to explain what things are coming in the near future
 - ii. Letter was sent to congregation donors on 11/16 thanking for giving and explaining the need for increased giving
 - 1. Pastor John will be calling and thanking our biggest givers
 - 2. It is important to both ask and to also share how St. Steven's is important in our lives

C. Pastor Cassie's hours

- i. Cassie has requested that she be allowed to reduce her hours now to 80% and hopefully to 50% next summer; this was approved by the Executive Committee
 - ii. Also will have 6 week maternity leave that would start end of January, but a potential 8 week leave is also being discussed.
 - iii. Cassie will explain to the congregation in the next update why and how she would like to change her involvement
- d. Each committee needs to identify 2016 budget requirements from each by December 1

6. Outline for 24 January 2016 Congregational Meeting

- a. End of Year Results
- b. Explanation of Finance committee recommendations/actions to reduce deficit
- c. Adoption of the 2016 budget
- d. Slide presentation/short video of changes that have been made over the year
 - i. Report by committee chairs
 - ii. Improvements
 - iii. Under construction elements
 1. Stewardship
 2. Website
 - iv. New members
 - v. Wednesday night activities
 - vi. Bridge music
 - vii. Detroit Rally
 - viii. Minnesota without Hunger event

7. Other Items

- a. Prayer cards – do we want to continue?
- b. Use social media to connect, as well, i.e. on birthdays
- c. Time and Talent sheet from Dale Nelson (new member); please look at it and see if you can make use of his talents

8. Adjournment: - Lord's Prayer

- a. Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm
- b. Next meeting will be the Christmas get-together to be held on December 16, 2015 at 7:00 to 8:30 pm at either Jessica's or Brett's home

The following Committee Reports were received this month and are included with these meeting minutes:

- Pastor's Report
- Associate Pastor's Report
- Worship Music
- Fellowship
- Youth Director's Report
- Evangelism
- Missions
- Finance
- Stewardship

Committee Reports not received this month:

- Property and Maintenance

Recorded and Submitted by
Doug Schmitt,
Council Secretary

Attachments to November 2015 Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Committee Reports:

Pastor's Report (Pastor John Snider)

November 16, 2015

1. **Lutheran Mideast Development's** special Request from the Syrian Village of Kobani. They have asked our help to keep them in their village and avoid the refugee stream to Europe. They need immediate help. We are sending out requests for help to our supporters and to the Synod through Bishop Lull. It is a unique opportunity for us to respond right to the heart of one of our world's greatest human challenges and witness to kindness and love through a Lutheran Christian organization.
2. **Stewardship:** Under Construction. Weekend December 5/6. Letters to all members. Presentations at worship about St. Stephen's being Under Construction around Youth; sanctuary; and hopefully Missions.
3. **"Let's Talk"** Muslim-Christian Potluck here at St. Stephen's, **Thursday, November 19**
6:00-6:30 Pot Luck (remember, no pork dishes please!)
6:30-6:40 Christian Prayers in sanctuary; Muslim Prayers in Lounge
6:40-7:00 Remarks by Dr. Abdull Dardry, Dr. Nadia's husband and former member of Egyptian Parliament
7:00-8:00 Open Discussion including talk about religion and violence.
4. **Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening** by Cynthia Bourgeault. We had 32 participants and an additional 7 people purchase the book. Many found it very powerful, me among them, and we'll continue to draw attention to the process.
5. **Minnesota without Poverty.** This wonderful organization, served for years by Mark Rogosheske and our Mission Gifts, held a fundraising gala which St. Stephen's high schoolers attended. They were magnificent. They visited with Vice President Mondale, were very respectful and brought encouragement to the entire event. You would have been as proud as I was.
6. **New Members** will be received at worship services on the weekend of December 12/13.

Associate Pastor's Report (Pastor Cassie Nault)

November Associate Pastor's Report

Confirmation/Wednesday Evenings:

- I fell ill this last week, so missed this past Wednesday, but I believe **our numbers have ticked up** since the beginning of the school year (someone told me that we had a "full house" this past Wednesday). Sitraka has done a great job

coordinating the meals and servants for those meals in a cost-effective matter; but extra donations for the meals are always welcome, as some of our families really do struggle to make ends meet. A special thank you to Lynda Bergerson and Shriley Eisfelder for their continued volunteer work in the kitchen.

Looking forward: **on Wednesday, December 2nd**, we'll have a special **Advent Worship Evening from 6-7pm** in the sanctuary. The worship service will be geared toward students in preschool through 8th grade and **parents are expected to attend.**

- Throughout **January, Wednesday evenings will be worship-oriented**, with the weekly lessons folded into our worship and small group time together.

Worship

- Advent is coming! One more Sunday of the current liturgical setting and then we're into a season of preparation—anticipating the arrival of Jesus in the manger.
- Christmas services: we are in need of ushers and other worship assistants on December 24th and 25th—if you are willing to help, please contact Lori Ritt, Pastor John, or me! We want to make sure we are as welcoming as possible at our most highly attended worship days of the year.

Discipleship

- The high school girls discipleship group had their first meeting on Sunday, November 8th. We had 5 students and 1 parent in attendance. We will be meeting monthly for service and fellowship opportunities and we are working on starting a devotional practice together. I'm most encouraged that this group has suggested trying to organize an international mission trip for Summer 2017. Sitraka and I are in conversation with the synod group that connects us to the Lutheran Church in Guatemala for us to explore this possibility.

Worship Music Committee (Lori Ritt)

Worship Music Committee

Thursday Nov 5

Members present: Cleone Swanberg, Cassie Nault, Lori Ritt

1) Talked about banners and candles for All Saints. Well received. People were moved by having the names and being able to light a candle for their loved ones. Added names from Pueblo de Fe, they were not able to have All Saints last year so their list included the last two years.

2) Supplies - need to check on baptismal cloths, communion supplies. How are we in relation to end of year? Everything looks normal.

3) Fall decorations to be put up before Sat/Sun Nov 7/8 to be up through Wednesday Nov 25 Thanksgiving Eve service - apple/pumpkin treats.

4) We discussed Christmas decorations starting Nov 28/29 with Advent wreath, tree with blue ornaments, etc. - looking at adding stars for remaining weeks before Christmas. Changing blue ornaments to red for Christmas. Not confirmed plans yet.

5) Still looking for Epiphany star in January (January 10, 17, 24, 31, Feb 7) - Have some ideas just need to implement.

6) Discussed the possibility of the Bridge moving to the lounge and how it would impact the volunteers and us. Not confirmed.

7) Lent - Ash Wednesday, February 10,

Palm Sunday, March 20,

Maundy Thursday, March 24,

Good Friday, March 25,

Easter March 27

Lori Ritt

Fellowship (Patrice Katzenmaier)

Thursday, Nov. 5, 2015

Attended: Joanna Mead, Kathy Cannif, Diane Johnson, Patrice Katzenmaier

Nov. fellowship servers are filled. I need one more person for 11/29.

11/8- This Sunday the Woodbury Coral is putting on a concert and we need to supply goodies for a reception. If you can bring please contact Kathy Cannif. Also, need servers and clean up help. Joanna has volunteered.

11/22- New Members. I will order a cake. Kathy will pick up Cub order along with apple cider for the Thanksgiving eve. (Secretary's Note: per Jan Perkins email this has changed to 12/5 and 12/6)

11/25- Bring TG eve treats and set up coffee at 6:30.

12/13 -We discussed the cinnamon rolls for the youth hristmas program on 12/13 @ 10:45. Some of us were unaware that Rhodes makes ready to bake rolls in a bag,

frosting included. Cub carries them. We each need to bring 1 doz. baked from home. Have at church by 9:15 or so. We need cleanup help and dish washing for this event. I will talk to Sitraka.

Patrice Katzenmaier, Fellowship chair

Youth (Sitraka Rakotoarivelo)

November Youth Director's Report

The Youth & Education Committees are always looking for more ways to engage our students every week. On November 6-8, we had the opportunity to attend an Urban Immersion retreat in Minneapolis. These retreats are focused on the effects of poverty in the state of Minnesota as well as the world. This was a VERY good retreat. We had fun, but we also have the opportunity to have really hard conversations on what poverty is doing in our neighborhoods. There will be more opportunities for our Sr. High students and families to advocate for those who are truly in need.

Our website is going through a transitional phase. If you go to ststephenswsp.org, you will see updated information under *Ministries > Children's Ministry*. We are thinking of ways we can inform others about our programming, and this is a great opportunity to be a part of a video we are producing for our ministry pages.

Wednesday News

CKC Good Foods have been providing our Wednesday evening meals and they have been doing a fantastic job! Going to this has alleviated pressure to our volunteers who have done it in the past. It takes a lot of hours to prepare meals for 50+ people, so going through CKC has really helped ease our Wednesdays. **An important reminder: Our meals are \$5, but if do not have the means to pay for the whole meal we will not turn you away, please join us, we insist :)**

To learn more about them go to ckcgoodfoods.com

Discount Card Fundraiser

We will be doing a discount card fundraiser starting in December to remedy some of the costs of our Wednesday night meals. Our goal is to sell at least 100, and if we sell all 200 cards we will have more than enough to cover the cost of our Wednesday meals. They will be \$20 a piece. Please consider purchasing and informing your family members, friends, etc. about this fundraiser.

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Holiday Boutique

December 6, 2015

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 9:00am - 2:00pm

Come check out cool stuff in the Fellowship Hall in between services! And better yet around lunch time there will be a chili cook-off. For anyone interested in joining in on the fun contact Sitraka at sitraka@ststephenswsp.org or calling 612-231-3490.

All proceeds to go supporting our Children's Ministries. Without your generous support this ministry wouldn't be effective, so we say THANK YOU for your continued support.

Children's Christmas Program

December 13, 10:45am in the Fellowship Hall

St. Stephen's Lutheran Church

Our annual Children's Christmas program will be something you don't want to miss! We have the opportunity to see and experience the birth of Jesus. Even though this is a very familiar story to all of us, there is always something different that happens to us every year. Come experience the story of when Love was born.

As part of the morning we will be selling baked goods for people to buy so if you want to make something please bring them the morning of December 13th. All proceeds go to our Faith Formation classes.

Bouncy House Fundraiser

December 30, 2015

Our first ever Bouncy House Fundraiser at St. Stephen's. Come drop off your kids for an amazing time at the Noreen Activity Center. More information to come.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Children's Christmas Program

December 13, 10:45am, Fellowship Hall

This is a very important event at St. Stephen's. What a fun way to get to know the children more as well as giving you an opportunity to develop your gifts and talents for the production. We are doing something a little different this year. Our Christmas program will incorporate production elements (videos, music, lights, etc.) so we need your help. **We will be need stage managers, prop managers, time cue managers, and technical assistants.** If you have a heart for drama and live production, or would like to learn more about it, please let Sitraka know by contacting him at sitraka@ststephenswsp.org or by calling the church at 651-457-6541.

Intergenerational Worship

Wednesdays in January from 6pm - 7pm

This will be an intergenerational worship experience for everyone at St. Stephen's. Instead of having our regular Faith Formation classes, we will be worshipping in a different way. There will be singing, prayer, small group discussion and encouragement. There is a lot of planning that needs to take place and how awesome would it be if different age groups took part in putting this together? So, if you are itching to help contact Sitraka by e-mailing at sitraka@ststephenswsp.org or Pastor Cassie at cassie@ststephenswsp.org.

Family Lock-in

January 2-3, 2016

Celebrate the New Year with a fabulous family lock-in. But of course this will not be able to happen without YOU! We will need to plan this fun event. If you are interested contact Darcy McKenzie by e-mailing darcy.mckenzie@comcast.net.

Sitraka Rakotoarivelo

Director of Children and Youth Ministry
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, West Saint Paul

"He must become greater; I must become less." John 3:

Evangelism (Steve Morganson)

1. We have changed the scope of the Bring a friend To Church day to a five month program obtained by Roger from The Lutheran Church of the Master in Lakewood CO.
2. Roger agreed to check if his daughter Stephanie would agree to be a facilitator.
3. Roger agreed to set up a planning meeting with his daughter sometime during the day
4. Two welcome packs delivered this month.

Regards

Steve

Missions (Patty Longard/Ann Anderson)

Blessing Tree (Ann Anderson)

DEADLINE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6 @ NOON

We have received our families and can now begin the 2015 **Blessing Tree** program -at full-speed ahead! We are truly hoping you can plan some *early shopping*; as always, we have a **tight turn-around time** for program fulfillment.

Delivery of the gifts is required by Monday, December 7, so we need your chosen gift to arrive by noon on Sunday, December 6. The tree will be up before Thanksgiving, and decorated with the gift tags on Saturday, November 21.

If you are able to help on Saturday, 11/21 from 1pm – 3:00 pm with writing tags and setting up the tree, **or on Sundays, 11/22, 11/29 or 12/6** with staffing the information table, we would love the assistance! Contact Patty or Larry if you can help in some way (see below).

Our **Blessing Tree** supports families in need thru the 360 Communities “Armful of Love” program. Armful of Love helps communities connect with families to provide not only gifts, but also hope along the path to self-sufficiency. It is a great opportunity for us to serve and to send the God’s message of love and hope. On the Blessing Tree you will find a variety of gift items for various people – children to adults – and a wide variety of ages, needs and gift options, including gift cards for food. We are excited about fulfilling this opportunity for generosity and stewardship.

As always, we could use the help of some “*Blessed Bees*” to make this a success. Please consider if you can be a Blessed Bee by helping with one (or more) of these roles:

- **HOT: Writing out Blessing Tags** for the tree (11/21 – 1:00 to 3:00pm)
- **HOT: Setting up and decorating the Blessing Tree** (11/21 – 1:00 to 3:00pm)
- **HOT: Help at the info table** for a rotation during the coming Saturday/Sunday services
- **Throughout fulfilment time: Sorting presents into ages and categories & updating the gift inventory**
- **Dec 6: Finalizing family gift sets – Noon to 2pm**
- **Dec 6 or 7 (*depending on weather and availability of helpers): Delivering gifts to Armful of Love by 6 pm**

We have done this the past two years with an amazing amount of support and love. If you can or wish to help out in some way, let Patty or Larry Longard (plongard@gmail.com or [651.224.1211](tel:651.224.1211)) know.

Finance Committee (Diane Meyers)

The Finance committee met on Thursday, November 5th. Members present included Sue Clark, Debbie Pickl, Dave Bergeson, Pastor John, Mike Bonk, Abra Gillman, Beth Hostager and Diane Meyers.

October Financials Results

The YTD October deficit of \$86,412 was right on plan with the YTD Budget.

October income of \$31,338 was \$2753 lower than the budgeted amount, mainly on the General Envelopes.

Expenses were favorable by \$2629 relative to the budget, mainly in the Property and Maintenance.

2016 Budget

Each committee should provide the Finance committee their 2016 budget changes by December 1st.

Other Discussion Items:

The committee agreed not to continue to repay \$825 to the Malmberg memorial for the 1/10 of the 2010 property assessment.

Sanctuary Improvements - Where the funds are coming from:

Doors	\$9,400	Capital Reserve Fund
Sound System	\$23,200	Holy Trinity Sale/ Anonymous Gift
Lighting & Children's area	\$ 4,400	Anonymous Gift.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Hostager and Diane Meyers, Finance co -chairs

Stewardship

11.16.15

- We kicked off the stewardship season with a discussion of "why St. Stephen's?" during the adult forum on November 1.
- The theme is "Under Construction." Thank you to Pastor Cassie for preaching on this topic earlier in the fall and providing inspiration.
- A letter was sent to envelope holders 11.16. Thank you to Abra, Jan, and Debbie for assistance with the mailing.
- Pastor John is coordinating Temple Talks for three weekends beginning weekend of Nov. 14-15. Speakers will be asked to talk about what is "Under Construction" at St. Stephen's.
- We are planning personal solicitation of some members to request larger gifts.
- Commitment weekend will be December 5-6.
- We'll assess the need for additional communication the first week of December.

Laura Vitelli
651-274-4994

Property and Maintenance Committee (Amy Wilson)