

**St. Stephens Lutheran Church
Congregational Meeting
January 29, 2017**

Call to order, Quorum confirmed, Meeting called to order at 10:35

Opening Prayer, Pastor John opened with a prayer of thanks for all, noted new location in Fellowship Hall.

Review and adopt minutes from previous, Motion to approve: Jim Packer, second: Dave Paton

Summary/Recap of 2016, President Donohue noted the following developments in 2016:

- Pastor Cassie's departure for the good of her family
- Needs assessment in process for staff being considered for implementation for H2 2017.
- Stewardship emphasis will be ongoing. Strong encouragement for members to return pledge cards if they have not done so.
- Member input: More than one reference made to "pledgeless" stewardship as has been used successfully elsewhere.
- Post-It exercise held in May considered as well as survey results.

Strategy Update/Survey results, Strategic Leader Debbie Pirkel reviewed what members have been relaying in terms of what is important to them and noted a mere 43 surveys returned. Debbie strongly encourages member participation in the survey.

Youth & Family update, Sitraka specifically recognized Jeff Kubat and the rest of the Men of St. Stephens (MOSS) for their continued dedication to the meatball dinner which was successful again this year with proceeds going to send those to Camp Wapogasset that may not have been able to go financially. The youth continue to strive to connect St. Stephen's to the youth of our community with Wednesday night services becoming increasingly a draw to the youth as well as continued efforts to engage families of same.

2016 Financial Update, Treasurer Dave Bergeson referenced 2016 as being another deficit year after several in a row. Dave mentioned that in his opinion the reserves had reached a "danger zone" in terms of the church's ability to continue to run these deficits. Approximately \$200,000 in accumulated deficits in trailing years mean we need to become more aggressive in cost containment and stewardship. Expenses had dropped generally in 2016 but HVAC repairs presented a significant and unanticipated expense. This factor caused the church budget to fall short of the planned budget deficit of \$52,000 to approx. \$56,000.

2017 Budget Presentation, Finance Chair Beth Hostager and Finance committee member Diane Meyers presented the budget for 2017. While expenses have been prudently managed and have been generally declining, the income being received has also at a similar rate. The "fix" to the deficit in 2016 was proposed to have been covered by removing the shortfall from the land sale missions budget (missions committee had received 10% of the proceeds). A handful of objections were heard to this approach. Members expressed their disappointment in this approach given the church's commitment to outside

missions. After much discussion including impassioned comments from Joanna Mead and others, Bill Johnson asked the President for the floor. Mr. Johnson suggested he would like to “change the conversation” as he feels that too much has been focused on what we can’t do and he wanted to focus on that which we can. To that end, Bill and Jane Johnson generously pledged an additional \$50,000 to their pledge for 2017. This was followed by an equally generous increase in her commitment from Joanna Mead. There was enthusiasm in this part of the meeting and the congregation was encouraged to prayerfully consider their own 2017 pledge. The 2017 budget was accepted with motion and second from Bruce Meyers and Jim Packer respectfully.

Foundation Report: Foundation President Paton reviewed 2016 as a good year for the foundation had grown over 10% due both to investment results and the generosity of the families of those that had passed in 2016 in naming the S.S. Foundation their memorial of choice...though it was noted that the Foundation is a worthy recipient of member generosity for most any occasion. Paton also referenced the most recent foundation purchase...the replacement of the auxiliary speakers in the Sanctuary. Paton noted that giving to the Foundation has numerous tax benefits as well. Members of the Foundation Board, specifically Kathy Canniff, Jane Johnson (Secretary), Ron Nelson, as well as de facto members Brett Scribner (as Council VP) and Pastor John Snider (as Senior Pastor) were recognized.

Old Business: None

New Business: A call was made for 6 delegates to the Synod Conference Assembly and 3 to the Synod Assembly. Jenny Van Pelt, Dan Mikel, Sarri, Mark Rogosheske, Bruce Meyers all volunteered to these events to be firmed up later.

Pastor’s comments, Pastor John referenced a line from a recent movie that asked “What kind of people are we?” Pastor John stated that this meeting meant that we were now talking about what we can do! We are givers and Christ’s Love is present here. We are called to have Christ shine...let your light so shine.

Closing Prayer, Pastor John closed with a prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 12:05.