

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Congregational Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2023

Present: Pastor Steven Mentz, Zac Huffman, President, Linda Huffman, Dorothy Clark, Judy Parler, Kerry and Donna Willingham, Del and Patrice Jenstrom, Ron and Kate Hausner, Erin Mitchell, Jaxon and Dana Brown, Al Oetken, Jackie Blondin, Cyndie Dixon, Chad Mitchell, Patrick Dugan, Bernice Prescott, Linda Craig, Diane Seglehorst, Penny Courtney, Madonna Howard, Jane Feltsentreger, Carole Kerr, Sadie Becoate, Jerry Kane

Zac called the meeting to order at 10:55am.

Pastor Muntz opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of June 2023

Motion (Diane) / Seconded Madonna / Approved (by all).

Treasurer's Report

A discussed ensued regarding the Treasurer's Report.

It was suggested that the Altar flowers be put in as a balance sheet fund item.

Zac explained the totals of both offerings and expenses.

He noted that the budget is based on actuals for this year and foreseen expenses in 2024. A question mark on a budget line item indicates the actual is unknown at this time.

Our new Pastor's salary is not yet known, but likely will be in the neighborhood of \$100K/year. It depends years of service, experience and education. Pastor Mentz suggested that we use this figure for all future planning.

The 2024 budget will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly in June. Zac noted that, based on 2023 actuals through November and December projections, projected 2024 income verses expenses will likely put us in the Red.

Zac reported that the new Financial Planning Team decided, with Board approval, to move \$280,000.00 from LCEF to a Fidelity Money Market account to receive a better interest rate.

The Board also approved the transfer of \$100K in December 2023 from our United Bank checking to a new LCEF 2 1/2 yr., 6.25% term note. The November checking account balance was \$186K, earning little interest.

Treasurer's Report Approval: Motion (Penny) / Seconded (Madonna) / Approved (by all).

Slate of Officers:

A Slate of Officers was presented for approval which included the extension of the terms of Zac - President, Bernice - VP and Cyndie - Secretary.

It was discussed that this ensures continuity during the Pastoral Call.

It was noted that Chad Muntz has joined the board to replace Carol Cook, who finished her term.

Del Jenstrom noted that the congregation should be notified of openings on the board.

Zac announced that according to our by-laws, only current board members are eligible to be Pres. or Vice President.

Madonna reminded the attendees that that bylaw was included to ensure that an officer knew the business of the board as well as the church policies in order to ensure a smoother transition.

Bernice suggested that if we will have vacancies on the Board, the announcement should be made to the congregation now.

Diane suggested that we hold up the vote today to open the floor to volunteers who wish to serve on the board. Jaxon asked if the officer could be a *current* or *prior* board member?

Penny stated that we need clarification of the policy and expressed concern about all officers leaving in December, 2024.

Zac suggested that the president and vice-president switch positions for continuity.

Diane expressed concern that the situation does not provide "new blood".

Chad inquired if the congregation elected the officers.

Jane expressed she thinks it is a good idea to retain the three current officers for continuity, especially as we look for a new pastor.

Motion (Diane) / Seconded (Patrice) / Approved (all) to accept slate as proposed.

Motion (Diane) / Seconded (Madonna) that we publicize the policy, open nominating and hold a special election in Jan. if anyone wants to join the board.

Motion (Chad) / Seconded (Patrice) / Approved (all) suggesting that we publish policy and vote at June meeting instead of January

Patrice asked if the policy and open position will be publicized.

Del inquired if the new officer has to be on the board for more than a year.

Financial Report:

Jeri Delahanty, Integrity Tax, (Michelle Crislip) generates our monthly financial report.

Currently, the Financial Secretary position is vacant, but not necessary. The majority of offerings come from online giving. Sadie and Linda count the weekly offerings and post the transactions.

A new Financial Team has been established with lead, Jerry Kane, Chad Muntz, Dana Brown and Zac Huffman.

Chad is writing a financial policy statement. Jerry is taking the lead of the Financial Team.

The team had multiple meetings with a Fidelity financial planner beginning in August to create our new money market and Teklu Memorial Scholarship accounts.

Pastor Mentz Report:

Pastor expressed how much he has enjoyed serving at St. Paul's.

He congratulated us on the number of programs we conduct for the size of our church. He noted that this is a strength. He suggested that we should be sure we keep up with fellowship activities as this is how new members and visitors get connected, mingle and associate.

TEAM REPORTS:

Congregational Profile Team – Diane

Congregational Profile Team members: Diane Segelhorst (Chair), Donna Howard, Judy Tribby, Dan and Erin Mitchell, Chad and Andrea Muntz, Bernice Prescott, Kate Hausner, Penny Courtney, Amanda and David Sturgeon, Zac Huffman

Congregational Profile Committee Purpose: Write a Congregational Profile (CP) to assist the SED LCMS in preparing a call list for St. Paul's.

Process:

We met throughout the summer, beginning in mid June and completing our task in August. Following a two week comment period by the congregation, we produced our final Congregational Profile, and it was submitted to President Harmon at the Southeast District on September 29, 2023.

Call Committee – Diane

Call Committee team members: Diane Segelhorst (Chair), Bernice Prescott, Patrick Dugan, Amanda Sturgeon, Andrea Muntz, Del Jenstrom, Jerry Kane and Zac Huffman(non-voting). Also consulting: Pastor Matt Hilpert (Circuit visitor), Pastor Stephen Mentz (Vacancy Pastor)

Process:

- Call Committee was formed in October 2023.
- All pledged to represent the Congregation views, not our own individual viewpoints.
- Reviewed the Congregational Profile, the St. Paul's strategic plan, and the results of the visioning session for the church held in May 2023.
- Formulated interview questions in advance of seeing candidate Pastor information
- Received a call list on November 3rd! 10 Candidates on list.
- Circuit Visitor contacted each prospective candidate to determine whether they would be open to a call at this time. Eight said yes, one said no, one could not be reached.
- Reviewed Self-Evaluation Tool (SET) and Pastor's Information Form (PIF) for each Candidate. Committee evaluated each candidate based on the criteria in our CP.
- Contacted our top three candidates to ask if they were interested in speaking to us about our vacancy. One said no, one never responded, and the third has since taken another call.

- Based on these responses, the Call Committee decided to also contact our next two candidates to try to set up interviews in early December as well. We have interviewed one of the two, and have the other interview scheduled for December 11.

We will continue to keep the congregation updated. Please keep this process in your prayers.

Outreach – Bernice

The Outreach Team has again had a very busy year, serving both St. Pauls ' congregation and the community. Most service activities have included contributions from many members of the congregation:

~~ St. Paul's participated in Winter Relief, a multi-church effort to provide shelter, meals and an array of services and commodities to approximately 30 homeless persons for an assigned week during the cold months. St. Paul's provided breakfasts, lunches and dinners, plus many large bags of toiletries, hygiene supplies and underwear, with the Quilter contributing a quilt for each person. This year when we delivered these goods to Seton, where the individuals are housed, volunteers there still remembered Pastor Teklu with admiration – during Winter Relief 2022 he not only said the table grace, but visited and prayed individually with each guest.

~~ Members of the congregation contributed generously to the CCCC food pantry; each month we delivered a considerable quantity of staple food items to the pantry. Additionally, for Thanksgiving our people on short notice contributed 13 family food bags, plus additional items as well as cash and gift cards. I must note that at every delivery to the pantry (maintained and operated by volunteers at Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church), I was greeted with great appreciation for the generosity of the people of St. Paul's. Let's continue to overwhelm them going forward, as hunger needs in our community are increasing.

~~ We continued to prepare and deliver every month a care bag to each homebound member and many individuals with short-term hospital, rehab or at home situations. The monthly total bags ranged from 8 to 13. Bags included the newsletter; quarterly Portals of Prayer; publications from Concordia Publishing House on topics such as the divine service, Christmas, Easter, Holy Communion, etc.; activity books; holiday cards; a variety of snacks (very popular!), beautiful quilted items made by the Dorothy; craft items from the Sunday School kids; and more. Easter brought potted flowers and Christmas a poinsettia. Most importantly, the care bags tell these members their church loves them and is praying for them and provide an opportunity for at least one church member to visit each person each month. Family members of recipients have expressed how much this gesture meant to the recipients and to them.

~~ With the Vacation Bible School team and contributions from the congregation, we jointly procured school supplies and packed 115 school supply kits and delivered them to the Lutheran World Relief warehouse for shipment wherever needed around the globe.

~~ The Empty Nesters again contributed a sizable quantity of new toys for the children of families in need; these were delivered to the Lutheran Mission Society for Christmas distribution. Included was a bicycle that will bring happiness to some child this season!

~~ The congregation "adopted" three families to assist for Christmas. These are families selected for us by the Lutheran Mission Society. Members purchased or provided funds for every need identified, as well as \$500 in grocery/gift cards! The gifts have all been sorted by family, packed, and delivered to the LMS.

Many thanks to all who contributed to these and more outreach activities this year and to the hard-working members of the Outreach team: Sandi Corwin, Penny Courtney, Judy Tribby, and our newest member, Amanda Sturgeon.

We are currently updating the church brochure to use as an outreach tool and plan in 2024 to develop ideas to better reach the community of families that needs the Lord.

Education – Cyndie

Team: Cyndie Dixon, Sunday School: Erin Mitchell, Youth: Chad and Andrea Muntz

There are several educational opportunities for adults being offered at St. Paul's. Pastor Mentz is leading, "Lutherism 101" during the Adult Forum hour on a Sunday morning before the Worship Service. It is a refresher course for mature Lutherans as well as people new to Lutheranism. The main reference for the course is Luther's Catechism.

On a Friday night, congregation members can attend a study of Romans. This is a virtual course under the leadership of Paul Koch. He sends the Zoom link to attendees for them to tune in. It is a wonderful way to wind down from a hectic work week.

The entire congregation participated in a School Kit drive to benefit Lutheran World Relief. Some of the materials were purchased using Thrivent cards amounting to \$500. The congregation contributed a plethora of supplies so we could fill 115 school kits! The kits were assembled by 26 multigenerational members of the congregation. Madonna Howard, Judy Tribby, Bernice Prescott and Cyndie Dixon delivered the kits to the LWR warehouse in New Windsor, Md.

The Trunk or Treat event, held on October 29, was a successful event. Approximately 240 kids attended the event to get a free pumpkin, make crafts, enjoy a dance troop performance, and collect treats from 12 trunks! A big thank you to the 38 members of the congregation who made this community outreach possible, especially Bernice and Bob Prescott, who drove to Westminster to purchase the pumpkins! Again, \$500.00 of Thrivent Action cards were used to purchase the pumpkins and some of the crafts.

Please be aware that Thrivent members have the opportunity to receive funds through, not your personal account. In the past, we have used these funds for Vacation Bible School as well as Trunk or Treat. We would also like to use them to fund the Care Bag Ministry for shut-ins. There are several congregational members that can give you guidance as to how to obtain them.

Sunday School – Erin

Sunday School:

- Toddler time had 3 successful meetings with 4-5 children, plan to continue as long as Madonna and Donna are willing to teach
- "Sunday school to go" was introduced with devotional books for families dispersed in October. All 10 books were picked up.
- Wax museum is coming up at Adventpalooza. Sign up in the narthex if you are interested in playing a nativity character.
- Plan to finish the curriculum we started last year this winter and move to a new program to finish the year
- Music opening has been very successful and the kids love learning to play instruments and singing
- Two service projects completed: pumpkins for Thanksgiving and bookmarks Christmas for our homebound member care packages. We will also do something for Valentine's and Easter, tbd. Thank you to Bernice for this opportunity!

Youth – Andrea and Chad Muntz:

Since resuming in September, Youth group has consistently had 3-4 youth attending per week.

- They began their Chronological Bible Study, and are enjoying learning about the scientific support for events in the Old Testament. They added a Bible history poster to the youth room that is quite impressive in detail.
- They planned a fall fellowship evening, but got rained out.
- They are all participating in Adventpalooza.
- They identified and planned out a service project, Bags of Hope. They applied for a Kid Kindness Grant, but were not selected for funding.

In the coming year,

- They will continue progressing through the Old Testament of the Chronological Bible Study.
- They will present their service project, Bags of Hope, to the congregation for assistance and support.
- They will plan a spring and perhaps winter fellowship event.
- They will participate in St Paul's Winter Relief efforts.

Fellowship – Jen

Thank you to my small but mighty team of Sadie, Carol, and Penny. We greatly appreciate all of the extra help and support we have on the day of events (moving furniture, bringing food, helping to clean up). Thank you all for your patience this year as I try to come up to speed heading up this team.

3rd & 4th Quarters:

July – Corky Godboldte funeral reception

November – Pie social following our Thanksgiving service. We served 8 pies to over 20 and we had just enough pie to send home with a few people.

December

- Advent by Candlelight. Although it was a smaller crowd (about 23) than in the past, it was a warm and friendly group. We had great fellowship, a wonderful speaker, and of course lot of great treats. It was suggested that next year we look at having it in the afternoon to accommodate those who are not able to drive at night.
- December 9th. Supported the Messiah Sing a long by providing/serving cookies and coffee/hot chocolate
- December 17th. Support Advent-palooza by serving snacks and drinks.
- December 31st. After the service on December 31st, join us for cookies, hot chocolate, and coffee and savor the last of the Christmas holiday.

2024 – 1st and 2nd Quarters

March – Would like to plan an Easter brunch/potluck.

May/June – High school graduation recognitions (if any)

Property – Zac:

Property – Zac Huffman for John Segelhorst

The Property Team consists of:

John Segelhorst – Chair, Diane Segelhorst, Zac Huffman, Patrick Dugan, Del Jenstrom, Patrice Jenstrom and Craig Silbert

There were no major projects during January - November, 2023. There are no major projects targeted through June 2024. The Property Team continues to address minor day to day issues as they occur.

June - November 2023 Completed:

- Water filtration system repaired
- HVAC system maintenance (Matrix Mechanical) performed
- Lawn mower replaced with newer model Honda self-propelled
- Narthex bottled water dispenser system installed
- Electric sign panel (East side) circuit board replaced
- Faulty West side parking lot and security lights replaced

To Do - 2024:

- Grounds clean up, leaf raking
- Mulch all flower / shrub beds
- Rewire baseboard heating plant

Tech – Diane:

Many thanks to the members of the Tech team who help every single week to present the services in church and stream them online. Members are Diane Segelhorst, Jen Houck, Stephen Wise, Patrick Dugan, Erin and Avery Mitchell, Steve Orozco, Gabe Hilliard and Zac Huffman.

Ongoing tasks:

- Create weekly announcements (Erin Mitchell)
- Mentor Susan in creating weekly Planning Center services and Proclaim slides for services (Diane Segelhorst)
- Report music selections to appropriate licensing authorities (Erin)
- Schedule weekly and special live streams (Diane)
- Schedule volunteers for tech booth (Jen Houck)
- Update outdoor sign (Diane)

Projects completed or in progress as of December 10, 2023:

- Ongoing maintenance of existing equipment
- Repaired outside electronic sign
- Incorporated prerecorded accompaniment into sound board

Projects planned for 1st/2nd quarters 2024:

- Provide sound to nursery
- Replace ancient streaming computer with new computer.
- Purchase vocal mics for choral sound

Website – Patrice:

Team Members: Patrice Jenstrom (chair), Del Jenstrom, Cyndie Dixon

Q23 Activities/Accomplishments

- Church Google Calendar Invite rolled out and publicized ○ People can now add the church calendar to their devices by requesting an invite by emailing web@stpaulscroNon.com ✓ Website & Planning Center/Church Center updates and cleanup done ✓ Sponsored a St. Paul's team/group photo contest for the purposes of promoting team spirit and for updating the website with creative and attention grabbing photos that hopefully will move people to want to join in

1st & 2nd Q24 Plans

- Announce the photo contest results
- Update the website with photos
- Consider adding a suggestion box to the website where people can submit suggestions for the website or church in general
- Continue to update the website to keep it fresh, inviting, simple, and useful

Worship – Jane:

Members for the Worship Team are Donna Willingham (organist and music), Bernice Prescott (Altar Guild chair), Sandi Corwin, (schedules acolytes), Diane Segelhorst (Tech Chair), David and Amanda Sturgeon (Contemporary service music), Kate Hausner, Carol Cook, Pastor Mentz (Interim Pastor), and Jane Felsentreger (schedules Pastoral Assistants, ushers, Children Message presenters, and chair of the team).

(Since Bernice Prescott and Diane Segelhorst will be giving separate reports, I will not include them in mine.)

THIRD QUARTER – JULY-SEPTEMBER, 2023

1. We welcomed Donna Willingham as our new organist. A list of familiar hymns from Lutheran Service Book, Lutheran Book of Worship and With One Voice was given to Donna along with information of maintenance of pianos and organ. We also answered any questions she had and may have.
2. We also welcomed Pastor Stephen Mentz as our new interim pastor. We provided help by answering questions of where things are, how we do certain things, etc. A new communion kit for serving the homebound was purchased for our church for the Pastor's use.
3. During the summer months we held Fellowship Time after the Worship Service with the aid of the Fellowship Team. Coffee and snacks were served.
4. We continue to solicit volunteers to serve as Pastoral Assistants, Acolytes, and presenter of the Children's Message.
5. Kate Hausner volunteered to bring order to the Prayer Lists. Wonderful job, Kate!

FOURTH QUARTER – OCTOBER – DECEMBER, 2023

1. The congregation celebrated Reformation Sunday, All Saints' Sunday with special music and creative services.
2. On Tuesday, November 21st we had a Thanksgiving/Pie Service. First the service, then the pie with help from the Fellowship Team.
3. Provided mid-week Advent Services. These services were streamed.
4. Donna and Kerry Willingham will lead us in a "Messiah" Sing-a-Long on Saturday, December 9th followed by a fellowship of cookies and drinks.
5. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be at 4:00 p.m.
6. Epiphany (January 6th) will be celebrated on Sunday, January 7, 2024.

FIRST AND SECOND QUARTERS – JANUARY – JUNE, 2024

1. Continue serving the congregation every Sunday with meaningful worship services.
2. Prepare for Lent – Ash Wednesday is February 14, 2024 and Easter Sunday is March 31, 2024
3. Provide other opportunities for our youth to serve in the worship services.
4. To provide a working relationship with our new Pastor.

Altar Guild – Bernice:

It has been a privilege to serve as team leader for St. Paul's Altar Guild this year. As with many areas of service, few people see the Altar Guild members carrying out their tasks, but the results are visible when you enter the sanctuary for any service. The Altar Guild cares for and changes the altar and pulpit paraments and banners as needed for the times and seasons of the church year, prepares the vessels and elements for Holy Communion, prepares the sanctuary for each service, ensures flowers are placed each Sunday, takes care of post-service tasks and ensures necessary supplies are always on hand. The Altar Guild prepares the sanctuary for all regular and special services, including holidays and annual events. Regular weekly preparations are handled by teams of two members, with all members working together for major events.

This year in addition to regular weekly duties, the Altar Guild:

Prepared the sanctuary for Ash Wednesday, Lent, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday

Provided special flowers, banner and sanctuary adornment for Easter

Prepared the sanctuary appropriately for several funerals

Set up candles and remembrances for All Saints 'Day

Adorned the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas.

During the next year, the Altar Guild plans to improve storage in the sacristy, where space is limited. We will also continue our monthly newsletter items on relevant topics; in 2022 we discussed the meanings of the liturgical colors and in 2023 we talked about various Christian symbols.

I am so grateful for the following faithful members of the Altar Guild: Carol Cook, Sandi Corwin, Linda Craig, Linda Huffman, Erin Mitchell, Andrea Muntz, and Jessie Silbert; the members of the Junior Altar Guild: Avery Mitchell, Abigail Muntz, Quinn Mitchell, and Camden Muntz; and, very importantly, the Men's Auxiliary: Scott Craig, Zac Huffman, Dan Mitchell, Chad Muntz, and Bob Prescott.

The next Congregational Meeting will be held in June, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Cynthia L. Dixon

Secretary

