

## CONGREGATION COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Oak Harbor, Ohio

May 16, 2023, 7:00 pm

*"To Enthusiastically Share the Love of Jesus Christ  
through our Thoughts, our Words, and our Compassionate Actions."*

### **COUNCIL BIBLE STUDY/INTENTIONAL PRAYER SESSION – 6:30**

- Devotions and Prayer in the Sanctuary: Pastor Becky led devotions and prayer.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Clark Price called the meeting to order. Present were: Clark Price, Pastor Becky Bolander, Gail Browning, Karen Demangos, Chelle Blausey, Scott Gluth, Thomas Rhodes, Traci Riechman, Cindy Kline, Mike Harder and Amanda Moore.

Excused: Tom Paule and Mike Overmyer

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:** Chelle Blausey asked for one correction to the draft minutes. After the correction was made, Cindy Kline made a motion to approve the Congregation Council Minutes for April 18, 2023, Thomas Rhodes seconded the motion and the motion carried.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The report was reviewed by the council and required no further action as a result of council discussions except as recorded in these minutes and are hereby made part of the minutes as copies in the record.

Chelle Blausey presented the report. Chelle pointed out to the council the Mission & Ministry fund balance through April 2023 has increased in April. Chelle stated after we put some information in the Newsletter about the fund and the committee's work, the fund balance has increased, some with Thrivent Choice Dollars and some with congregational giving.

Clark stated that there is now a separate fund set up for the Mission Trip, so all funds for the Mission Trip that were in the Mission & Ministry fund have been moved to their own fund. All funds currently in the Mission and Ministry fund can be used by the Mission & Ministry committee for their work.

Chelle also pointed out that the year-to-date benevolence for Lutheran Social Services and Trinity Lutheran Seminary are both at 73% of our budget. She stated they received 1/5 of the Lenten Envelop donations and this will probably be the total amount that these organizations will receive because we have no planned giving for these organizations for the rest of 2023.

Gail Browning made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report and Cindy Kline seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**PASTOR'S REPORT:** Pastor Becky presented her report. She presented the Vital Worship Grant budget and plan for the upcoming months. The committee set up for the Vital Worship Grant will be meeting next week to talk about partnering with the Arts Garage and with some of their artists. Pastor Becky stated they will kick off the project in the fall with a Learning Event with the Arts Garage and the community to showcase what we will be doing in worship this year.

The committee has grant money for four artists that will present their art in worship, a \$500 stipend for each event. She asked the council to provide names of artists that we might know who might be interested in being a

part of this committee and/or working as a resource with the committee. At the end of the year the committee would like to do a Community Art Celebration with Oak Harbor and a big outdoor art installation, hopefully in conjunction with the Arts Garage. St. John's committee will be meeting next Tuesday, May 23, 2023, at 5:30 P.M.

**COMMITTEE & OTHER REPORTS:** The reports were reviewed by council and required no further action as a result of council discussions except as recorded in these minutes and are hereby made part of the minutes as copies in the record.

Finance & Stewardship: Chelle Blausey presented the report. She reported that we are up in attendance and giving from the same period of time in 2022. We are averaging \$220 more per week than this time last year.

Chelle passed around a draft of a new quarterly envelope for the Mission & Ministry Fund that will be included in the 2024 donation envelopes. Chelle also shared with the council her notes on 2023 Loose Plate Designation & amounts received thus far for 2023.

The committee has been gathering information about each month and any awareness designations that are planned. They also are gathering information from the congregation for where they would like to see loose plate offerings go. The council discussed various dates and ideas for loose plate offerings with Chelle and ideas for church events that might go with different Sundays each month.

Chelle also stated that on July 23, 2023, the loose plate offering will be designated for LYFT Bridge of Hope Pantry in Fremont, Ohio. Chelle and a few others at St. John's received an email from the organization for donations. They prepare welcome packets for migrant workers and families that come to the area to work. There is a list of needed items and Chelle proposed our committees collaborate to gather items during worship that day as well as give them the loose plate offering.

Chelle also stated they are looking at redesigning the pew envelopes we have to make them more user friendly. She also stated we will continue to have the confirmands choose the loose plate designation on confirmation Sunday and the different youth groups for the loose plate for Easter and Christmas.

Property & Maintenance: Mike Harder presented the report as written. Clark reported that the sound system in the social room upstairs is not working. Also, the projection screen upstairs is broken and cannot be used. Clark stated that the screen needs to be replaced and the sound system needs to be fixed.

Clark also asked Mike Harder about the elevator maintenance contract that the committee is looking at for 2024 with Davis and Newcomer. If it is a multi-year contract, council will need to approve the contract as the commitment would extend beyond the annual budget approved by the congregation. Mike believes it is a single year contract. Mike stated that Davis & Newcomer has said they will not provide a formal contract proposal with us until the contract with Schindler is completed. Clark will talk with the company about receiving a proposal from them that can be compared to the Schindler proposal.

Worship: Traci Reichman presented the report. On June 18, 2023, Pastor Becky will be gone but will video tape her sermon for the service and Paul Sowers will facilitate the rest of the service. Traci reported that the committee is also working on ways to improve the outdoor services.

Clark asked about the documented meeting discussion on the new audio/visual system. He stated that he and Pastor Becky have talked about the sound system and her concern about not being able to see and communicate with the sound system techs during the service. This and other items with the new system are being worked on.

Clark also shared that we received three heart box cards. Three are suggesting that frames around the monitors

are not needed. Since two of the frames have been installed already and the material for the others has been purchased, the Worship committee has decided to install the frames on the other two. Another comment was a preference of intinction for communion and suggested maybe using cups for one Sunday during the month. Clark stated the decision has already been made and we will continue with intinction and the individual cups for those who don't want to do intinction.

Chelle Blausey shared with the council that at the top of the 2023 Loose Plate Designation report, there are other suggestions, Habitat for Humanity, LYO Lakeside retreat and Hopewood Outdoor Ministries. She also suggested that the outdoor service on June 25, 2023 that is for Blessing of the Pets could have the loose plate offering designated to the Ottawa County Humane Society.

Christian Education: Cindy Kline presented the report. She stated she and Thomas Rhodes have nothing to add to the report. Clark Price stated that he has heard that Sandy Rhodes will not be teaching catechism next year and Cindy Kline affirmed his understanding. Clark and the council are grateful for Sandy's service and thank her very much for her commitment over the last several years.

Mission & Ministry: Scott Gluth presented the report from their April 23, 2023, meeting. Scott stated that there have been no new requests for financial assistance since the last meeting. We may need to advertise that we have the program. He also stated that June 1, 2023, is the deadline for the uploading of photos to the Church Directory. The directory committee is also working on a printed directory. Clark suggested that Mission and Ministry contact Pam Vidal and Jamie Tooman to see what they have been working on for the printed directory.

Strategic Planning: Gail Browning presented the report. The committee toured the educational building basement and the parsonage. The committee agreed that their original suggestion to keep the parsonage as an event center is the best use of the space. Rules and guidelines for the parsonage should be developed. The office manager would have to be in charge of scheduling the use of the parsonage.

Clark stated that we have a Building Use and Regulation Policy in place, but the policy does not cover the parsonage. He stated it would have to be updated to include the parsonage. He read a few of the rules that limit the use of our building and the activities that can take place. The concept of opening our facilities up to the community is that it shouldn't cost our members in terms of upkeep, janitorial services, etc. That's why there are rates to use certain of the facilities to cover our costs.

Clark asked the council for a motion to revise the Building Use Rules and Regulations Policy to incorporate the parsonage. Scott Gluth made the motion and Traci Reichman seconded. Discussion followed which included the use of the garage and it was stated that Property and Maintenance uses the garage for storage. The use of the parsonage will be limited as it is not handicapped accessible. This could also impact the use of any state grant monies for activities or events held in the parsonage. After all discussion ended, Clark called for a vote and the motion carried.

Clark further discussed the Strategic Planning meeting minutes that contain a recommendation to the council that we consider a paid part time Youth Leader to help support and organize youth and young adult programming. Clark stated the committee will continue to work on this idea and bring it back to council. If we want to go that way, the strategic planning committee will make a presentation at the Annual Congregation Meeting. The proposal would need to be incorporated into the budget for congregation approval.

Clark stated that Pastor Becky has expressed her concerns about not being able to work with the youth on her part time schedule, and she already works more hours than part time. She has many other areas that need her attention. Clark stated our vision has been to call an Associate Pastor. However, this vision has not yet come to fruition. He stated we need to continue to be looking outside of the box for solutions.

Clark stated we have three people that have expressed an interest in serving on the Shelter House Committee, Jake Diebert, Heath Slack and Renee Swartz. The first task Clark would like them to complete is to gather more information from the congregation as to the needs and wants for a Shelter House. Clark has begun hearing more questions about why we need a shelter house and what we would do with it. Clark would like the Shelter House committee to report to the Strategic Planning Committee as they are developing their plan.

Mutual Ministry: Gail Browning stated that the committee did not meet this month. She asked the council to approve Karen Demangos as the 6<sup>th</sup> member to fill the committee. Pastor Becky is aware and in agreement of this addition to the committee. Gail made a motion and Chelle Blausey seconded to approve Karen Demangos for the committee. Motion carried.

Executive: The Executive Committee did not meet.

Endowment Trust Fund, Inc: Clark Price presented the report. The ETF, Inc. met on May 10, 2023. They signed their annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure forms. The investment committee reported and made some recommendations for changes to the Investment Policy Guidance for International Investments and also for Equity Exposure. These changes were approved by the ETF Board.

The Endowment Trust Fund, Inc. is going to be coordinating an financial and estate planning seminar that will include the church. It will be held at the church and probably in November 2023. Discussions for the seminar have included Pastor Becky. She would like for it also to include a venue where people can come to talk about death and dying, cremation, and things that people struggle with when they or their parents are dying. Clark stated in the past, Pastor Richard Powell, our visitation pastor, talked with a lot of members about these issues and estate planning with giving to the church as part of their legacy.

Our church saw the benefits of this ministry for several years. However, in the last 5 years, the bequests to the church have stopped. Clark stated there are also ways in which people can give to charitable agencies such as the church from investments while still living, not have to pay taxes on the gift, and also receive tax benefits from the gifts.

The reality in the future may be that the church will not be supported through our traditional means of support of a weekly offering. It may come more from estate and other types of financial gifts.

Audit: The audit committee completed the audit for April 2023 but has not yet issued the report. They are also completing an audit of the ETF, Inc.

Call Committee: There is no new information from the Call Committee to report. Clark stated that he talked with Mary Satterfield from the Synod Office. She is the Call Process Facility for the NW Ohio Synod. He wanted to get some insight from the Synod as to what is happening as we have not received any new candidates from them for several months.

There have been some pastors recently to which she has directed our profile. One was not interested in being an associate pastor. The reality is that the candidates searching for a call can be very selective. For every candidate there are about 10 opportunities. It has become a very competitive environment.

Clark stated that maybe the approach in our ministry site profile in looking for an associate pastor is not what is appropriate at this time. More pastors out there now are second career pastors. Ones that are out there have probably been solo or senior pastors and are not looking to take a step backwards to an associate pastor call. Clark will be talking to Pastor Becky about this and sharing with her what he is sharing with us now.

Maybe our profile is not attracting the right persons. If Mary Satterfield believes someone might be right for our church, Clark told her we would certainly look at that person even if they don't want an associate pastor call. Clark believes, however, we may need to change our profile to actually request a senior or solo pastor and state that there will be a transition period with Pastor Becky. He believes we need to get a more competitive profile into the call process.

Engagement Director Report: The report is posted on Google Docs.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. Council Initiatives Updates: Clark asked the Strategic Planning Committee to look at the outstanding initiatives that have not been completed. Clark will talk with the committee about their report and some of the initiatives may come back to council.

Clark stated that we are getting a lot of projects in front of us again, many that could end up being costly. When Clark was the treasurer of council, he and Paul Druckenmiller, who was the chair of Property and Personnel at that time, put together what was called the St. John's Facility Restoration Program, a long range plan that had scope, objectives, projects, and financial requirements. The major projects included things like resurfacing the parking lots, power washing the exterior of the church and sealing it, the church basement water intrusion project. The sanctuary restoration project was also in this plan.

The plan laid out over time when the needed projects could logically be financed and completed. We have similar issues upcoming. We need to replace the Educational Unit Hot Water Heater and we have discovered that we need a new roof on the Educational Building and on the Bell Tower due to their significantly degraded conditions. The Sanctuary Restoration Project, if approved and completed will probably be upwards of \$200,000. The organ is going to need some upgrade in the future and longer term a major refurbishment which could be very expensive. The idea of a shelter house is now in this planning. Even resealing the parking lot every 5 years is a major expenditure.

Clark would like to put together an Integrated Plan that will lay out timeframes for when we believe these things mentioned above will need to be completed. We need an understanding of what kind of capital we will need for the projects, be able to prioritize and determine what we can actually afford to do. Clark will work with Mike Harder and the Property and Maintenance Committee to put a plan together. At the next meeting or the July meeting, Clark hopes to have a draft for council to review.

Mike Harder stated that E.J. Croll is going to contact CL Deemer Roofing & Sheet Metal Company, Inc, to look at Bell Tower shingles. The shingles look like they have torn or been lifted up and pieces are being blown off with each wind storm we have.

2. NWO Synod Imaging Renewal Microgrant donation request: This request was discussed at the April council meeting. Chelle stated that the Finance and Stewardship Committee has discussed designating a loose plate offering for a donation to this program.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

1. Educational Unit Water Heater Replacement: Mike Harder stated that in May of 2022, the water heater had to be repaired. Kaylor Plumbing, Wiring and Heating, Inc. repaired the water heater at a cost of \$1,506 and stated that the water heater is not up to code and could cause a lot of water damage if it leaks. There is no expansion tank.

Mike Harder stated that the Property & Maintenance Committee wants to replace the current water heater with the same size commercial unit. Mike stated that if in the future, we would decide to reopen a nursery school or daycare, the health department would not approve a smaller water heater and we would have to replace a smaller one with a commercial size.

E.J. Croll applied for an ETF, Inc. grant and received \$9,055 for replacement of the water heater, but the grant will not cover the complete cost of a new water heater. The quote from Campbell Mechanical Services is \$17,426 for a commercial size heater. In order to replace the water heater, we will have to go to the congregation for approval of the remaining cost.

Clark asked the council if we should ask the congregation for approval of the cost not to exceed \$18,000, in case there are unforeseen costs. The council decided to ask for approval of a cost not to exceed \$20,000. The congregation will be asked to approve the difference in the total cost minus the ETF, Inc. grant.

Clark asked the council for a motion. Mike Harder made a motion that the council schedule a Special Congregation meeting for the sole purpose of asking the congregation to approve purchasing and replacing the Educational Unit hot water heater at a cost not to exceed \$20,000. The congregation will be requested to approve \$10,945, which is the difference between the ETF, Inc. grant and the bid from Campbell Mechanical Services, plus the contingency. Thomas Rhodes seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Clark stated the congregational meeting could be held as early as June 10 & 11, 2023, with written meeting notices being given in the bulletin on weekends of May 28 and June 4, 2023, and in the June Newsletter.

#### PAROCHIAL REPORT:

	Since last meeting				Year-to-Date 2023			
Baptisms	Adult	0	Child	1*	Adult	0	Child	2
New Members to Congregation	Adult	0	Child	0	Adult	1	Child	3
Members Leaving Congregation	Adult	1#	Child	0	Adult	1	Child	0
Affirmation of Baptism		10+				10		
Funerals / Deceased		1^				5		
Funerals of non-members		0				1		
Marriages		0				0		

\* Vincent Alexander Behm, son of Andrea Behm on May 5<sup>th</sup>

# Spencer Stone to Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, Elmore

+ Claire Elizabeth Blausey, Dakota Grace Gluth, Kaleb Martin Grant, Tyler Ervin Johannsen, Adam Michael Kurtz, Payne Alyce Lohman, Ashleigh Teegan Meckfessel, Madelynn Grace Schiets, Braxtin Cole Witt, Grayson Michael Zimmer

^ Vernell Kleinhans on May 5<sup>th</sup>

#### COMMUNICATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE:

The Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce sent a request for financial support for the Independence Day Celebration. The request was given to the Mission and Ministry Committee.

The ELCA sent a request for financial support of ELCA ministries. St. John's already support several of the ministries identified: e.g., World Hunger, Missionaries, Young Adults in Global Mission. They also sent a request for support of World Hunger, which is identified above as being supported by St. John's.

Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church in New Waterford, Ohio sent a thank you for our donation of \$1,302 for the East Palestine train derailment disaster. Our donation was from our extended Soup Sales this past winter.

Genacross sent a thank you for our \$880.42 donation from our Lenten envelopes.

St. Peter Lutheran Church in Martin, Ohio sent an appeal for support from their Outreach Team for a project they have supporting the Kisereny Lutheran Parish in Tanzania. The request was give to the Finance & Stewardship Committee for consideration.

Cherry Street Mission sent a request for financial support which was given to the Finance & Stewardship Committee for consideration.

A thank you was received from the Todd Hablitzel Family for our donation to the Todd Hablitzel Fund of \$6,359.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS SCHEDULE:**

- May 23: Red Cross Bloodmobile 1-6pm
- May 28: Parking Lot Worship Service w/ Mission Trip Blessing
- May 29: Office closed for Memorial Day
- June 3 – 9: Mission Trip
- June 15: Deadline for the July '23 issue of Eagle newsletter
- June 16: Red Cross Bloodmobile 12:30-5pm
- June 20: Next Council meeting

**ROUNDTABLE:** Clark called Schedel Gardens regarding dates for a possible council retreat. June 20 and July 18 are open dates they have. He shared the cost and other details for the evening. After discussion, the council decided not to hold the gathering at Schedel. No other plans were made at this time.

Clark also stated we have to reschedule the August 15, 2023 council meeting. Clark will send out an email with some alternate dates.

**ADJOURN:** Cindy Kline made a motion to adjourn and Mike Harder seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** The meeting was closed with the council praying the Lord's Prayer together.

Submitted by:

Karen J. Demangos, Secretary