

154th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION OF
ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH MEETING MINUTES

November 19, 2023

Our Mission:

To Enthusiastically share the Love of Jesus Christ through our thoughts, our words, and our compassionate actions.

Our Vision:

Transforming our community with the joyful and contagious Love of Jesus Christ.

1. Call to Order – Welcome: Clark Price called the 154th Annual Congregation meeting to order at 11:00 AM. and welcomed everyone. Clark read the Mission and Vision Statements. He then explained the chair on the stage. The chair is for Jesus and His presence and the Holy Spirit with us today. We have this chair present for all of our council meetings as we remember St. John's is His church, not ours and we seek His leadership and guidance in all of our decisions.

2. Opening Devotion and Prayer: Pastor Larry Michaels led devotions using I Thessalonians and said a prayer of thankfulness.

3. Introduction of Council members: Clark introduced the officers of the present council. Gail Browning, our Vice-President, will be leaving the council this year and we thank her for her service since 2020. Chelle Blausey, our Treasurer, was appointed Treasurer of council in 2019. Karen Demangos will be leaving the council as the Secretary of the council. She has served since 2020. Clark has always wanted our council meetings to be completely transparent and he thanked Karen for her minutes that have contained not only what our decisions are but why our decisions are made. These are the officers of the present council.

The remaining council members are Cindy Kline, who will be leaving council after her first term, Thomas Rhodes, who is completing his first term, Traci Riechman, who was appointed to council in February to a vacancy that was created by Paula Cleaver's resignation, Mike Overmyer, who is completing his second term, Mike Harder is completing his second term, Tom Paule, who was Vice-President for his first term and is now completing his second term as a council member, Scott Gluth, who is completing his first term, and Amanda Moore, who is completing her first year on council. Clark asked the congregation to recognize the 4 members who are leaving council, Gail Browning, Karen Demangos, Cindy Kline and Tom Paule.

4. Business Items and Opening Comments: Clark Price stated that we currently have 374 voting members and need at least 38 voting members for a quorum for this meeting. Clark stated we clearly have more than 38 members present and he declared we have a quorum present. Karen Demangos as secretary will be recording the minutes for today's meeting.

Clark read the constitutional requirements for a voting member. He asked Larry Gulau to take a count of voting members present and Larry stated there are 74 voting members present.

Clark thanked Pastor Becky Bolander, the church staff, the council, Pastor Larry Michaels and Paul Sowers for conducting worship, and all the many, many volunteers for all the work they do in every capacity of our church. He encouraged all who want to volunteer to look into this as we always need more and welcome all volunteers. He said a prayer of thanksgiving for all the

people in our congregation who share their talents. He thanked God for all the blessings He has given us and as we continue to feel His presence with this congregation, Clark asked for God's continued guidance.

5. Minutes of 153rd Annual Meeting of Nov. 13, 2022: Clark asked for a motion for approval of the above minutes from 2022. Doug Ceraldi made a motion for approval and Donna Fizer seconded the motion. There were no questions and Clark asked for the vote. Motion carried.

6. Treasurer's Report: Chelle provided a year to date recap of 2023 through October. She thanked Cindy Hemminger for all her help and patience and she thanked all of the members of the Finance and Stewardship Committee for all their hours of volunteer work.

7. Officer Appointment: Clark stated that Chelle Blausey has been the Treasurer of the congregation since her appointment in July 2019. She was elected to council in November of 2018 and then appointed Treasurer in July of 2019 to replace Clark Price who was appointed President at that time. She is the longest tenured person on the council.

In 2022, there was no treasurer on the ballot. As stated in the constitution, officers of the congregation stay in their position until they are replaced or they resign their position. Chelle did not resign and continued on as treasurer for 2023, beyond her elected term. Clark thanked Chelle for all her time and devotion to her position and the congregation gave her a round of applause.

Clark stated we now have someone who has volunteered to take over the office of Treasurer and he was presented to council at our last meeting. The council approved the recommendation of this person to the congregation, for their approval for this person to be the Treasurer of the Congregation Council.

Clark introduced Curt Riechman to the congregation as the volunteer for the office of Treasurer. Clark stated Curt has been attending Finance and Stewardship Committee meetings and council meetings for the last couple of months to decide whether he would like to be appointed and to acclimate himself to the position. Clark asked for a motion for the appointment of Curt Riechman for the position of Treasurer.

Linda Kohlman made the motion to approve the appointment of Curt Riechman to the position of Treasurer of the Congregation Council and Randy Patrick seconded the motion. Hearing no questions, Clark called for the vote. Motion carried. Curt will assume the position on January 1, 2024.

8. Election:

- Introduction of Nominating Committee & Slate of Candidates: Linda Kohlman introduced the nominating committee, Linda Kohlman and Liz Zelma-co-chairs, Annette Schmit, Pat Vogel, Sherry Priesman and Sharon Krieger. She then introduced the candidates on the ballot: Paul Sowers for Vice-President, Sherry Priesman for Secretary; for council, Karen Demangos, Scott Gluth, Thomas Rhodes and Austin Tallman; for the nominating committee, Marisha Everett and Rhonda Sowers, and for Synod Assembly representatives, Joy Ceraldi, Debbie Graber, Cheryl Sandrock, Doug Ceraldi, Dave Graber, Randy Kohlman and Jim Sandrock.

Clark asked for nominations from the floor 3 times and there were no nominations. Clark asked for a motion to close the nominations and accept the ballot as presented. Herman Kohlman made the motion and Cheryl Sandrock seconded. Motion carried.

The nominating committee passed out the ballots and then collected them from the voting members. Clark stated the committee will count the ballots as the meeting proceeds, and the results will be presented later in the meeting.

9. Committee Reports (page number in November newsletter supplement)

- Christian Education: Cindy Kline presented the report.
- Worship: Traci Riechman presented the report.
- Mission & Ministry: Scott Gluth presented the report. He stated the committee is in need of funds as they have and will continue to help members in the community. They have the board in the narthex with envelopes for donating and they are looking into other fund raisers. There are now envelopes for 2024 to give quarterly to the Mission and Ministry Fund. Scott also asked all members to pick up their new church directory in the narthex.
- Property & Personnel: Clark Price presented the report in Mike Harder's absence.
- Strategic Planning: Gail Browning presented the report. She reported that the Idea Boards that were in the narthex were reviewed, the ideas sorted, summarized and distributed to the appropriate committees. She thanked everyone for participating in the boards.
- Mutual Ministry: Gail Browning presented the report. She stated the Mutual Ministry Committee is a support for Pastor Becky. Clark stated the committee is very important if needed by a pastor. Their support directly to the pastor has not been needed, but the committee has provided feedback on certain ideas/projects that the council has undertaken.
- Finance & Stewardship: Chelle Blausey presented the report. She stated donations for the Educational Building roof project currently are at \$43,390 with an additional \$4,000 that has been pledged. Clark stated the roof project was completed last week. The total approved for the project is \$75,000, which included contingencies. There was no repair work required so there were no additional costs to the completion of the project, so the total should be about \$65,000.
- Call Committee: Karen Demangos presented the report. She stated the Call Committee has been suspended at this time pending the approval of the 2024 Budget. Clark stated if the budget is passed, the Call Committee will be officially terminated. He thanked the Call Committee members for their work over the last several years. They have provided help to realize our need for focusing staffing on our youth as we continued to wait to find an associate pastor.
- Audit: Clark thanked Luann Monak, Becky Witt and Marsha Kohlman for their service. They audit our financial records monthly. Periodically they audit our policies and procedures to ensure the church is following all procedures.

10. Organization & Other Reports (page number in November newsletter supplement)

Clark stated the annual reports of the other committees identified in the agenda are in the newsletter supplement on the pages listed and asked if the congregation had any questions. There were none.

11. Old Business

- Shelter House Survey results: Clark stated that one of the suggestions on the Idea Board was to build a shelter house on our empty lot. The committee to look into the feasibility of this developed a survey for the congregation. There were 56 responses to the survey and 76% of those responding were overwhelmingly opposed to funding and building a shelter house at this time. Clark stated we may look at this sometime in the future, but it does not seem feasible at the present time.

12. New Business

- St. John Endowment Trust Fund, Inc. (ETF) Board

Presentation of 2023 ETF Grant Recipients: Doug Ceraldi presented the report. In 2023, \$46,210 was distributed to 6 organizations inside our church and 8 organizations outside of the church. These grants were selected in 2022.

In 2023, there were 9 organizations outside the church that applied for a grant and 7 from inside the church. All were selected by the board to receive grants, which will be distributed in January 2024.

As of October 31, 2023, the ETF, Inc. had a balance of \$803,425.90 in the fund.

Doug promoted the seminar on December 3rd, "Getting Your Ducks in a Row". The ETF will provide a 1 hour seminar to members of our congregation that will give information about financial planning, planned giving, estate and end of life planning.

- Presentation of the 2024 Annual Budget – for Congregation approval: Chelle Blausey presented the 2024 budget and highlighted the changes. The budget contains no funding for an associate pastor and contains funding for a full-time Director of Youth Engagement. She stated that our benevolence goals no longer include Trinity Lutheran Seminary, however, we will include them to receive a loose plate offering during the year.

Chelle highlighted discussions the council has had regarding an Associate Pastor versus a Director of Youth Engagement. She stated that this change in ministry staffing will help engage our younger members from birth to about 40 and it is hoped to raise our attendance and giving as well as providing a much needed ministry to younger members.

Chelle stated the budget this year is over \$5,000 less than in 2023. The 2023 budget

required \$6,700/week and about \$6,000 per week has been received. With the 2024 budget, we should not require more weekly giving. She stated with the reduced 2024 budget, the required weekly giving will be slightly lower but still higher than the current level of giving.

Clark stated that we are fortunate, thanks to all our members, to be financially healthy. He stated that the General Fund has adequate funding to cover some deficit spending for some time. With the new position, we can afford to be in a deficit position for up to 3 years and still have enough funding to cover the new staff position. We believe we need to give the new position time to develop and achieve its mission and is a critical investment in our congregation's future.

Clark asked for a motion for approval of the 2024 Budget. Doug Ceraldi made the motion and Cheryl Sandrock seconded the motion. Motion carried.

13. Looking Ahead to 2024 and Beyond: Clark discussed benevolence giving and referred to the sermon many of us heard recently from a representative from Luther Home of Mercy. He stated the amount of our benevolence giving is astounding. Our gifts to Luther Home of Mercy and to all the places we give do count and count a great deal.

Clark discussed the new envelopes for 2024 that have a new option for benevolence giving through the Synod. You can continue to give to Mission Support which goes to both the NWO Synod and the ELCA. Clark explained a recent change and now 60% of Mission Support stays with the Synod instead of the previous 49%, with the remaining going to the ELCA churchwide. Clark explained a new option on our envelopes for giving, called the Annual Fund of the NWO Synod where 100% of your gifts stay in NW Ohio. Clark also stated that if you are using Simply Giving, you can mark where you want your offerings to go and it will be electronically withdrawn from your account.

Clark then presented a number of initiatives for 2024, including hiring the Director of Youth Engagement; a new coffee/fellowship area in the elevator lobby; a safety upgrade to the elevator by upgrading the Educational Unit side door with an electronic eye, the same upgrade as was done to the sanctuary side door earlier this year. He also discussed plans for new ways to more use of our audio/visual system; new ministries for Mission and Ministry and additional community ministries such as Cub Scouts, etc.; more and creative use of our facilities.

Clark then presented two larger projects that will be discussed in 2024: The Sanctuary Restoration Project and the Organ Restoration Project. Both of these projects will need larger financial support for completion. They have both been in the pre-planning stages for the last couple of years. The goals for 2024 for these projects are to define the scope of each project and set potential dates for beginning the projects, and to receive congregational approval for the projects and to start Capital Campaigns for financing the projects. Clark stated there are options on the scope for these projects and we may use the survey method, similar to what we used for the shelter house, to receive congregation feedback on the scope.

14. Upcoming Events - - - Advent & Christmas Events: Clark presented slides which identified our Advent services starting at 7:00 P.M. each Wednesday starting on November 29th. His slides also included the special and regular worship services between now and Christmas.

15. Parochial Report – since November 13, 2022 Annual Meeting

Baptisms

Adult 0 Child 4

New Members to Congregation	Adult 5 Child 5
Members Leaving Congregation	Adult 1 Child 0
Affirmation of Baptism	10
Funerals / Deceased	20
Funerals of non-members	1
Marriages	3

16. Election Results and Nominating Committee Appointment: The nominating committee provided the results of the election to Clark:

Vice-President: Paul Sowers; Secretary: Sherry Priesman; Council: Karen Demangos, Scott Gluth, Thomas Rhodes, Austin Tallman; Nominating Committee: Marisha Everett, Rhonda Sowers; Synod Assembly: Joy Ceraldi, Debbie Graber, Doug Ceraldi and Dave Graber.. Organizational meeting for the new council will be on December 19, 2023, after the regular council meeting.

Clark then stated Sherry Priesman, who was elected secretary, was also on the nominating committee. He said Jamie Tooman has volunteered to take Sherry's place on the nominating committee. Clark asked for a motion for approval of the appointment of Jamie Tooman to take Sherry Priesman's remaining term on the nominating committee. Joy Ceraldi made the motion and Pat Vogel seconded. Motion carried.

17. Adjournment: Clark stated we are in exciting times at St. John's and encouraged everyone to be involved. We are thankful for everything Jesus has done for us. The congregation gave Clark a round of applause for all the work he has and continues to do as our president.

Clark asked for a motion to adjourn and Tracey Nycz made the motion and Cindy Kline seconded. Motion carried and the meeting was adjourned.

18. Closing Prayer & Doxology: The meeting closed with all present praying the Lord's Prayer together and then joining hands and singing the doxology together.