

**Christ Lutheran Church
Council Minutes
November 11, 2013**

Present: Pastor Kristin Hunsinger, Council President Heather Heckel, Vice President Tinky Keen, Treasurer Paul Quel, Secretary Stephanie Feaser, Council Members: Dennis Burns, Chad Foltz, Diane Kellogg, Bruce Matson, George Springer, Sarah Vaughan, John Jung

Incoming Council Members Present: Shannon Fleming, Faith Hobson, Glenn Kellogg, Gerald Ransome

Absent: Ernie Foltz, Ferrel Newman, Pastor Eric Moehring (on sabbatical)

Stephanie opened the meeting with devotions.

Minutes from October were approved.

Pastor Eric's Report: (On Sabbatical – no report)

Pastor Kristin's Report: (Written report)

- Evening Worship Services – Small crowd at last 4 services. Still experimenting. Meeting soon to evaluate and promote. Blessing of the Animals 4th Sunday of November.
- Christian Education – Bruce currently teaching adult class. Guest pastor on Nov. 17.
- PartywithJesus.wordpress.com children's blog being developed
- Youth made care packages for college students.
- Xmas program is December 22 with 20 children expected to participate.
- On Dec. 2, Pastor Eric returns to the office. He will be in church on Sunday, Dec. 8 and preaching on Sunday, Dec. 15.

Ministry Team Reports:

Evangelism (Sarah) – Door hangers will be placed in the immediate area about the upcoming holiday events in early December. A prayer walk is being planned for the spring.

Stewardship ministry report (written report submitted by Pastor Kristin) – The committee is sending thank you notes to those who have pledged and letters to those who pledged in the last 2 years, but who have not yet pledged this year. So far there were 60 pledges received for a total of \$228,061. Cindy Williamson, Financial Secretary, is projecting an additional \$108,000 from the approximately 55 pledges still outstanding from last year. This Sunday we received 6 pledges for a total of about \$11,000.

Music (Diane) – We are still waiting on additional fundraising for the hand bell and organ repairs. One bell is currently malfunctioning. New choir members are still being sought. There is \$750 currently in the fund for the bells.

Thanksgiving baskets (George) – There have been many requests for receipt of Thanksgiving baskets so far this year. Eight from Moody Middle plus another nine call ins, with 20 more calls since the list was closed. The committee is deciding on how many we can serve. If families are already receiving Thanksgiving dinners through Lambs Basket, then the committee will not keep them on their list.

New Business:

Daisy Scout Troop request – A troop of Daisy Scouts is requesting to meet at Christ Lutheran the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 6-7 pm in Jr. Church room. Church is already open then for the dance class and YMCA. **MOTION** was made and carried to give permission to the Scouts to use the facilities.

Next's Year's Officers – We need to elect officers for next year. Also be thinking about changes in ministry team leaders with the incoming and outgoing council members. Outgoing council members should bring their shepherding list next month to pass on to new council members.

Old Business:

Constitutional Update – Sarah will resume typing edits soon. Diane submitted the wording for the “Support of Ministry Committee” regarding staff liaisons for each pastor.

Fall Council Objectives

Communications – One person has volunteered to help with Facebook so far and Patty Franz will work on advent sayings. The youth are looking into a church Instagram account (which is like Twitter only with photos).

Stewardship Campaign – Heather proposed a year round Stewardship Committee to work on the spring bequests and estate planning talk beginning now for next year. So instead of just operating from about April – November, the committee would work on a spring campaign and a fall campaign and continue to follow-up with budget connections.

Treasurer's Report (Written Report by Paul) -

Based on the current trend of monthly deficits, Paul is projecting the end of the year budget offerings at about \$337,300 and a minimum of \$352,400 in expenses. Even with the approved use of the Reserve Fund and the Boldin Bequest, there would still be a \$3,200 deficit in designated funds (which are not to be used for anything other than designated expenses). Paul is requesting that the \$14,513 in the Memorial Fund Money Market Fund be submitted to Audit to determine what if any surplus has built up in the Memorial Fund since a substantial portion of it was moved to the Thrivent Monday Market Account and to identify how much of that surplus was due to interest accrued. There was discussion about the Memorial Committee, audit process, timeliness and completeness of a potential audit, etc. It is suspected that the Memorial Funds are indeed undesignated, designated funds and could be used to finance the hand bells and organ expenses. In lieu of a formal audit, Heather will ask the Memorial Committee for a portion of the funds (about \$6,500 suspected as interest income) to be used to replenish some of the reserve fund and some of the actual Memorial Funds to be used for the music projects. To recognize the use of Memorial Funds for the music projects, a memorial plaque or some sort of artwork to be placed on or near the organ/hand bells was proposed. Something like the recognition done for the baptismal fonts, stating in memory of all listed in the ledger.

As John put it, the big question is how are we going to run the church next year with no cash on the balance sheet to start the year and predicted expenses exceeding pledges by several thousand dollars.

Much discussion ensued regarding the budget and the future of Christ Lutheran.

- 1) Gerald noted that several years ago, the Church took a risk by hiring a second pastor. The Council thought we were on a growing trend, but shortly after the calling of a second pastor several large families/contributors left the Church. Multiple reasons are believed to have been a factor in their exodus. Instead of growing membership, it has been declining along with the economy, while expenses and maintenance costs continue to exceed income.

- 2) For the most part, the easy, small, line item reductions have already been made to a fairly streamlined budget. We will need to get more creative and make tougher decisions this year. We discussed additional, bolder cost cutting options such as, but not limited to the following:
 - a. Possibility of having staff telecommute and close the building on Monday or Fridays, mornings or afternoons, or more frequently, to save heating/electric costs, etc.
 - b. Across the board salary cuts for staff/pastors.
 - c. Reduction in staff hours or elimination of one or more staff positions. (We would need to consult with people like Bill Franz and members of Synod for decisions involving changes in a pastor's "call".)
 - d. More fundraising, not just for special projects, but to keep the church open and running
 - e. Ask Synod for assistance, advice.
 - f. Consider selling the building and relocating to a less costly space or merging with another congregation.
- 3) While all of these options have some financial advantages, they also have the potential for serious negative impacts on the ministry, congregation, and partner organizations.
- 4) We may need a bold plan or a combination of these and other options to meet the financial obligations of the coming year (with possibly a \$50,000 shortfall) and in years to come.
- 5) We acknowledge having both short term, immediate financial issues to deal with, along with longer term, vision oriented issues regarding the future of Christ Lutheran.
- 6) Two smaller committees were suggested; one to investigate short term financial solutions and one to look at longer term goals and vision.
- 7) The first committee will investigate and calculate the pros and con of the above and other cost cutting options and propose 1-2 viable solutions to Council at the December meeting or before. Heather, Bruce, Gerald and Glenn will be on this committee.
- 8) Another committee will research the longer term viability issues of Christ Lutheran, merger options, relocation issues, and perhaps a new vision/structure. John, Paul, Diane, Shannon and Jane Dry will be on this committee.

Meeting closed with remarks for the good of the church.

Next Meeting: Monday, December 9, 2013.

Submitted by Stephanie Feaser, Council Secretary