

## **Council Minutes**

**March 21, 2022, 6:00 pm**

Attending: David Weisser, Deborah Dreher, Pam Hoffman, Cindy Toppin, Abby Schultz, Marjorie Peterson, Bruce Arndtson, Pastor Geier

### **Call to order at 6 p.m.**

Deborah made a motion to approve the February minutes, Pam made the second. Motion carried.

Bruce made a motion to approve the February financial report. Marjorie made the second. Motion carried.

### **Treasurer Deborah Dreher**

#### **No Council Action Required**

St. Philip's Lutheran Church remains in strong financial position. Review of February 2022 Financial reports indicate Total Giving year-to-date is 14.4% over Budget while Total Expenses year-to-date are 12.8% under Budget.

### **Vice President Sadie Reiners**

No report. Deborah reported that the air conditioner will be installed on April 4. There is a leak in the ELC room that Paul Swanstrom is working on.

### **Serving Ministry Pam Hoffman**

#### **No council action needed.**

New member orientation is on 3/27. A light lunch will be served that day.

Coffee on Sundays has started as of 3/13. Donut holes started yesterday.

Ladies Night Out is being planned for some time in future.

We wrote notes of appreciation for the staff.

### **HR Committee Cindy Toppin**

Met with Pastor Geier regarding general personnel issues this past month. Old personnel files will be shredded at City wide shredding event.

#### **No council action needed.**

### **Worship Coordinator Report – Marjorie Peterson**

Service Debrief: Services have been going well. The in-person attendance has remained relatively the same, between 80 and 90. However, there have been more families attending now that the mask mandate is lifted. Live-streaming services have been getting progressively better. John and Pr. Geier have been putting a great deal of time into tweaking them. John has been using ProPresenter7, the upgraded software. We are still seeing a camera shot of the screens, but soon will have the actual slides inserted in

the shots. The static shots of Lenten services will now have a narrowed width, to increase the quality of the picture. ABE has been our vendor for sound and light and did not receive any of our voice mails due to changing their phone system. They are now responsive.

Funeral Booklet: Live-streaming of funerals will be done using the static mode. If families choose, they can pay a fee of \$200 to have a technician operate a regular live-streaming service. This fee needs to be added into the funeral booklet. Becky will follow up with Lista and also print some booklets to give families. The fee structure should be followed as indicated in the booklet.

Council Notes from Marge: Benevolence funds have been distributed to the ministries chosen by the congregation at the annual meeting. The Building and Grounds team has been fixing many odds and ends around the facilities. An ant infestation was found in the ELC rooms and kitchen. Pest control has been retained to take care of that. The new AC system is on order for the old sanctuary. The Fellowship Team submitted a grant for Paul Oman to paint a picture at the Mississippi River Park for the community.

Service Schedule: The concern voiced at the annual meeting regarding the metric for scheduling two services was discussed. Clarification was made that the metric of going to two services if the attendance got to 200 was based on safe seating distance recommended by the CDC for the pandemic at that time and not a general policy. Attendance has been in the 80-90 range currently, with room in the sanctuary for all to sit comfortably and room for more than double that number under the pandemic conditions. There is no alternative form of worship available at this time that would be different from the service now offered. The current policy for summer Sunday worship, from Memorial Day to Labor Day weekends, is one service at 9:30 AM. Therefore, it was recommended and agreed upon by the team to continue with one service at 9:30 AM until Fall 2022. The exception will be two services on Easter Sunday, April 17, at 8:30 and 10:30 AM. Worship and Music Team requests that Council communicate these decisions to the congregation, and this was agreed.

Communion: It was suggested that we phase back into regular communion by offering the option of either communing with the kits or coming forward to be served. Maundy Thursday will be considered for the service to start this. There will be first communion children and their families who will commune first at that service, before the rest of the congregation, as has been done in the past. There are plenty of kits to get us there and beyond if needed. It may be that the kits could be a permanent option. Pr. Geier and Ellen will discuss the change in the Order of Worship with this in mind.

Future Planning: Musicians are assigned for all services in March and April. There will be a Maundy Thursday service and Good Friday service at 7 PM. Unity plans to sing at the Maundy Thursday service. On Easter Sunday there will be two services, at 8:30 and 10:30 AM. The flower garden will be assembled on Saturday, April 16 at 9 AM. Marge, Darlene, Becky, (and Barb?) will be available for that.

Outdoor worship service: The grant will be reviewed the middle of March and awards announced the end of March. It was discussed that even if we are not awarded the grant, we will likely proceed with having the outdoor service. The point was made that building community is important, especially after the pandemic. This would be a tool for helping with that. There likely will not be a means of live-streaming at an outdoor service, so it was suggested that we could record it and then upload it for viewing online afterwards.

Sunday Coffee: The coffee machine has been hooked up and is ready to go. The team agreed that we could go forward with serving coffee after services, but maybe not any food at this time. Becky will inform the Fellowship team and if they are on board with this, she will also inform the worship coordinators that they can start serving coffee.

Racial Justice Item: Darlene presented some ideas of what other churches have done. Ellen has reviewed the ELW and found 14 African American Spirituals, with nine that the congregation is familiar with. There are also other hymns from marginalized groups in the ELW. Darlene also suggested a possible book study with the recommendation of the book: "In Their own Words: Slave Life and the Power of Spirituals" by Eileen Guenther. It was agreed that a task force led by Darlene, with Marge, Barb, and Ellen will come up with ideas of how we may proceed with a focus on African American, Latino, and Native American music.

## **Learning Ministries Report – Abby Schultz**

### Preschool Ministry Team Meeting

1) Registration numbers for next year are as follows:

M-W-F 9:00 to 12:00– 26 spots are filled

T-TH 9:00-12:00- 10 spots filled

2) In line with the district, county numbers and CDC guidelines we have also dropped our mask requirements. Parents were asked to weigh in on whether they would like teachers to continue to mask and decisions were made on a class by class basis.

3) We are working on more ways to get our program out there. We have bought new banners and will use our yard signs and Facebook. As always word of mouth is the best way. So if you know anyone looking please pass along our information.

4) Lorelei will be out on a leave from March 21st – at least April 14th. We are fortunate to have a sub willing to cover the whole leave for all five days a week.

5) WELCA gave us a donation which we decided to put to good use right away. We thought long and hard about things that would truly benefit our children and program. We were able to purchase our new signs, new religious books for the children, a new little people nativity set, and some new music. We are so blessed to have the support of this church behind us!!

6) Budget was reviewed. Thanks to different grant funding through the state our budget looks good.

### Faith Formation Team Meeting

Sam Willis is interested in joining FF team but cannot commit right now

Mentor Orientation next year: Schedule it on Ash Wednesday or the week before?

- Only require it for 7th graders and new mentor pairs?
- No; adding qualifiers will just end up being confusing, and making something optional will essentially guarantee that people won't show up
- Even though the meeting was short, it was nice to have an opportunity for families and mentors to gather and touch base

### Gertens Plant Sale

- Lily, Julia, & Linnea are going to camp and will be fundraising (Sarah will write a bulletin blurb)
- Sales are online only, website closes on April 7

### Easter Plans

Bring back worship bags on Easter?

- Right now kids are taking toys/activities with them to the pews
- We're also doing children's bulletins on Easter
- We decided that we do want to bring back the worship bags; Sarah will "revamp" them and set them out a few weeks before Easter and observe how many kids use them

### Egg Hunt

- Start asking for candy donations March 13 (Sarah will write a bulletin blurb)
- Send out postcard invitations to all families March 21
- Spring/summer schedule (see printout)
- So far, only one high school family has gotten back to me about scheduling

- Friday, July 22 or Saturday, July 23 for service project day trip
- Saturday, August 13 for kayaking & ice cream day trip
- Unless anyone else gets back to me soon, we'll go ahead and just schedule these

#### VBS

- Registration hub: <https://www.myvbs.org/splc/>
- Sarah will take a closer look at activities & supplies, since it would be nice to plan for a science station IF we have enough volunteers, but we also don't want to buy expensive supplies and then let them go to waste. Including a science station will also shorten rotation times.
- Supplies are running low on Cokesbury, so I went ahead and ordered everything we'll need; if we want to order anything else we have to do that ASAP
- At this point, we've ordered all of the pricey essentials; we mostly just need to order craft supplies (which are inexpensive), and people will donate snacks

#### Text in Church

- People can sign up to receive texts from St. Philip's
- We can have as many admins as we want
- Would be very useful for making announcements about events/meetings
- "You can also import your CSV files, add information from your pew pad, or allow people to add themselves by texting a keyword and filling out your Smart Connect Card." We can also have Connect Cards on our website
- What I would like to do: have a small group of people sign up for the free trial (staff & committee members especially), then collect feedback about how well it would work for St. Philip's

Questions to consider (Sarah will talk to Text in Church customer service for many of these):

- How many texts will we get during the free trial?
- If someone texts back, will that count toward our limit?
- How will we keep track of how many texts we're sending out so the admins can collaborate and make sure nobody's going over the limit?
- Where will we get the money for this in our budget?

#### Lectionary curriculum in the fall

- We looked at Spark lectionary vs Whirl lectionary; Sarah likes Whirl best, and we agreed that it does have plenty of pros
- We do have money in the budget to buy the new supplies we need

### **Communication/Marketing/Tech Report – Bruce Arndtson**

**No Committee Report.** Bruce asked about using Walgreen's sign for Easter worship marketing. Council agreed to have Bruce pursue for Holy Week advertising. We may also consider this if we do an outside service this summer.

### **Pastor Geier – March 2022 Council Report**

· The changes in our mask policy seem to have gone smoothly. Several people have commented that they appreciate keeping the side sections of the sanctuary reserved for social distancing. Coffee and donut

holes have resumed! We shall continue to pray for declining COVID-19 numbers and increasing worship numbers.

- We are awaiting the result of our two grant applications to the synod.
- On February 26th, nine people from St. Philip's participated in our synod's congregational toolbox workshops! This was a fantastic turnout!
- I am grateful for all who came together to support the families of Norm Holtorf and Dale Wegener during their memorial worship services and luncheons. Pastor thanked all those who helped with these funeral services.
- Our midweek Lenten services have gone smoothly, although I admittedly was anticipating a few more folks participating in person.
- We are now using ProPresenter 7! However, we are still in the process of figuring out how to make it do everything we want it to do.
- There continue to be ample opportunities for pastoral care including pre-marriage counseling, potential member visits, funeral planning, homebound/nursing home visits, hospital visits, and lots of folks dealing with lots of "stuff". Prayers for your pastor and your fellow parishioners are appreciated.
- Right now I am most concerned about those individuals and families who may have fallen through the cracks over the last two years and for those who disengaged due to the pandemic and have not yet plugged back into our faith community.

Pastor participated in the Hastings Prays for Ukraine service last night; the ecumenical service was held at the Presbyterian Church. Discussed whether St. Philips should host another community service like this.

We also discussed the need to send e-mail blasts to everyone in the congregation for time sensitive information such as the Ukraine service or funeral services for members. Council agreed that more e-mail blasts would be welcome; people don't necessarily read the announcements buried in the bulletin that they get in their e-mail.

## **Old Business - none**

## **New Business**

1. Boy Scouts use of facility. We are now named in a rider on their insurance. Unlike other organizations who meet here, the Boy Scouts require us to be chartered to them. David will pursue finding out more information from the regional Boy Scouts about why this is structured as a legal charter.
2. Parking lot. Although sealing did not get in the budget, there are huge cracks in the parking lot that need attention. This is referred to Buildings and Grounds to seek bids and report back.
3. A non-member wedding party wants to use our facility and bring in their own clergy. Council decided not to agree to this; we are not a private event center.
4. Rivertown Days Service. Before this could go to Worship and Music, the Episcopal Church volunteered. We would be interested next year.
5. Leadership retreat - May 15 at Schaar's Bluff was suggested. Council and ministry teams will be invited.

Deborah made the motion to adjourn, Bruce seconded. Meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.

Submitted by  
Cindy Toppin