

# Council minutes

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Arlington, Massachusetts

8 June 2009

**Council Members Present:** Airin Cherian, Vicar Judy Converse, Beverly Dougherty, Pastor Ross Goodman, Sergia Hay, Jen Nahn, Dana Ramish, Cindy Reuter, Alison Roberts, Brian Sniffen, Darcie Sunnerberg, Marilyn Waehler.

**Also Present:** George Wilson.

**Absent:** Mark Olson.

## Gathering

A quorum was gathered and we came together in God's name at 7:40PM. A candle was lit to remind us that Christ is present with us as we meet.

## Check-In

We shared highlights of what's new in our lives and that for which we're thankful: children, new stages of life, marriage, family, graduations, the Synod's embrace of the Braille and Large Print Ministry, returning health, the beautiful spring weather, and the recent picnic and the privilege of hosting it.

## Agenda

The agenda was accepted.

## Devotions

Airin Cherian then led a devotion on plans: ours, others, and the LORD's, from Jeremiah 29:11: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" Next month, Beverly Dougherty will lead devotions.

## Hymn

We sing *Come, thou almighty king* (408).

## Word

### Minutes

The minutes of 11 May 2009 were accepted as clarified.

## Financial Reports

### Financial secretary's report

We are ahead as of May, even without receiving the parsonage rent for May. A number of families have prepaid their summer pledges. We have had some families drop off in pledges a bit, but it is not yet severe.

### Treasurer's report

The previous statements had not reflected the large payments we have made against our Thrivent mortgage principal. The new statements do so. A few manual transactions this month were used to correct bank errors in reading salary cheques to our staff.

## Social Ministry

George Wilson is here to speak about this proposal, written with much work by her and by Todd Hay. Perhaps one sentence could be added as to the church's incompetence to appraise donations for tax reporting. Much of the discussion concerns the IRS requirements that donations be gifts of property—not sock-puppetry. As the policy document's footnote 1 (also at <http://www.churchlawtoday.com/private/library/cltr/c0193081.htm>) says, a gift to the Church must be distinguishable from a gift to another party. If the Church is only a conduit and powerless to redirect the money, then the Church has never owned the money at all. The money is then not deductible.

**Motion 1** *We adopt the Benevolence Fund Policy as proposed by the Social Ministry Committee.*

MOVED, SECONDED.

**Motion 2** *We move to continue this discussion in e-mail or next month.*

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

Pastor Goodman raises these issues in prayer.

### **Date of the annual meeting**

**Motion 3** *We set the date of the annual meeting for the 24th of January, 2010.*

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

### **Christian Education Director**

An interview will be held on 28 June 2009.

### **Retreat**

The council will hold a retreat at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Woburn, 9AM–3PM.

### **New England Synod Assembly**

The congregation's delegates to the synod report on the events of the Synod Assembly. The work of the Assembly included:

- Unanimous approval of a memorial on support for a program to make ECLA materials available in Braille and large print (persuasively argued for by Alison Roberts)
- Approval of a memorial calling for an ELCA social statement on disability
- Approval on memorials to stop genocide in Darfur and reaffirmation of the church's commitment to peace-making in the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Approval of memorials concerning human sexuality (adoption of the proposed Social Statement on Human Sexuality)

### **Pastoral reports**

Pastor Goodman says he has never been away so much as this May—except last summer's sabbatical, of course. There's been a large church retreat, a wedding, the Synod Assembly, and some time in Philadelphia with the intern-to-come, Andrew Heisen.

The Town of Arlington has approved the new cross, and AT&T has agreed to the extra \$1000 per month. On the news of the new Christian Education director, several families have increased their pledges by \$10000. The Korean Congregation is on track to catch up and complete their pledge, and to increase their rent as we asked.

Pastor Goodman and Mark Olson have worked out a plan for the retreat, including Bible study focused on our three visions of Listening, Learning, and Serving. We will also spend some time working on the intentionality of the congregation: what are we good at, how can we strengthen that, and how we can pull others in to that.

Vicar Judy reports on her plans for the summer: Holden Evening Prayer, a music-themed Vacation Bible mini-School, and final work towards Ordination. Confirmation has happened, so it's time to start working towards next year's enormous confirmation class.

Sergia Hay raises our Pastors and our congregation in prayer.

### **Meal**

Pastor Goodman gathers us in prayer and leads communion at 9:21PM.

Respectfully submitted, Brian Sniffen

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Next regular council meeting: 13 July 2009 at 7:30PM.