

Council minutes

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
Arlington, Massachusetts

13 September 2010

Council Members Present: Pastor Ross Goodman, Anne-Louise Klaus, Mark Olson, Dana Ramish, Alison Roberts, Heather Sheridan, Wendy Stack, Marilyn Waehler.

Also Present: Vicar C.J. Stratton, Diane Kramer, Don Mitchell, Jen Nahn, Colleen Henry.

Absent: Marianne Brown, Airin Cherian, Kirsten Lienhard, Brian Sniffen.

In Brian's absence, Diane Kramer took minutes.

Gathering

A quorum was gathered and we came together in God's name at 7:35PM. 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.

Agenda

The agenda was accepted with the following additional items: Jen Nahn's update on Christian Ed and Mark Olson's discussion of aiding the LSS Ruth House.

Devotions

Mark Olson led a devotion drawing upon an excerpt from Scott Walker's book, *Footsteps of the Fisherman* which offered a discussion on the true meaning of words.

Next month, Don Mitchell will lead devotions.

Hymn

We sang *Be thou my vision*.

Word

Minutes

The minutes of August were accepted.

Financial Reports

Financial secretary's report

Don reported that the discrepancy between the Financial Secretary's report and the Treasurer's Report that was reported last month has been resolved. As suspected during last month's Council meeting, it was due to different methods of handling the initial balance.

We are slightly ahead of budgeted income. It was suggested to encourage the congregation for the good giving record over the summer, but still watch the third quarter statements and provide some motivation for giving, if necessary.

Don has looked into e-giving options, but has decided to hold off at this point due to cost. Members wanting to use electronic giving will be advised to use their own bank's online payment options for the present.

We received a stock gift in late August. The settlement occurred in the first week of September, so it will be reconciled in September's report.

Treasurer's report

Diane reported that spending, overall, is below budget for the year to date. The only accounts over budget are the Major Maintenance and General Maintenance accounts. This is due to two unexpected issues, one with the boiler and one with the backflow valve, which led to failed insurance and town inspections. Both issues had to be addressed to pass inspections, putting the accounts over budget.

Don brought up the issue of snow removal for the balance of the year. Diane is looking into costs and it will be discussed at the next Property Committee meeting scheduled for September 15.

New Business

Piano

Motion 1 *St. Paul purchase a grand piano from Connie and Jeanette Fagone.*

MOVED, SECONDED, AMENDED AS BELOW.

Colleen Henry explained her vision and long term plan for music at St. Paul. She explained that the grand piano will add a richness to the quality of music at the church, attract additional talented musicians and open St. Paul up to additional outreach activities in the community (recitals, etc.). After much discussion, it was agreed that the piano should be purchased for the reasons that Colleen presented, and also because it was an excellent opportunity to obtain a fine instrument at an exceptionally good price with flexible payment terms. There was some discussion of possible fundraising, which the Worship & Music Committee will drive. Because the piano must be moved from the Fagone's home by the end of September, a decision had to be made at this Council meeting.

Mark made the following amended motion:

Motion 2 *St. Paul purchase a grand piano from Connie and Jeanette Fagone for \$7,500, to be paid by the end of 2013.*

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

Colleen is to write a short justification for the purchase.

Request for funding for Seminary in Philadelphia

Ross discussed the value of the seminary and its need for funding support. He suggested that there does not need to be a dollar value attached to the appeal, instead perhaps a commitment to take up an offering over three years via an annual Seminary Sunday to highlight the work of the seminary. Allison

suggested that rather than focus on Philadelphia, we should widen the focus to other vocational opportunities.

Motion 3 *Establish a Seminary Sunday for the next three years (no goal now / to be planned).*

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

Updates

Diane discussed a new building usage agreement between St. Paul and English At Large. English At Large trains volunteers to become English language tutors and work one-on-one with adults in its 20-town service area. Currently it serves more than 250 adults each year. A private, non-profit affiliate of ProLiteracy Worldwide, its volunteers have provided free English literacy services to adults for more than four decades. These services include individual and small-group tutoring and conversation practice, which a volunteer tailors to the specific needs of each learner. St. Paul is always looking for ways to support our local community by making our building space available to worthwhile organizations. We also seek outreach activities that may provide an opportunity to match the interests and talents of our congregation with the deepest needs of our community. We believe we have found a way to achieve both goals this fall with English At Large. Orientation will be held at Fellowship Hall on Thursday, October 7th from 7:00 to 8:30PM. Training will be held at Fellowship Hall on three Saturdays: October 16, October 23 and November 6 from 11:30AM-5:00PM.

The Sudanese Community Center is also in discussions with us about hosting their mother/child tutoring workshops beginning in January.

We are looking at the possible synergies that exist between EAL, LSS and the Sudanese Community Center's tutoring efforts.

Additional items

Jen Nahn's Update on Rally Day and Christian Ed: Rally Day and the Pancake Breakfast was a success. Classes start next week and everything will be ready

for the kick-off of a new year. Jenn is looking at what will be done for education hour during the upcoming retreat. She will be hiring a new Nursery Attendant soon. Sex education is in the works, but not for this fall.

Mark spoke about Ruth House (LSS), a residential program for teenage mothers in Brockton. They are housed in an old building that needs work, most urgently a new roof (\$38,000) and window replacement (\$15,300). LSS has \$34,000 in their gift account which could be used toward the roof. Mark is suggesting the additional \$4K for the roof could be donated by St. Paul using M7/Tower Fund. Don suggested making it a “challenge grant,” with St. Paul matching whatever other funds LSS can raise. Other suggestions included bringing representatives from Ruth House in to a Coffee Hour and suggesting to LSS that they contact Thrivent for possible fund matching opportunities. Mark suggested pre-approving a motion to fund the \$4K, and then have the Social Ministries Committee decide upon it.

Motion 4 *Fund \$4K donation to Ruth House/LSS toward roof replacement, subject to approval by Social Ministries Committee.* MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

Pastoral reports

Vicar C.J. Stratton reports: Vicar C.J. was pleased to attend the Council meeting, her first ever at any church. She reported that her first 4 weeks at St. Paul have been a great experience. Council members commented favorably on her first sermon and her voice.

Pastor Goodman commented that Vicar C.J. has already had a number of fresh new ideas, including shifting confirmation classes to Sunday night and combining it with a meal.

Pastor Goodman reports: Calumet retreat sign-up is not great—less than twenty attendees so far. We need to make a push for attendance to, at minimum, fill the Conference Center.

Ross would like to establish a discernment process for sometime next year, working in conjunction with the

mutual Ministry Committee. The process would explore questions such as : Who are we? Why are we here? Where are we going? What are we called to do? Ross feels strongly that we need to bring in an outside facilitator to avoid the pastor “pushing the agenda” and that the discernment be an ongoing process. He will have more details in the Oct/Nov timeframe. Dana suggested that Vicar C.J. begin participating in the Mutual Ministry Committee meetings.

We have started getting sign-ups for the Alpha program, which Ross will be facilitating.

Marilyn inquired about the status of Kathryn Schnaible, whom we helped with seminary application fees. Ross reported that her application has been made. It was suggested to give the congregation an update on her status.

Meal

Pastor Goodman gathers us in prayer and leads communion at 9:25PM.

Respectfully submitted, Diane Kramer

Next regular council meeting: 11 October 2010 (Columbus Day) at 7:30PM.

These minutes can be found online at
<http://evenmere.org/~bts/Church/>.