

Council minutes

St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church
Arlington, Massachusetts

14 March 2011

Council Members Present: Pastor Ross Goodman, Maile Hedlund, Mark Olson, Dana Ramish, Alison Roberts, Heather Sheridan, Brian Sniffen, Wendy Stack, Chris Trost, George Wilson.

Also Present: Ken Heyda, Jen Nahn, Knute Ogren of Camp Calumet, Vicar C.J. Stratton.

Absent: Airin Cherian, resigning.

Word

Calumet

Knute Ogren presents on Camp Calumet's new \$430000 capital drive, the "Campaign for Today." Calumet has been a linchpin of Christian education in the New England Synod. They're now trying to invest in better support for accessibility: two two-unit private-bath cabins, a coach bus, insulation of the lake-side dining hall, and remodeling of the staff lounge to add a bathroom.

Gathering

A quorum was gathered and we came together in God's name at 7:38PM. A candle was lit to remind us that Christ is present with us as we meet.

He presents a video² that explains their goals and methods. They'd like each church in the Synod to give \$1–\$5000 over the next three years, but they'd specifically like us to give \$5000.

Check-In

We shared highlights of our Lenten devotions: reading, prayer, meditation, solitude, offerings, fasting.

Financial Reports

Financial secretary's report

We're still slightly ahead for the year based on a big gift in January, but our rate of giving this February is much less.

Agenda

The agenda was accepted.

Treasurer's report

Key Heyda briefs the council on our budgeting and financial system. The only point of interest this month is a transfer from the Property/Maintenance fund (P8) to Parish House Repair (P12) in order to cover urgent expenses.

Devotions

Brian Sniffen then led a devotion on Gethsemane from the *Meditations of the Seven Words of the Cross*¹ given by Morgan Dix in Trinity Church, Good Friday, 1894. Next month, Mark Olson will lead devotions.

Minutes

The minutes of February were accepted.

Hymn

We sing *Go to dark Gethsemane* (347).

¹<http://anglicanhistory.org/usa/mdlx/blessing7.html>

²<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDrTN3UPFZE>

New business

Peace garden

Motion 1. *Motion to dedicate April and May coffee hour funds, except for the Easter Breakfast, to the Peace Garden.* MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

This garden, being organized by CJ, requires funding for the raised beds, gardening supplies, and seeds. We want to tie this initiative with a larger Food Justice initiative we'll be promoting in April.

Motion 2. *Motion to dedicate up to \$1000 from n7 to fund the establishment of the Peace Garden.*

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

These funds will cover any remaining costs for the garden not supplied by coffee hour funds.

Affordable housing walk

Motion 3. *Motion to dedicate \$500 from n7 to donate to the Housing Corporation of Arlington for their annual Walk for Affordable Housing that will be held in the middle of April.*

The funding is used to help procure additional housing units for low-income personnel.

Vicar's tax liability

Motion 4. *Motion to give Vicar C. J. Stratton a gift of \$1114.39 to cover her cost of tax liabilities from her 2010 housing allowance.* MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

Motion 5. *Motion to transfer \$1115 from M1 to P11 to cover the amount gifted to Vicar Stratton for tax liabilities.* MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

Due to an accounting error by St. Paul Treasurer the Vicar's housing allowance was not classified as income as it should have been—only ordained ministers can deduct a housing allowance. As a result not enough tax liability was withheld from her paycheck. As a result Vicar Stratton would need to pay this amount in tax liability. In order to alleviate the financial burden we would like to give Vicar Stratton this one time gift.

Ken Heyda reports that we received advice from tax attorneys to call this a gift, not a bonus.

Real estate

Motion 6. *Motion to approve amended lease on the cross space with AT&T.* MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

This will allow AT&T to make modifications on the cross we currently lease to them. They will increase our payments by \$450 per month beginning the first month after modifications have been made. It will not impact the visual presence but they will need more space at the base of the platform. I have signed an authorization form allowing them to move forward to obtain proper permits to make the changes. We would like to move quickly once they have obtained permits to move ahead with the project. See attached documents.

Synod assembly

Motion 7. *Motion to authorize the sending of an additional youth delegate to the Synod Assembly.*

MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

The synod would like to see more participation by our youth and are encouraging congregations to send a youth delegate as well. The Lutheran church believes that Youth lasts until 30. We also discuss sending two delegates with one vote between them.

Calumet funding

We ought to be able to help them, but we notice we have enormous and mounting obligations for our own property: the windows, pianos, and utility costs. We ask the Social Ministry committee to consider this for their giving plans over the next few years, and to advertise within the congregation that we'll be providing that support.

Motion 8. *Motion to institute a short-term capital financial planning committee consisting of Steve Dougherty, Dana Ramish, and others as they are asked to serve.* MOVED, SECONDED, CARRIED.

We are also concerned about our own maintenance needs and requests from LSS, the Synod, the Seminary, and Calumet.

Updates

Airin Cherian has resigned from the council due to taking on another job and moving to Texas. We will need to find a replacement for him.

Jen Nahn, Director of Christian Education, reports on the joy of working with the children as they experience the change of liturgical season. The confirmed youth are gathering in their room at the end of the top hall. They're managing their own curriculum quite well. A new Inclusion Committee is forming—There will be a summary in the Messenger.

Pastoral reports

Vicar Stratton reports that she's passed her six-month evaluation. She's now closer to leaving St. Paul than arriving. There will be a service trip to urban Boston at the end of the month. The raffle brought enough money to send two kids on the service trip.

Pastor Goodman speaks about involvement in the congregation. Also, we have a new intern.

Meal

Pastor Goodman gathers us in prayer and leads communion at 9:42PM.

Respectfully submitted, Brian Sniffen

Next regular council meeting: 11 April 2011 at 7:30PM.

These minutes can be found online at

<http://evenmere.org/~bts/Church/>.