

WINDSOR HEIGHTS LUTHERAN CHURCH
Congregation Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 20, 2023
Room 127 & Google Meet

Present: Sharman Blake, Julie Borseth, Norm Carlson, Tony Dahlman, Tracy Hirst, Jill Hyda, Matt McNamara, Michael McNamara, Bill Morris, Kevin Nicolet, Pastor Chris Olkiewicz, Maren Steensen, John Swanson, Barb Waymire

Absent: Jill Hyda

Guests: Scott Steensen

We Gather in God's Name

I. Call to Order

- Swanson called the meeting to order and offered devotions.

II. Approval of the Agenda

Hirst moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Carlson. Motion carried.

III. Secretary's Report

Nicolet moved to approve the November 2023 minutes. Seconded by Morris. Motion carried.

IV. Treasurer's Report

- Waymire provided the report to Council. There was a loss for November with lower general offering than budgeted. A pattern is emerging for giving shifting to earlier in the year. We still have \$15,000 income so far this year and have made strides since last year.

Borseth moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Hirst. Motion carried.

V. For the Good of the Order

- Hirst gave her thanks for the council and congregations support after her father's death.
- Pastor Chris shared member Frances Wiesner passed away recently. Ross Curnow has been dealing with brain tumor for over a year and has shown some response to treatment. Ross and his wife recently welcomed a baby.
- Pastor Chris would like to thank everyone who has helped, and will continue to help, during this busy time of the church year.

VI. Pastor Housing Allowance & Personnel

Council met in Executive Session to discuss personnel related matters.

The Executive Session was closed.

VII. Pastor Report

- Pastor Chris shared as of December 19th, fifty pledge cards have been received, totaling \$271,766 in commitments for 2024. The SE Iowa Synod Assembly will be held May 17-18, 2024, in Coralville. WHLC will have voting members from the congregation. Pastor Chris shared an excerpt from an email from the BioLogos Foundation which speaks to his concern for continuing to find ways to lift up the relationship between science and theology. WHLC will host a service of prayer on the last evening of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 25th at 6:30 PM with St. Theresa Catholic Church, Windsor United Methodist, Windsor Presbyterian. The Chin Baptist community has been invited to join us for potluck prior to the congregational meeting. We are in need of many volunteers for Christmas Eve and Day worship services.

VIII. Old Business

- Nominating Committee
 - Dahlman will have nominees ready for the annual meeting. Council does not need to approve.
- Annual Meeting
 - The meeting will be held on Sunday, January 21st. The date and time will be published in writing in the January *Window* and announced in worship the two preceding Sundays.

IX. New Business

- 2024 Budget
 - Scott Steensen presented on behalf of the Finance Committee. We are doing well. The committee has put together a budget through November actuals, should be better in December. We are in a strong position with excellent fiscal responsibility. The committee evaluates our current standing, where we might finish the year, looks at variances and tries to reflect that in the next year. We plan to see \$503,000 in expenses and income equaling a balanced budget. Transition expenses will be moved to other line items. Anticipating increase in interest income because of certificate of deposit rates and anticipating general offering similar to 2023. Scott noted a \$3,000 increase in property insurance premium. It was also noted that Family Promise has ceased operation, and the line item in benevolence will need to be moved and perhaps changed to "homeless family assistance". Further, lawn care and landscaping with snow removal should be merged. There has been strong capital appeal giving. Building and mortgage costs will be discussed at the annual meeting.

- Synod Contribution
 - Nicolet received a letter that the SE Iowa Synod has a \$70,000 shortfall, asking congregations to consider an extra gift to assist. There was discussion about possible gift amounts. It was decided to table the discussion until February after our financial year closes and we can consider what assistance we might offer. It can also be mentioned at the annual meeting if a budget surplus is discussed, as mission support has traditionally been a high priority for our congregation.
- Annual Meeting Reports
 - Council members are encouraged to offer a short report for the annual meeting if they have been involved in planning an event in 2023 or part of a certain project. Borseth has written about our involvement with Windsor Elementary. Steensen will offer one regarding the Windsor Heights Fall Festival and Season of Creation Service at Brenton Arboretum. Heidi needs reports by December 28th to publish.
- Other
 - The Finance Committee will present the budget and answer questions between services on January 14th.
 - A synod group approached Pastor Chris about doing a forum to discuss ELCA efforts working for justice and peace in Palestine and Israel through the campaign, Peace Not Walls. This forum may be scheduled in February.

X. Announcements

- Council Meeting – January 23rd, 6:30 PM in-person and online option. Will discuss with the new Council about moving to Tuesday evenings.

We Close in Prayer & Send in Mission

XI. Reflections & Closing Prayer

Pastor Chris offered a poem, “93 Percent Stardust” by Nikita Gill as a closing prayer.

XII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned.

Minutes taken by Maren Steensen
December 20, 2023