Zion Lutheran Church Minot

Church Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 17, 2023

* Meeting called to order by President John Butgereit at 6:39 PM
* Pastor Elaine opened the meeting with prayer.
* In attendance at this meeting: John Butgereit, John Thompson, Kristi Asendorf, Rich Jensen, John Gruenberg, Pastor Elaine, and Pastor Natasha on the phone.
* No Executive Session was needed for tonight’s meeting.
* The Agenda was reviewed. Add to New Business: Financial Trends of Zion Report, and information on the Time & Talent Auction. Add to Old Business: Update on visits with Programming Staff regarding Sabbatical Leave Policy. Motion by Kristi Asendorf to accept the agenda with additions, a second was made by John Gruenberg. Motion passed.
* There were no visitors at this meeting.
* All submitted written reports were in a Consent Agenda, including meeting minutes from August, were reviewed. Motion by John Gruenberg to approve the Consent Agenda. Second by John Thompson. Motion carried.
* New Business
  + Congregational Renewal Action Team. Initial work has been done by LeaderWise and a report has been submitted. The Council should take the time to read through this report. Our next step is to put together an Action Team of four to eight people, and would include a youth representative, to work on the results of the report given. Pastor Natasha asked the Council to come up with names of people who might be an asset to this work. Also, to try to come up with another name to call this working group. The plan is to have the team in place by Thanksgiving.
  + Fall Stewardship & Pledge Cards. Dates chosen for pledge card reception: Sunday, November 12th and 19th; Saturday, November 11th and 18th; and Wednesday, November 8th and 15th. Pastor Natasha is planning to meet with the Stewardship Committee. Pastor Elaine is working on a letter to send out to the membership. Last year, we had 132 family units who pledged their support. Currently we have 362 active families, so that’s slightly over a 30% participation. Our goal for 2024 is to get to 150 families submitting a pledge. (there are 437 total families listed in our membership). As a church, we need to better communicate everything we are doing to show people where their investment is going. We tend to hold events and advertise them ahead of time, but don’t do any follow up reporting. Marketing the church all year is important.
  + Zion Financial Report. The report given was showing giving and expense trends. In 2024, we will have a full time staff for the entire year. We looked at the numbers over a five year period and got some idea of where we needed to be in costs of operation. Payroll is the biggest part of our expenses. Zion has been running on a deficit since at least 2018. The books show some positive years because we are taking money from savings and investments to meet the budget. So, we need to realize our income needs to be more than offerings. It’s important for us to look at fundraising events, i.e. dinners, auctions, etc. And there was discussion on how to get the congregation to understand the serious issue we are looking at with continued rising costs and steady income, and there is a real possibility we are going to have to make some cuts in programming. In the past few years, we tend to avoid the hard talk with the congregation and make it seem to be okay. Budget planning will begin at our next meeting.
  + Time & Talent Auction. This event is happening to raise money for the operations of the church. Asking people to donate items that are homemade, or event tickets, or labor, or whatever ideas they can come up. There is s planning/organizing team in place. The hope is to clear $2,000. It will be a live auction.
* Old Business
  + Employee Vacation Overpayment. The amount has not been repaid. The employee was asking for more information. The Synod attorney and HR person are available to us at no cost. However, they have indicated this may be difficult to recover without going to small claims court.
  + Rebel Give problem update. At this time, we don’t have an update.
  + Heat Pump/AC Repair/Replace. Building and Grounds Committee reports they have received two bids and are awaiting a third bid. The rooftop option won’t work because the structure won’t hold the weight. The only option we now have is to remove the existing unit and replace it with more than one smaller unit. The price will be between $95,000 and $100,000. The Committee has looked at various ways to finance this project. The most likely avenue to pursue is to find out if we can borrow from ourselves using one of the restricted funds with a written plan on how to repay it over a number of years.
  + Update on conversations with staff on program staff sabbatical. John Butgereit and Rich Jensen met with Christ and with Kortney on separate days.
* Other Items: Kristi Asendorf wanted the Council to know she would have to step down from her position because of family illness, with a hope to someday serve again.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:07 PM

Submitted by Rich Jensen

Church Council Secretary