

Zion Lutheran Church, Minot
Church Council Meeting, Tuesday, September 17th, 2024

- Meeting called to order by President, Rich Jensen, at 6:33pm.
- In attendance at this meeting: Rich Jensen, Gary Leslie, Matt Sundahl, Matt Stephens, Amanda Winkels (Mahulum), Joe Stenvold, John Gruenberg, Sherry Broderick, Pastor Elaine Sveet, and Pastor Natasha Kolles.
- Check in and devotion: Discussion was held regarding embracing the culture of experimentation. Council brainstormed reasons for church participation declining in the US. Some reasons discussed included: busier lives, sporting events, culture has changed and church is no longer the hub, so many other things going on in the community, distractions, seeking meaning/purpose elsewhere, and politics/animosity turning people off. Pastor Natasha spoke a little about her ELCA meetings. The ELCA has done things the same way for a long time, but several new bishops will be elected in the next few years and changes are coming. People feel the ELCA needs to be more adaptable. Other questions regarding risk and failures were discussed. People/churches need to be willing to take risks to see what might work for our church (experimentation). Following discussion, Council prayed.
- No visitors present, no introductions needed, and no executive session needed tonight.
- Agenda: Pastor Elaine provided some comments regarding the Finance Report. Updates included corrections on some final numbers. Rather than a \$45,000 deficit, we have a \$2,100 positive balance. These issues are mostly due to the fund accounting currently being used. There is a meeting set up with Accounting Solutions on Monday, September 23rd, (with members of the Finance Team, Pastor Elaine, and Amanda from the office) to try to improve the accounting format and reduce the confusion. A motion was made by Amanda Winkels to accept the agenda. Motion was seconded by Joe Stenvold. Motion passed.
- The Consent Agenda was reviewed, including meeting minutes from August, pastors' reports, youth director reports, staff/committee meeting notes, financial reports from August, and email actions by the Council.
 - Pastor Natasha made Council aware of an addition of one hospital visit in her pastor's report. There was also an error that was fixed in the Community Outreach Assistance report. The monetary total for Outreach expenses is actually \$1,196.26, only \$196.26 over budget at this time. The value of the food stamps/cards given is \$460 (23 people at \$20 each). Matt Sundahl made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda with these amendments. Matt Stephens seconded the motion, and the motion passed.
- New Business:
 - A. Zion Photo Directory: Pastor Natasha spoke about the advantages of an online directory. The Icon directory is free. With an online directory, congregation members can update their picture as needed and new members can be added easily. Ways of doing this could be: family photos could be sent to Amanda (office) to be uploaded or uploaded directly by congregation members. We could have volunteers take pictures following worship on given days or ask a local professional photographer to take pictures on scheduled dates. We could also have a print version. 500 printed copies would be \$3,350. We could sell advertising (amongst congregation members) to help offset the cost of the directory. A motion was made by John Gruenberg to: 1.) pursue an online photo directory this fall, 2.) supplement the cost of the directory with advertising/sponsors, and 3.) use Icon as our online platform for the photo directory. Matt Stephens seconded this motion. Motion passed.

- B. CD rates for investment purposes: Pastor Elaine shared that the Finance Team decided that a CD was the best option for an investment of the \$50,000 interest from the building fund savings account (line item 106). The current rate is 4.25% for 12 months at First Western Bank & Trust. Amanda has started initiating this process with First Western. A motion was made by Joe Stenvold to go forward with the CD at First Western Bank & Trust for \$50,000 for 12 months @ 4.25% or the current rate, with the money coming from line item 106, the building fund savings account. Motion was seconded by Amanda Winkels. Motion passed.
- C. Rachel Kurtz Concert: Discussion was held regarding this concert on September 28th at Minot State University. Our pastors and some staff are planning to attend. There may be some push-back from others in the community as Rachel Kurtz is seen as a member of the LGBTQ community. Discussion centered around whether Council is comfortable with and supports Pastors Elaine and Natasha in wearing their clergy collars and name tags identifying them and Zion Lutheran Church. Following discussion, a motion was made by Amanda Winkels that we, the Council, support the pastors and staff in representing our congregation at the Rachel Kurtz concert. Motion seconded by John Gruenberg. Motion passed.
- D. Portico & BOP 2025: Portico is Pastor Natasha's health insurance/pension plan, and BOP ~ Board of Pensions PCUSA is Pastor Elaine's health insurance/pension plan. There will be increases in both plans (BOP ~ increase of 4% or approximately \$1,496.70; Portico Gold Plus Plan ~ increasing approximately \$1,483). A motion was made by Matt Stephens to continue with these same plans for 2025. The motion was seconded by Joe Stenvold, and the motion passed.
- Old Business:
 - A. Food, Faith, Family ~ Council Contact for the meal Wed. Oct. 9th: Council is serving the meal, creamy chicken pasta. The prep team will make the chicken and the sauce; we just need to prep the pasta. We also need to decide what we want to do for dessert. Diana McLean is looking for a contact person for this meal. Rich Jensen agreed to be the contact person. There will also be a salad bar, which is starting on the 9th for the first time. Available council will bring a dessert/baked good for the dinner. We will need a gluten free option.
 - B. Pastor Elaine's 6 month Eval: Pastor Elaine's evaluation has been completed.
- Discussion was held regarding the upcoming Lutefisk and Meatball dinner. Joe Stenvold gave a report. The 900 pounds of lutefisk is here (at Marketplace Foods). The dinner is being advertised in Minot and surrounding communities (tv, radio, flyers, Facebook, newsletter, etc.). All food and help are in order. Some people are doing prep on Friday, others are encouraged to help. There are still some open slots for shifts on the sign up sheet. Still trying to figure out some signage for the building/property.
- Pastor Elaine shared that the Finance Team is working on the Stewardship Plan. The date for pledges is Sunday, November 17th. The Finance Team is wondering if there is a goal we should set for an increase in percentage of giving. Council felt that an increase of 10% would be reasonable. Pastor Elaine will take that to the team.
- Joe Stenvold shared that the West Minot Church of God needs their church space and is asking their current day care of approximately 80 kids to move out. He is wondering if this is something Zion wants to pursue? Joe was unsure of the income generated, but thought it was substantial. Leroy Smestad is Joe's contact person there. Joe will have Leroy talk to his

- pastor before Zion attempts to contact them. It may be a good idea for Chris Torgeson to be a part of any discussions.
- Joe Stenvold shared some information from his talk with Dorian from Lowe's regarding the landscaping. Dorian came and looked at things and is going to get some information together for Joe. Nothing will be done with the landscaping until next spring.
 - Discussion was held regarding the date for the next Council meeting. It was agreed that we would move the meeting to Tuesday, October 22nd @ 7:00pm.
 - The meeting was adjourned @ 8:30pm and Council prayed together.

Submitted by Sherry Broderick
Church Council Secretary
Zion Lutheran Church