

Zion Lutheran Church, Minot
Church Council Meeting, Tuesday, October 22nd, 2024

- Meeting called to order by President, Rich Jensen, at 7:04pm
- In attendance at this meeting: Rich Jensen, John Gruenberg, Melissa Helgeson, Gary Leslie, Joe Stenvold, Matt Stephans, Sherry Broderick, Pastor Elaine Sveet, & Pastor Natasha Kolles
- Check in and devotion: Discussion was held regarding 'Funding Forward: Shifting your Church's Staffing Model.' National data indicates that 1/2 of all churches can no longer afford a full-time pastor, with 1 in 5 pastors serving multiple congregations, and 1 in 3 pastors having other employment. Fewer people are going into seminary because they are unsure there will be positions for them. Zion is currently in a good, enviable, position, but we need to look forward to make sure this can continue. There was discussion about how we need to raise up our own pastors. Zion currently has 5 teens who are considering seminary, which is great. When we look at Zion's vision and mission, we need to look at how these things are changing so we can move/change with it. Communication is essential between staff leaders and congregation. We want a balance of clergy/staff led and lay led leadership within our church. Following discussion, Council prayed.
- No visitors present, no introductions needed, and no executive session needed tonight.
- Agenda: Two items were added to the Agenda under New Business ~ item D will be something that came up with the Trust Committee, and item E will be a staff education request. A motion to approve the Agenda as amended was made by Joe Stenvold. It was seconded by Sherry Broderick. Motion passed.
- The Consent Agenda was reviewed, including meeting minutes from September, pastors' reports, youth director reports, and staff/committee meeting notes. The financial report was not ready to be included in the packet. Melissa Helgeson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Matt Stephens. Motion passed.
- Discussion was held regarding the Financial Report: Pastor Elaine shared some information regarding the Financial Report. They had a meeting with Accounting Solutions and the Trust Committee, which didn't really help as much as they were hoping with the way the report is organized (they are wanting something closer to fund accounting). Pastor Elaine reported that we have about a \$5,000 surplus at this time, so we are in good shape. Office staff (Amanda) and Pastor Elaine are going through ledgers and hoping to continue to improve the layout of the finances so they are easier for all to understand.
- New Business:
 - A. Report from Lutefisk Fundraiser: Joe Stenvold shared the results of the Lutefisk dinner fundraiser. Revenue from that dinner is currently \$7,864.65 (not final numbers). It was a great success. Joe agreed to take on the fundraiser again next year and said the Korsliens also agreed to help. Joe and committee plan to tweak a few things for next year (more tables, some supervision/job tweaks, possibly more donations from the community, maybe a tip jar for the youth fund, t-shirts to sell/sponsor for t-shirts~"I Survived the Zion Lutefisk Dinner" or something like it).
 - B. Adjustment to Office Manager pay: October 2nd was Amanda's one year anniversary. A 5% raise was built in for her after one year. She has earned her raise; however, the raise should have started in October and is not set to start until November. Melissa Helgeson

made a motion to pay Amanda the \$169 for the additional raise pay for the month of October. Seconded by Gary Leslie. Motion passed.

- C. Budget General Items: We need to get some help with the budget. Discussion was held about having each Committee (Personnel, Building & Grounds, etc.) look over their budget items and give budget recommendations to the Finance Committee who will then give recommendations to Council to help to build the budget. All info needs to be given to the Finance Committee prior to their meeting on November 18. The Finance Committee will have the information to Council in December so that Council can get the budget finalized by their January meeting. The January Council meeting will be moved up to January 14th, so that the budget can be finalized and all information ready for the Annual Meeting on February 2nd, 2025.

We should plan to start notifying the congregation of the February 2nd Annual Meeting starting in the December newsletter. We will also have to go over the membership list prior to the Annual Meeting to determine those eligible to vote.

Rich Jensen later confirmed that our bylaws require that we make an announcement during worship services 2 weekends prior to the Annual Meeting and that we send out an electronic/email notice or mail out a letter so that everyone that is eligible to vote is notified. This has to be done 10 days ahead of time.

- D. Trust Information: Pastor Elaine shared that the Trust Committee approved the request for the mission funds like they did last year ~ \$3,000 for LCM and \$3,000 for Metigoshe Ministries, plus they are taking over the cost of the Bibles and Catechisms, which was \$2,500 last year and will be \$2,000 this year. This is an \$8,000 savings for the Zion budget which is good news. Also, Pastor Elaine had noticed that some of the 13 Memorial Fund options listed in the newsletter are inactive. She brought this to Trust and they are now recommending that we remove the inactive funds from the list. The current 13 funds include: Zion General Fund, Building Fund, Community Outreach, Education, Global Missions, Hand Bells, Music Ministry, Playground, Prayer Shawl, Trust, Youth Ministry, ZLCW, and Undesignated Memorial Fund. The ones that were suggested to be removed were: Global Missions (funded with a special offering), Hand Bells (Music Ministry covers this), Prayer Shawl (currently has quite a bit of money and has not been active), and Youth Ministry (people tend to write a check directly to Youth Ministry and Education could cover costs here as well). It was also recommended that the name Playground be changed to "Outdoor Enhancement" which is how it is referred to in everything else. Melissa Helgeson made a motion to approve the recommended changes to the memorial trust accounts/funds (removing those 4 accounts) and for Trust to update the name of the Playground fund to Outdoor Enhancement. Seconded by John Gruenberg, Motion passed.
- E. Staff Education Request: There has been a request, to be sent to the Trust Committee, for staff education. Chris Torgeson and Kortni Plorin are requesting funds for registration and travel to attend the National ELCA Network Extravaganza in Louisville, KY, in January, 2025. This conference is an opportunity for Chris & Kortni to network with other colleagues as well as attend workshops and courses to enhance their professional skills/ministries at Zion. There is a course on Mental Health Resources for Youth Ministry which would be beneficial for Kortni who has been dealing with mental health issues in her ministry. Discussion was held regarding: the budget and if any of these funds are available, the length of the conference and the expenses, sending one or both staff members, which year of the budget the funds would come out of, possibly having some funds coming out of the budget and the remaining funds going to Trust in a request, etc. After much discussion, Council agreed that they would like Chris &

Kortni to present their reasons for/benefits from attending the conference to Council at the November 19th meeting before making a decision regarding the recommendation to the Trust Committee. At the November meeting, Council may have a better idea of the budget as well. Rich Jensen will let Chris & Kortni know what will be expected of them regarding their presentation at the November meeting. There was a motion made by John Gruenberg to table this discussion/decision until the November 19th Council meeting. It was seconded by Matt Stephens. Motion passed.

- Pastor Elaine brought up discussion about a date for the Trust Committee to consider this if we don't make a decision on it until November. Rich Jensen said he would have some discussion with the president of Trust just to see if this is a request they would consider (if we agree to pass it on). Trust recently asked not to get these kind of requests, so that is not guaranteed.

○ Old Business:

- A. CD Rates: The \$50,000 (previously discussed) has been put into a CD for 12 months.
- B. Action team on LeaderWise report from Fall 2023: We got a report from LeaderWise last fall with some things they observed with our congregation and some of the recommendations they made/ideas going forward. We had talked about putting an action team together, but this hasn't been done yet. Rich Jensen was wondering if we want to do something at this time or hold off for awhile. Our mission and vision may need to be changed going forward. Pastor Natasha will have the LeaderWise information added to the packet for the next meeting and further discussion will be held at another time.
- C. Status on the installation of HVAC: Joe Stenvold reports that it's running temporarily right now. Joe thinks Mike is done with his part and the gas is in. Now it's time for Joe to do his part.
- D. Education attendance numbers (church school, confirmation, youth group, adult, trends?): Rich Jensen will ask Chris & Kortni for their numbers and how we're trending.
 - Melissa Helgeson brought up discussion regarding confirmation and the feeling that it goes on too long for kids. She feels like kids get burnt out and exhausted with it, and that the time they are away from confirmation classes (9th and 10th grade) makes it more difficult to complete things/write faith statements as juniors. Many other churches confirm kids at the end of their 9th grade year. Both Pastor Elaine and Pastor Natasha shared that there may be some changes coming and we can have future discussion about it.

○ Meeting adjourned @ 9:00pm. Council prayed together.

○ The next council meeting is scheduled for November 19th @ 6:30pm

Submitted by Sherry Broderick
Church Council Secretary
Zion Lutheran Church