

Zion Lutheran Church, Minot
Church Council Meeting, May 20th, 2025

- Meeting called to order by President, Joe Stenvold, at 6:29pm.
- In attendance at this meeting: Joe Stenvold, Amanda Winkels, Sherry Broderick, Mike Uran, Nicole Martin, Rondi Deaver, Harry Summers, Paster Elaine Sweet, and Pastor Natasha Kolles
- Check in and devotion: Pastor Elaine shared a devotion and group tower building activity. Brief discussion was held on how diversity can be beneficial. Pastor Elaine finished with a closing prayer.
- Visitors were acknowledged: Kortni Plorin, Chris Torgeson, Chris Baker
- Agenda: Harry Summers made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Nicole Martin. Agenda approved.
- The Consent Agenda was reviewed, including meeting minutes from April, pastors' reports, youth director reports, and staff/committee meeting notes. Pastor Elaine requested a correction in the wording of the April minutes re: the section on the denial of tax exemptions for churches housing child care centers. Sherry Broderick will make that correction.
 - A motion was made by Amanda Winkels to accept the Consent Agenda without the financial report and with the correction to the minutes. Seconded by Rondi Deaver. Consent Agenda accepted.
- Discussion was held regarding the Financial Report:
 - Mike Uran highlighted pg. 7 of the Profit & Loss Budget vs. Actual (YTD) section of the report ~ item #401.1, Regular Offerings. We recently received a large pledge of \$51,000 which will need to be spread over the year. Currently, our offering appears well over anticipated offering due to this large donation (currently \$152,392.86 vs. the budged \$135,000). Our Rebel Give offering was also higher than expected (about \$8,500 more) as we had kind of been guessing at that amount previously. Overall, we are looking pretty good right now. Total income of \$234,614.85 vs. a budged amount of \$175,542.60.
 - Expenses ~ line item #500, Program ~ we are about \$1,400 over budget; line item #708, Insurance ~ was paid. This is paid yearly and was \$15,058.
 - At the most recent meeting of the Finance Committee, Bruce McLean had remembered the insurance amount being a little lower. Pastor Elaine, Amanda Babcock, and Mike Uran looked into that this morning. There had been talk about lowering the insured building replacement cost. This would result in an \$863 reduction in cost. Bruce McLean thought lowering the replacement cost was a go, but this needed further discussion.
 - Line item #766.2, Lutefisk/Fish Fry ~ now has its own line item ~ nothing was budgeted as these were new events year.
 - Line item #723, Software ~ this was high as it was paid at the beginning of the year.
 - Line item #806, Pastors' pensions ~ this was higher than budgeted. Chris Torgeson's pension (or part of it) is now included in this line item (and was previously shown in another area), and Pastor Elaine thought there had also been a double payment, so this should even out as the year goes on.
 - Net income of \$18,039.85; corrected net income of \$28,422.89.
 - Overall, our offering is currently stronger than in previous years.
 - Another item discussed during the Finance Committee meeting was Zion's Visitor newsletter and ways we could save costs. Switching from color printing to black and

white or reducing the amount of newsletters printed/sent out per year. Examples of color vs. black and white copies were passed around. Approximately 180 households get emailed and printed forms of the newsletter. If we were to switch to black and white, we could save approximately \$838.60/year. If we were to switch to black and white and only send it out 6 times/year rather than monthly, we could save approximately \$1,677.20/year. Council had discussion regarding these options. Pastor Elaine shared that we need to mail out 200 copies to get the bulk mail rate. If we wanted to break even in cost without the bulk mail rate, we would need to get the mailed copy number down to 60 or less. It was pointed out that older members really like/rely on the printed newsletter. Amanda Babcock gets many comments from people on how they really like the newsletter and how it looks. It costs us about \$130 per month for the printed copies. There was then talk about having people/businesses sponsor the monthly newsletter. It was agreed that we pursue this and put an ad in the June Visitor asking if there is any interest in sponsoring the monthly newsletter (putting their ad in the newsletter they sponsor). Council agreed that at this time, they prefer the color print, and want to look at sponsorship to cover the cost. If this is not successful, Council will have further discussion in the future. A motion was made by Amanda Winkels to have Pastor Elaine and Amanda Babcock work on pursuing the idea of sponsorship for the newsletter. This was seconded by Harry Summers. Motion passed.

- Discussion was held regarding lowering the insured replacement cost of the building for a savings of \$863/year. After brief discussion, a motion was made by Harry Summers to take the recommendation of Bruce McLean, chair of the Finance Committee, to adjust the insurance coverage valuation of the building to 4,505,000 (\$700,000 less than the previous valuation), for a savings of \$863/year. Motion seconded by Rondi Deaver, Motion passed.
- A motion was made by Amanda Winkels to accept/approve the Financial Report. Seconded by Nicole Martin. Motion passed.

○ New Business:

A. End of the Year Report from Chris & Kortni:

- Chris Torgeson ~ There were 102 church school students this year (81 last year), 35 adult volunteers, 11 new church school families. Chris also led Chair Yoga, worked with OWLS, worked on music with Pastor Natasha, and held Adult Studies. Moving some of the Kid's Sabbath days to Wednesday nights was successful. The Food, Faith, & Family Coordinator, Diana McLean, did an awesome job. The creation of a food prep team was very helpful and it was nice to have the salad bar back. Chris will be looking for someone to replace Diana in the fall as she is not staying on in her position due to other commitments.
- Kortni Plorin ~ There were 132 kids in 6-11th grade confirmation and 10 new families. There were 92~6-9th grade students and 25 adult guides; 17~10th grade students that met with their mentors for 6 weeks during Lent; 12~11th grade students that were confirmed; and 24 seniors that were recognized on Mother's Day/Senior Sunday. Youth Group attendance was 15-23 kids weekly. The plan is for Youth Group to meet every other week over the summer, starting June 4th. Kortni was on the Western ND LYO Board for which Zion has 3 youth involved, and she has a mission trip in Seattle planned for July 26th-August 2nd.

B. First Western New Bank Fees/Gate City Bank:

- Pastor Elaine went over some of the new fees that First Western will be charging as of June 2nd. The two main changes that will affect us are: 1.) A charge for deposits. A charge of \$.06/deposit which will amount to \$12.48/year (4 deposits/week) and 2.) A \$10/month fee which will amount to \$120/year (previously no fee). A total increase of \$132.50/year in new fees. Amanda immediately changed Zion to electronic statements rather than paper mailed statements which would be an extra \$4/month.

We are unsure if there will be a charge for our safety deposit box. Gate City Bank has now reached out to Zion to offer their services if we would like to move our banking there. They have asked if we would like to set up an initial meeting with them (Gate City).

- After discussion of what constitutes a 'deposit', we are unsure if the fee would be charged for each check deposited or each complete deposit made, which would be a big change in the anticipated fees. Joe Stenvold, Mike Uran, and Amanda Babcock will plan to go to First Western and visit with someone regarding which checking account we have and the specifics on the upcoming fees prior to talking about looking into other banking options. They hope to get a meeting with First Western scheduled next week.

C. Discernment Update:

- Pastor Natasha shared that Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Bismarck voted to call her as their new Associate Pastor of Congregational Life. She has decided to accept that call in the upcoming weeks. She will formalize this with a letter of resignation. She is hoping to use her remaining vacation and sick days as well as be available for support in preaching, staff collaboration, and pastoral care. She plans to be available on Wednesdays and Thursdays as well as the weekends she is scheduled to preach and would be available for funerals or other emergencies. Pastor Natasha is requesting that her last day in the office be July 20th. She would then use her remaining vacation days, making her official final day of call August 20th, 2025.
- A motion was made by Harry Summers, Personnel Committee member, to approve Pastor Natasha's proposal. It was seconded by Amanda Winkels. Motion approved.

○ Old Business:

A. Council helping with Rebel Give:

- Council had no one stop to sign up during the time offered. There were a few people that stopped with questions and one that said they would go home and sign up, but Amanda Babcock said there were no new sign ups in Rebel Give. There was discussion on possibly trying this again in the fall or during the stewardship drive. There was also talk about considering doing a gift card drawing from those that sign up as incentive.

B. Gas Voucher Council Sponsorship-Paid:

- There was discussion on ideas for future sponsorship (without too much advertising as we want to avoid too many people asking for help/abusing the system). If anyone has any ideas, they can share with Pastor Natasha and it could be put in the July newsletter. Pastor Elaine also shared that we should think of a way to thank those sponsors, those that support Food, Fatih, Family and the gas vouchers (possibly in the newsletter).

C. Staff Support Committee:

- We talked about changing the name of this to "Mutual Ministry" for rostered leaders and staff. Pastor Elaine shared that August would be a good time to make changes in the names of the committees, etc. and update that at next annual meeting. A good way to get started would be to have current staff each bring a name forward as a possible committee member. The Pastors and staff will discuss this and bring more information to Council at the June meeting. Discussion also needs to happen as to how we want the Personnel Committee to function; it needs to be separate from Mutual Ministry. Discussion needs to happen regarding these guidelines. We can also ask the Bishop to come in for some training in this area if necessary.

D. Synod Consultation Panel Report:

- Council needs time to talk about this report. We should try to meet and generate some questions (for the Bishop) prior to the June Council meeting on May 17th. Once we have more specific questions, we can ask the Bishop to come in to clarify those questions/information. It was agreed that those interviewed by the panel will meet on June 10th @ 6:30pm to discuss this further. This will be considered a special meeting, not an open Council meeting.
- The next council meeting is scheduled for June 17th. Pastor Elaine will be available on Zoom for this meeting as she will be in Canada.
- A motion was made by Nicole Martin to adjourn the meeting at 8:39pm. Amanda Winkels seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned.
- Pastor Natasha led us in prayer.

Submitted by Sherry Broderick
Church Council Secretary
Zion Lutheran Church