

First Lutheran Council Meeting – February 25, 2024

The meeting was called to order by President Jennifer at 11:00 AM.

Council Members present included: Jennifer, Cindy, Kevin, Lynn, Joy, Robin, Ardyce. Other members in attendance included: Glenn Beard, Frances Olson, & Minister Matthew.

Devotions were led by Cindy. She read about the 3 themes of Lent: "Pause, Ponder, & Pray". We were encouraged to think about these important aspects and to take time to reflect and renew ourselves as we participate in this Lenten season. Proverbs 28:26 was a verse given to guide us through this time of Lent.

Approval of Agenda: Cindy added to the agenda for "Old Business" regarding an upcoming audit. Kevin also brought up adding discussion for payment of the new freezer. A motion was made by Joy to approve the agenda with these proposed additions; seconded by Cindy. Motion carried.

Approval of the January 21, 2024 minutes: A motion to approve the Minutes was made by Joy; seconded by Lynn. Motion carried.

Approval of the Council Reorganizational Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Joy; seconded by Cindy. Motion carried.

STAFF REPORT: Matthew indicated things were going well. He referred the council to page 7 of our meeting packet in which he quoted Jesus in Matthew 11:28 – "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Alluding to the idea that 2024 is a new year in our church with a lot of positivity going on. Lent service had an inspiring number of guests- 49. Cindy inquired if there are written copies for the Bible Studies that take place after the Lent services. Matthew said he could share the bible passages and notes. The LYO went to Red Lodge and had a successful trip. Matthew conducted 5 baptisms. Matthew is also doing 3 visitations and feels this outreach ministry will continue to improve. Cindy requested the church's message on the answering machine could be changed to read "8:00 to 3:00 instead of 8:30. Matthew will take that up with Tarri.

TRUST REPORT: Frances Olson shared documents with the Council to help new council members understand our two trusts and their availability for use by FLC. She explained the 4 missions of the Rothe Trust which are as follows: funding Christian Education, donating to religious activities in ELCA, providing college scholarships. They will also support capital projects up to ¼ of cost of project along with matching donations from congregation. Frances presented the council with a draft of a "request form" required for withdrawing funds from the Rothe Endowment fund. These forms will be made available at the church office. The Iverson Trust money is available to FLC with no restrictions as the Council deems appropriate. These funds may be drawn by written request from the Church Council provided in the council minutes.

Frances also provided the Council members the statement revealing the January 17, 2024 financial statement for both funds. Trust committee meets quarterly. Francis invited members to attend the next Trust meeting on April 22 @ 5:30.

WELCA: Joy shared the minutes from the February 12th meeting. Joy indicated there will be a change up in their meeting as the bible study will be done first and then they will proceed into the business meeting. Ash Wednesday is on February 14th and Lent services will begin on February 21st with the Church council in charge of serving soup & sandwich supper on the 21st. Val is making a sign up sheet for funeral callers to volunteer for 2 months at a time. The WELCA group decided to skip the Spring Luncheon and expand the Fall Bazaar that was initiated last year. Upper Missouri Cluster Spring gathering will be April 27th at the First Lutheran in Williston.

FINANCE: Kevin introduced the use of a new spread sheet which will facilitate tracking of all the various spendings throughout the month and the methods by which payments are made. Transactions will be itemized and this will allow us to be more accountable with our spending. Kevin verified why there was such an increase in Utilities regarding the Church Phone for the month of January. We now have installed a brand new system and upgraded our phones to improve efficiency, so the total for January includes this purchase. Discussion was held on a "general CD" which came due for renewal in December. Cindy made a motion to add Kevin Sullivan and Ardyce Alvesshere's names to allow authorization to make decisions regarding the management of this CD at Cornerstone Bank and remove Karla Quale's name. Lynn seconded. Motion carried. Matthew suggested this CD could eventually be earmarked for something specific in the future.

Cindy made a motion to approve the Financial Report; Robin seconded. Motion carried. The date for the next Finance Committee Meeting has yet to be determined.

PROPERTY: Glenn Beard addressed the Council to give an update on various ongoing projects. The Parsonage will be sold as a whole unit with the house and the lot going as one unit as this was voted on by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. Glenn has solicited bids from 3 different companies and has only received a quote from one for repainting the fellowship hall and the food pantry hall along with the Sunday School area. He also has been approached by the Food Pantry and they were volunteering to paint their space themselves. He was wondering what action he should take on this matter. Discussion was held. Jennifer suggested we could wait with this project until we hold the strategic planning session in April. Glenn has been in contact with G & R and the controls will be here at the end of March. He recommended the Council needs to come together to decide how we want the building to set when it is not occupied. Each Department or section of the church has the ability to be scheduled separately. Glenn will put together a map of zones to more easily address the climate control for each section of the church. Top Gun Asphalt of Miles City will come out and observe the property to decide what to do. It will be dependent on weather as to when this project will begin. Money is budgeted for this project.

Glenn indicated the freezer molding on the east side of the church needs to be replaced before we start having water problems. MDU has replaced the gas meter with a new one.

Glenn will be meeting with the building commissioner regarding the “new” signage and informed the Council of various regulations we will have to abide by. The signage cannot go past the property line on any side. Glen and Jennifer will work with Indigo Signs to create a design to present to the City for their approval. Glenn suggested a 4-sided LED sign so it can be viewed from any direction. Robin addressed the Council regarding technology issues such as the cost of a work station, possibly negotiating the salary paid to our current IT assistant, and looking into Windows Enterprise. Robin also gave an update on property insurance. He received a quote from Bravera. They are less expensive and are local so they may be easier to access if assistance is ever needed. Ardyce will check in with Church Mutual as it seems they have a better policy, but are most costly. Our renewal isn’t up until August so there is time to shop around.

The next Property Committee meeting is scheduled for March 1, 2024 at 11:30 AM.

WORSHIP: Marcia Hellandsaas facilitated a new Bible study based on the book Crossing the Bar which began on February 19th at 10:00 AM with 8 people participating. Easter Brunch is being organized with Tarri Wenstad leading the planning. Anne, Celeste, and Matthew are calling members to verify information as we are preparing for a new pictorial directory in the future. They are also collecting additional information for the membership listing. Discussion was held on the church calendar presented for the year 2024. The next Worship Committee meeting is March 6 at 9:00 AM.

Stewardship and Evangelism: Lynn reported on the success of the LYO Seafood Boil as it was well attended and proved to be a profitable event. The proceeds will be given to support the LYO’s trip to the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July of 2024. Matthew has lined up volunteers from our church to participate in the Feed My Starving Children event from 12:00-2:00 on Saturday, March 23. Interested members are to sign up in the church narthex and designate a t-shirt size as we will be ordering T-shirts to represent our church. Matthew would like to get a Volunteer Team going at First Lutheran to recruit and assist people in setting up events such as Clean Up the Patch, Backpack program, etc. Work is continuing on updating the membership list. Matthew will contact Brad Dokken to find out specific protocol on becoming a member of First Lutheran. S & E members will be coordinating the annual Easter Egg Hunt with the Youth Committee. Plans are being made for the annual Ladies Tea on April 21st. Anna Schwartz is in charge of this event with “a purse party” theme. A Thank You to the Care Team was shared from Val Swensrud. The next S & E Committee meeting will be on March 5 @ 5:00 @ Teddy’s.

YOUTH & EDUCATION: This committee did not meet in January, although carried out their business through phone calls. Discussion was held on making the LYO more of an organization with the hope to get a Youth Advisor that can coordinate things with the minister. Another goal would be to have Youth Officers. The LYO account needs to have better checks and balances with possibly a monthly Treasurer’s Report. Sunday School continues to be strong, but it needs

an account to store the money from various activities like the Noisy Buckets proceeds. It was decided to have a line item in our FLC account for the Sunday School money rather than having their own account. The LYO National Youth Convention kids will be meeting the last Sunday of every month to start getting organized for the New Orleans trip. The LYO indicated they would like to start a fundraiser and sell a variety of clothing and other items to promote our Sunday School, LYO, and our Lutheran congregation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Ardyce is looking into archiving items on our website and our app so that the most current services are easier to find. At the current time, a person has to scroll past old services or search the “Library” to find the most recent service.

The details for the selling of the parsonage were reviewed. The congregation voted to sell the lot and the parsonage as ONE unit at the Annual Meeting. There have been inquiries to buy just the lot. There are parties interested in purchasing the parsonage according to Katie. Discussion was held on the asking price for the property. Jennifer reminded the Council of the CMA that was provided initially by Katie. Cindy made a motion to sell at the recommended CMA price. Robin seconded. Motion carried.

President Jennifer indicated the Executive Council needs to set up a meeting to have the Semi-annual Staff and Council review. It was decided to meet on Wednesday, Feb 28 at 5::00 PM for Matthew.

Discussion was held on the Annual Meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: Recommendations have been made for quite a while about conducting an audit of our church. Matthew has been in touch with the Senate Office and they indicated an audit should be done once a year. We would need to make up an audit team. One can go “outside” or “inside” to complete this process. Discussion was held on all the aspects of an audit such as “how many years back would one go, who will conduct the audit, how much it will cost” etc. Joy indicated that the dissolution of the Parish might be the perfect time to start an audit. An audit then would start at the beginning of 2023 and go through January 2024. Ardyce contact Vicki Karpyak to see if she would be willing to do our audit.

A new freezer was installed in the kitchen. Glenn added cabinetry next to it as a landing place for purses, etc. Cindy made a motion to request the Trust Committee use money from the Iverson Trust to pay for the new freezer. Joy seconded. Motion carried.

Cindy made a motion to add Kevin Sullivan for “Read Only” online access to the First International Bank and Trust account. Lynn seconded. Motion carried.

Strategic Planning was discussed. Members of this committee - Jennifer, Marcia, Joy, and Matthew visited with Brad Dokken and Bishop Craig. Bishop Craig will facilitate and work with the committee to create a Strategic Planning Session to fit our needs.

He will be here Saturday April 27 & lead worship on the 28th **All council members need to attend this session if possible.**

Installation of the 2024 Church Council members will be held during the church service on Sunday, March 17th.

Jennifer asked the Council about their preferences of times for the Summer Council meetings. A tentative schedule was developed to accommodate schedules.

Monday, June 17th at 5:30

Wednesday, July 17th at 5:30

Wednesday, August 21st at 5:30

Our Church will be hosting Vacation Bible School this Summer. It will run from June 18th- 19th from 5:00- 8:30 PM, with a program on the following Sunday.

Matthew is checking into new type of media offered to churches Right Now Media is similar to Netflix, although it has more of a Christian-based theme. Once he has more information he will present it to the council. Likely this can be paid by the Rothe Trust as it will fall under education.

The next meeting will be held on Sunday, March 17th at 11:00 AM.

Robin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ardyce seconded. Motion carried.

The Council concluded the meeting by reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Haugeberg, First Lutheran Church Council Secretary

Addendum/Addition to the February 25th Church Council Meeting minutes:

Cindy Geiger made a motion stating Joy Patten and Jennifer Sorenson have authorization to sign real estate documents for the sale of the FLC parsonage property located at 304 6th Ave NE, Watford City, ND. Marcia Hellandsaas seconded. Motion carried.