

**St. Mary's Lutheran Church
Congregation Council Meeting
December 17, 2009**

Present:

David Buggs	Dennis Eirich	Janet Schoettler
Barbara Campbell	Randy Hansche	Andrew Schroeder
Sharon Corso	Marilyn Jensen	Steve Seymour
Kate Dischler-Noreen	Gail Musolf	Ken Winkle

Pastor David Raben **Excused:** Laura Dietrich, David Mielke, Jon Svatek
Pastor Brian Alberti

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Council Vice-President, Steve Seymour.

Devotions: Devotions were led by Steve Seymour, Council Vice-President.

Congregational Forum: Dave Larsen, Bookkeeper, was present to answer any questions relating to the 2010 budget proposals.

Approval of Agenda: December 17, 2009

Motion: Barbara Campbell

Seconded: David Buggs

Passed

Approval of Minutes: November 19, 2009

Motion: David Buggs

Seconded: Randy Hansche

Passed

Treasurer's Report and Attendance Report: Sharon Corso, Financial Secretary, noted the following items from the Finance Committee Report as of December 10, 2009:

- It was a good month overall – receipts outpaced disbursements by \$8,533.00.
- Line by line accounts look correct, without any issues.
- Committee reviewed the 2010 budget numbers for the final time. Comfortable with current version. A motion was passed to recommend the current 2010 budget numbers (pending the results of the current pledge drive) to Council for approval.
- Discussed options for refinancing – Made motion to recommend to Council to use the services of the M & I Bank for our loan and banking needs. (25 year amortization, 6.5% interest, 3 year fixed rates.). Best quote received of the five (5) that responded back.
- Proposal to change our fiscal year from January – December, to July – June.
- Operating Reserve Account balance - \$11,619.92
- Short Term (Property) Reserve Account balance - \$38,548.91
- Long Term Reserve Account balance - \$42,590.15 (Council determines disbursements from this account)
- Dedicated Accounts balance-\$49,111.01 (which includes the \$11,619.92 Operating Reserve)
- Designated Memorial Fund Account balance - \$139,168.52 (which includes the

\$38,548.91 and \$42,590.15 reserves

- Building Fund Account balance - \$1,260.61

November attendance report: 551 – average to date, 498.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Brian:

- Able to participate on Dec. 5-6th, in the election of the new Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod.
- Visited the Shalom Center to find out about the partnership between St. Mary's and this agency.
- Joined the board for Urban Outreach.
- During December, has been in discussion with staff on the future of the confirmation program.
- Discussion with Pastor David about beginning a life group with a particular focus in engaging members of the congregation with regard to service and outreach.
- Noted his four areas of focus: confirmation, teaching adults, worship planning, and social justice.

Pastor David:

Pastor David spoke on the success of the new member's team with their involvement and connection with those who will, and have joined St. Mary's. A list was given to each Council member with the names of the new members that were received on December 6, 2009. A motion was made by David Buggs and seconded by Janet Schoettler to accept these new members. Motion passed. Council then broke into groups to follow-up with more discussion of the Vision 2010 goals for St. Mary's. Pastor Raben then noted the following items in his report:

- Finished LIFEgroup 101 with a retreat in Racine for 24 adults. Topic was Spiritual Gifts.
- Staff is preparing for Advent 4 and Christmas Eve/Day.
- Encourage everyone to be aware that many guests and visitors will be with us during the holidays and to please park away from the building to make room for the elderly and visitors.
- New members were received on December 6, 2009.
- There will be coverage for emergencies after Christmas from the pastoral staff.
- Christmas program for Cross Training this Sunday at the 10:30 service.
- Bible presentation to 2nd graders on January 17, 2010.
- New Adult Bible class begins in January; "It takes a village to read the Bible!"
- E-Team training for new members will begin soon. Looking for more names.

Business Manager Report: In Jerry Willing's absence, Steve Seymour passed out information on the Mortgage Re-Financing Bank Proposals. After discussion, a motion was made by Barbara Campbell to go with the M & I Bank proposal per the Finance Committee's recommendation. Seconded by Randy Hansche. Motion passed. Steve Seymour then presented the proposal of changing our fiscal year from January-December, to July 1 – June 30.

Benefits of this plan:

1. Budget planning aligns with the church year program
2. Financial reporting aligns with the church year program.

Implementation Plan and Timelines were then discussed. Highlighted areas were as follows:

- Annual congregational meeting would be held at the end of July.
- Budget process would take place March through June.
- Annual report preparation would take place in June/July.
- Annual Stewardship campaign would continue on the current calendar year basis.

- Annual contribution statements would be published on the calendar year.
- Reporting annually to the ELCA would provide membership statistics as of December 31.
- Council members serving in 2010 would add 6 months to their term. Their term would end at the annual meeting held in July in the appropriate year for each member.

After more discussion, Sharon Corso made the motion to have the fiscal year changed to June 30th; to add 6 months to the term of those serving in 2010 and take the results to the annual meeting in January for approval. Seconded by Randy Hansche. Motion passed.

Randy Hansche then spoke and informed everyone of his decision to resign from Council so he will be able to devote more time to the Property Committee. Steve Seymour explained that his name (Steve Seymour) will be placed on the ballot to indicate he will be able to serve out Randy's term plus what he has left to serve on his own term. The Nominating Committee has been notified of this. Marilyn Jensen made the motion to accept Randy's resignation. Seconded by Ken Winkle. Motion passed. Randy was thanked by Council for the faithful service to St. Mary's.

Steve Seymour reported that 49% of the pledges have been received so far. Of these there has been an approximate increase in 95 of the pledges and 148 with no changes. Eighty-three (83) members responded that they were using the Scrip program. Budget Hearing Meeting Follow-up Information sheets (from December 6, 2009) were passed out. The presentation reviewed the footnotes to the budget to explain budgetary items of general interest. Items of discussion:

- Low attendance at the meeting – only 7 congregational members; remaining were council members & finance committee members; communicate church needs
- Re-financing impact
- Custodial services
- Benevolences
- Cash flow
- Church Management Software
- Health Benefit costs
- Staff wages and benefits – Disclosure & comparisons

Steve spoke on the impact of contribution increases:

- What it will take to balance the budget and build reserve
- Additional ways to support the church is through Scrip.
- If contribution targets are not met to balance the budget, action will have to be taken.
- We must communicate our needs to the members by:
 1. Using leaders and chairs of committees to communicate the need for giving & increasing our pledges and how this can help with the needs of the church.
 2. Mailings to the congregation.
 3. Faith talks.

After a lengthy discussion on the budget, line items, and the need for communication to the members, it was proposed that the Stewardship and Finance committees will get together and draw up a plan before the annual meeting. No further steps will be taken to approve the budget until these committees come back with their findings.

Old Business:

Committee Report Highlights:

Education – Andy Schroeder reported that the committee is looking into expanding and offering more opportunities for Bible study classes between services.

Property – Randy Hansche reported that lighting is now in the garage and he will be dividing the spaces up for storage. He also noted he has a “healthy” list of projects that need attention in and around the church.

Synodical Affairs – Kate Dischler-Noreen reminded everyone to review the e-mail that was sent out to Council members regarding the ELCA new policies relating to the issue of gender and leadership in the ELCA from the recent Assembly Meeting and members wanting limited contributions to the ELCA as a result of that decision. (This e-mail was forwarded to Council members on behalf of Synodical Affairs – date 12/8/09)

Homeland Ministry – Kate Dischler-Noreen made mention that Jason Wick will be returning home from active military duty and the committee’s concern how they can make his transition and re-connection to civilian life run smoothly for his family. Seven (7) Christmas packages were recently sent out to the servicemen in combat areas. Donations for the packages were received from St. Mary’s members, but the cost for shipping has been absorbed by the committee members.

Communications Task Force – David Buggs reported that the Kiosk should be up and running during the holidays.

E-Team – In Laura Dietrich’s absence, Pastor David reported that 15,000 “welcome” postcards were sent out to people living in the community that included December Christmas Service dates and times.

Worship, Music & Arts – Ken Winkle thanked everyone who helped with the High Tea following the Christmas Concert last Sunday.

Robert’s Rules of Order – Steve Seymour passed out a Parliamentary Motions Guide to all in attendance. Based on Robert’s Rules of Order, this should help us at the annual meeting when questions arise concerning motions and how they are introduced, debated, amended and voted upon. Suggestion was made to have someone serve as Parliamentarian at church meetings.

New Business:

Council Nominating Committee – All Council members should e-mail Steve Seymour with their suggestions for interested party’s names to be placed on the ballot to serve on the Nominating Committee at the annual meeting as soon as possible. At the present time there will be one vacated position to fill – that which was held by Georgianne Sampson.

Annual Meeting - The Annual Meeting will take place Sunday, January 31, 2010 at 1:30 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.

Council Retreat – Due to the lack of space at St. Benedict for the Council Retreat in February, Pastor David made the suggestion that perhaps the retreat might be held later in the year (late May or early June). Other suggestions:

- Carthage College
- Another Lutheran church in Kenosha
- Will check for suggestions from Jerry Willing, Business Manager

Council Connection – Randy Hansche reported no comments or issues brought to his attention. Kate Dischler-Noreen reported that a member questioned why the Hunger envelopes were not in the bulletins. This will be looked into.

Other New Business: None

Announcements:

- December 20th at the 10:30 service – Cross Training Christmas program. Reception to follow.
- Christmas Services: Eve – 5 p.m., 7 p.m., & 10:00 p.m. Christmas day – 9:00 a.m.
- Chili cook-off – January 10, 2010 at noon
- Annual Youth Rummage Sale – January 16, 2010.
- January 17, 2010 – 2nd graders receive Bibles
- Thank you notes read from: Lutherdale Ministry for recent monetary gift; Wisconsin Family Ties for use of St. Mary's facilities for parent support group meetings; Deb Hartfield for monetary gift as she pursues her seminary studies.
- Reminder that all committee chairs must have information in for annual report by December 31, 2009 and to discuss at their committee meetings if necessary, how would they reduce their budgets by another 10%.

Calendar: Next Council meeting – January 21, 2010 in the Lounge
Council connection for January – Janet Schoettler

Prayer Concerns: Charlie Vandenburg, Jerry & Georgie Willing, the Ron Miller family

Adjournment: David Buggs made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. and seconded by Randy Hansche. Motion passed. The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer in unison.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Jensen, Council Secretary

