

**Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church Council Meeting**  
**Monday, March 10, 2014**  
**7:00 PM**

Present: Heather Heckel, PE (Moehring), PK (Hunsinger), Shannon Fleming, Paul Quel (treasurer), Faith Hobson, Bruce Matson, Gerald Ransone, Jim Ingraham, Stephanie Feaser, Ernie Foltz, Glen Kellogg, Diane Kellogg (secretary)  
Absent: Ferrell Newman, Tinky Keen, Chad Foltz (excused),

- 1) Devotions - Pastor Kristin led a short devotion from a template from the service book & hymnal, sign up passed around for upcoming year.
- 2) Approve February's Minutes—changes by PK noted, approved.
- 3) Pastors' Reports
  - a) Pastor Moehring:
    - 10 new members received, contingent upon approval of church council. Clarification of what an associate member is. Unanimously approved.
    - 6 young people received first communion Sunday.
    - New men's small group led by Jim Pickels and Mitch Roberts (primarily retired men right now), using the model that Pastor Herman suggested, will be project oriented.
    - 3 slots for synod assembly are open, anyone on council can volunteer; let PE know by this Sunday.
    - Chart Diversity by Generation; how age groups break out in terms of what type of churches they attend
  - b) Pastor Hunsinger:
    - 3/30/14 is the date for the 2015 planning meeting for the ELCA youth gathering, held in July 2015 in Detroit, theme is "Rise Up to Stand With Those in Need"
    - 2014 VBS theme is "Camp Friendship" 7/13-7/17
    - Away this weekend (3/15-17)

#### 4) Ministry Team Reports

- a) Morning worship planning ministry recommends that the summer schedule (June-August) Sunday school at 9 am and Worship at 10 am. Have a fellowship experience after worship service. Fundraising by youth, music, homecoming with ice cream, board games, cookies, get out of the church, where we go do a non-event and invite others to do something. Plan is to be finished by noon with whatever we have planned. **Discussion:** Would people really come at 9 for Sunday school? Last summer we had worship, plus a fellowship, then Sunday school. It worked well in the beginning, but Sunday school attendance dropped off near the end. Comments, late service folks thought 9 am service was too early. We will continue the 5 pm services throughout the summer. Another option is to not have Sunday school during the summer. Or we could start at 9:30? Part of the purpose of having church early is to give people more of a summer day. We like the idea of bigger events, but will people stay? Why don't we mix it up, and start at 9:30, and have a variety of things at 10:30? Do Sunday school one week, fellowship another, Bible Study another, for instance. This suggestion can be passed down to the worship planning ministry, along with considering VBS or the 5 pm service when planning Sunday services in the summer.
- b) Ernie Foltz; whenever we have youth events involving funds (ie the church is putting up something for the event, and the youth are putting up for the event), how do we deal with youth pulling out? In scouts, you find someone to take your place and your \$\$ is gone. It hasn't been a significant problem but we should set a policy, with leniency for emergencies. Get the kids and parents to sign a form stating specifically what the responsibilities are? Lost & Found and Winter Cel are just registration fees, and not much of a problem. ELCA Youth Gathering; it has more significant impact; hotels, seats on buses. Someone should write a policy and bring it back to council. Ernie will work on drafting a policy. A policy would need to be in place before October, when deposits are due for the youth gathering.
- c) Gerald volunteered to work with the Evangelism ministry and discovered it had no members, so he will start contacting members. Suggestions for members were made. Heather: Stewardship should start tomorrow as well, and be a year-round group, and have an increased scope beyond just the fall fundraiser.

#### 5) Treasurer's Report

- a) February was better than January, with a \$2300.00 deficit. 2 Sundays early in March, things are breaking even, and we will still be breaking even after next Sunday.
- b) No questions!

#### 6) New Business

- a) We need to reschedule July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting to July 21<sup>st</sup>, due to conflict with VBS
- b) Ernie: we got \$413.75 from Kroger.

## 7) Old Business

### a) Pray It Forward

- Update: last total from 3/6/2014 was \$40,111 from 54 pledges; a few more were in the offering plate. We did not get to \$43,000 but we did exceed the \$38,000, which gives us enough to cover the budget, but not increase benevolence, or increase the reserve. **Discussion:** Has each line item in the budget been scrutinized? Answer is probably yes, but the budget formation discussion is below. We don't need to discuss this year's 2014 budget, but we do need to discuss future plans, we have 4-5 months "breathing room" before we have to think about funds. Others disagree. We can't afford to put the discussion off until the fall. We don't want to repeat what we just went through. Some sort of recognition of achieving our goal should be done.

### b) Constitutional Update/Congregational Meeting

- Meeting will need to be postponed to tba; the proposed constitution must be approved by Synod before it can be brought to the congregation for review. Congregation is required to have 30 days' notice before voting on the constitution. Once Synod has approved the proposed constitution, it can be presented to the congregation for approval.

## 8) Vision Planning Group

- a) Current members, additional names needed-long range strategy, looking at what we want our congregation and its ministries to be, and how we are going to be using our financial and property resources. We need some idea of what we really need to be doing before we can move forward. But a plan will not take care of budget problems, but what we do with it can make a difference. The idea is the 4 people already volunteered plus a couple more (Shannon, Jennifer John, Bob Light, Greg Faust)
- b) We need additional people 2 others have been asked but haven't responded yet. We need to get the members this week, and they need to start.
- c) We would like to hear soon from this group. We realize that 2 months is a very short time line. **Discussion:** What examples will this group come up with? What will they say? How does that translate that into getting congregational backing? How does that work into a budget? How does this process actually work? What does it look like? Going through a vision process won't solve our budget problems. So, what is the purpose of a vision group? What will they do that provides guidance to the budget formation? PE says to make us a more discipleship congregation, we become what our vision is and that will grow our discipleship. All congregations have budget issues. We need a vision as a congregation. But what would a vision be, and how is it different from what we have now? It might be that we need to emphasize....what? Hypothetical example, we need to focus on social justice issues, address poverty, hunger, discrimination.....then that might lead to us deciding that we need to not focus on something else (say dropping music all together, again hypothetical). But there needs to be buy-in from the congregation. Redoing the total vision would be a 2-3 year process, according to Pastor Herman. We could come up with a questionnaire, and distribute that to our shepherding list, and soliciting them for input and information. We don't have 2-3 years; the best we can do is work

within our budget time frame. Is what we have to offer what people don't want? Because our membership is declining. Why is our membership declining? That is a whole new conversation. Pastor Herman tells us it is a long time to do this process. So, what is the alternative? PE, we need to do this visioning because we need to understand who we are and not trying to do what we can't do. Example is a church of primarily retirees trying to attract local families with young children, they looked at who we are and how we can serve their current members and got those members more involved in social action and bible study. If we go through the study and listen to God, we will know. These are not new questions, but we need to look at them in a different way. How do we look at them in a different way? What are we going to do that different? Look at the budget and see what the options are. If we keep kicking the can down the road, then we will just be facing these issues later. Will that improve our chances? Can we change the mission of this church within 2 months? Hope is that we will get an idea in the next couple of months that will help move the budget process along. We can't answer everything, but we hope to see recommitment and enthusiasm in our members that help us determine what our budget looks like in 2015. How to turn around from feeling like a dying congregation to one that relies on God's work, God's grace to find our mission. Why hasn't that happened in the last 10 years? We have tried, and been faithful in doing it; we've had committees, groups, meetings task forces and all manner of efforts at doing this in the past, with little coming to fruition. We need to be more intentional about it. Create a positive atmosphere that we are here for a purpose. We need to begin the process and say to ourselves that yes, there will be enthusiasm. We can't have a vision if we don't have the finances to back it up. 2015 budget will be predicated by the 2015 pledge. What will make that pledge look good? The congregation will have to be confident that we are moving in the right direction. Whatever we decide should give the congregation hope that will have a good vision. If nothing happens there is not much hope. We are better off with a plan than without one. There are lots of things we can try but they all take money. Like set up Starbucks in the fellowship hall. Free coffee! 2 months to come up with some preliminary information about what is important to people. We need to find out what is important to the congregation. Both groups would continue beyond the initial 2 months. Possibly having a budget out before pledges come in. Be proactive; get the budget before people pledge, instead of getting pledges then forming the budget. You have a vision, to accomplish that the budget committee tells how much it would cost, and then they take it to the congregation. We could start the stewardship campaign, or at least letting congregation know how much stuff costs. Waiting for pledges to come in is in a way, doing it backwards. The congregation gave us the time to take a breath; we need to know what we're going to be doing. People might be at their wit's end with giving, but they gave. Do we need to restructure? We need to be looking at all of the options. We also need to understand that there are no allusions that the pray it forward will happen again next year. Do we have a breakdown of the 53 pledges? Are they one-time donations? Suggest we give the vision group April and May, budget formation starts in June. Ministry requests due by July. Budget formation comes up with a plan by September 1. They could start tomorrow.

#### d) Guidance from Council

- All three groups need to be in communication with each other (vision, stewardship and budget formation). Need to have a person responsible for communication. Need to have a council member on the stewardship ministry.
- The vision group will contact the congregation, or most of the congregation with some set series of questions, to get the entire congregation involved. Seeking input from the congregations. What do you envision for this church? Give us some highlights, give some low points, and tell us what is missing from church. What brings you into church?
- What these groups need to do:
  - Timeline
    - Stewardship, September October, have a plan in place before that. Pledge numbers by October council meeting
    - Vision needs to get their information to the budget group by June at the latest. With feedback each month, and constant communication in the interim. Report every month

#### 9) Budget Formation

##### a) Budget formation timeline

- This needs to be a group as well. Members could be the ones proposed for the short-term committee last month (that group was charged with coming up with an emergency budget in the event that the pray it forward failed completely).
- Not just rearranging our current budget and cutting things out, looking at what we do and don't need, will need to work with the vision planning group.
- Needs to start meeting by June, the vision group will have had 2 months to come up with plans and ideas.
- When should this group need to have their recommendation? We need to show that we are working towards something.

#### 10) Constitutional Update/Congregational Meeting

- a) As we stated earlier, Synod needs to approve our proposed budget so this has to wait on their approval.

#### 11) Next Meeting: April 14 (holy week)

#### 12) Remarks for the Good of the Church/Closing

- a) Meeting adjourned 9:30 pm