

Grace Lutheran Church Council Minutes

December 17, 2015

In Attendance:

*Pastor Paul Bulgerin	*Darlyne Holle	*Aimee Lempke
*Pastor Heidi Borkenhagen	*Trudi Biefeld	John Walch
*Ruth Schmidt	*Lisa Bernd	Scott Donovan
*Jim Mulholand	*Sarah Ganaway	*Katie Eippert
*Mara Schwartz	*Melanie Arndt	*Laurie Gosselin

The meeting began at 7:20p.m. With President Elect Darlyne Holle presiding.

DEVOTION: AIM Ruth

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 2015 MINUTES

PASTOR PAUL'S REPORT:

Fall Stewardship: With about 95% of the pledges returned it looks like our estimated income for 2016 is around \$540,000. This is a \$50,000 increase over 2015.

This amount does not include any pledged giving from the new members who joined Grace last week as they have not yet turned in their commitment cards.

Our preliminary budget for 2016 is around \$545,000, so we are very close to having the money we will need. I am hoping that our new members' commitments will bring us even closer to that amount.

We had many generous increases for 2016. This is the largest single year increase in giving in my years at Grace.

Letter to the Congregation: This increased giving will enable us to pay for our new church mortgage and fund our ministry programs, but it does not allow for raises for the church staff or increased benevolence giving to keep us at or near the 10% level.

The council executive has agreed to send a letter to the congregation next week explaining this and asking for members to consider some additional giving, especially so that we can give the staff a raise.

I have sent you a copy of this letter along with my report.

End of Year Giving: We've sent out an update to all members showing them where they stand year-to-date with their 2015 giving and encouraging them to do all they can to catch up if they are behind.

We have had one member give one check already, and promise an additional gift for a total of \$5,000 additional giving in 2015. That is most generous.

Nominating Committee: We are still working to find a Church Council Secretary and chair of the Worship Committee. The committee members are talking to more potential candidates this week.

Encouraging Worship Attendance: As we briefly discussed at last month's council meeting, the staff is starting to discuss ways in which we can reach out to our members to encourage regular worship attendance. It has been down this fall and we want to make sure that when the building is completed we are already reaching out to our people to stress the worth and importance of worship.

I also want to take dedicate four weeks in 2016 to take the congregation through the evangelism program I wrote for the synod that helps congregations look at becoming more inviting places, gives some basic tools for sharing your faith with others and ways in which we can welcome people to our church home.

PASTOR HEIDI'S REPORT:

Worship: Thanks to all the musicians, volunteers, and the staff who are putting in so much effort to make our Christmas celebrations wonderful!

The choir cantata was a treat- thanks to Joyce and the choir. I'm looking forward to Grace's wonderful children leading our worship this Sunday.

I put together the service for Christmas Day and the Christmas Hymn Sing for the Sunday after Christmas (Dec 27- which is ONE service at 9 am).

HYPE Youth Group: We met on December 13 to do some planning for the coming months.

TNT: Brian and I are hosting another Hot Chocolate Party December 18, and a trip to a UWM basketball game will be January 23.

Meeting with Grafton School District: I coordinated a lunch with the Grafton clergy and the school administrators, hosted by the district. It is always mind-blowing to me to see how blessed we are to have this great community, and how eager the school district is to work with the churches. We discussed issues of safety (related to the daily shootings in our country), how we deal with those different from us (related to the hate and misunderstandings directed towards Muslims), and issues that we see due to drugs and the stigma of mental illness. It was a great discussion. We also invited them to use our building once construction is completed. We plan to host the gathering next December so they can see it.

Christmas Hymn Sing: I was able to get in touch with someone at the Ale House, and we are set for December 22, singing from 6:30-7:30. I placed a Facebook ad to promote it (cost \$20). Please come, and bring friends! It's going to be really fun!

AIM RUTH'S REPORT:

It's extra busy in December with **Sunday School Pageant and Children's Candlelight** in the same week. Things are looking good for both of them. By the meeting tonight, we will have shared our Pageant at Thursday night worship for the first time. I have some work to do on the Children's Candlelight yet. Terrific kids, Sunday School staff, parents and Children's Candlelight volunteers make these services possible, along with Ed, who turns the services I give him into bulletins and power points. So terrific working together with Eryn with the songs and bells. Hope you can join us for these great services.

Katie Eippert, Erica Dimmett, Mari Goecks and I have planned some great games and crafts for the **Shower** for Mary, Joseph and Jesus. We'll also be setting up Fellowship Hall and some of the other spaces for the Shower activities.

Finished up first half of **Confirmation** year with 7th Graders.

Had a great Christmas party with **Kids For Christ**. Mari Goecks led some awesome games and the Root Deer Floats were loved by all.

Am enjoying all the kids and their comments at **Children's Messages**.

Women of the Brunch Bible Study enjoyed our Advent/Christmas lunch and gift exchange at Messina's.

Kind of crazy knowing this is my last Christmas at Grace. I have many great memories of special services that I plan to hold onto. **Thank you**, Council Members, for all your hard work. You are such a blessing to me and this congregation. May you all have a Christmas full of joy and peace and love.

DIRECTOR OF INVOLVMENT:

Service of the month: Baby Shower for Jesus. This month our service is the baby shower for Jesus. We are collecting items to be donated to Advocates. This is the last service of the 50th Anniversary celebration year.

Time & Talents Packets: I am entering all of the Time & Talents sheets right now & will be emailing you your information as soon as possible. There are a few areas that still could use some help.

Pledge Cards: Pledge cards are still trickling in. I continue to enter them as soon as I get them & pass the information on to Pastor Paul.

Women's Book Study: My women's book study is going strong. We continue to meet on Wednesday's but will switch to Tuesday's with Heidi's group during lent.

New Member Reception: We welcomed 5 new families this month. Two women joined at the Thursday service & 3 families joined on Sunday. I really enjoy getting to know the new families. I will have their photos in the Gathering Space next week.

Statements: I just sent out reminder statements last week & finished them this week.

Construction: I continue to go to bi-weekly construction meetings & also attended a building committee meeting. Lots of changes are going on at Grace now. The special rocks that the congregation made have gone in the cement. It was so wonderful to see all of the lovely rocks become part of our firm foundation. Slabs of concrete have been poured. They are waiting for steel to come later this week. I have been working with Matt Lempke on the next phase of moving. The Adult Literacy Center will need to be out of Luther on 1/15/16. There are lots of little things I also have been working on – contracts signed, etc. It is truly an exciting time at Grace.

FELLOWSHIP:

I'm told that Thanksgiving Pie Social was it's usual success.

I'm currently putting together treats for Baby Shower for Jesus this Sunday.

Fellowship will be planning Lenten Meals.

We're also discussing options for events after New Years.

PROPERTY: No Report

CHRISTIAN CARE:

We received new members on December 6. Four families (six adults and two children) joined us across all three services.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

CEC did not meet since the last council meeting. There is no specific report.

WORSHIP: No Report

OUTREACH:

Two trunk loads of food stuffs were taken to Family Sharing; one just before Thanksgiving and one after our Thanksgiving Eve service.

No additional projects were held in December.

Family Promise Update:

Grace hosted one family, a mother and her son for the week of Dec. 6th. The family was physically staying at St. John's in Lakefield. Over thirty volunteers from Grace and our support church of Living Hope served in some capacity during that week. Things went smoothly for being out first week.

Additional monies may not be needed in regards to purchasing the mattress pads and covers as previously thought. Numerous grants were applied for and received from Thrivent. The financial aspect of hosting this week and our next upcoming week in March will be reviewed. If additional funds are needed, the mattress drive will then be considered.

Our next service will be St. Ben's in January.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

A motion was made by Mara Schwartz to approve the 2016 budget as is with the stipulation that any additional giving goes towards staff raises and or benevolence. This was second by Sarah Ganaway and carried unanimously.

VPT:

Vision Planning did not meet; however, Janet Sladky has decided that she will resume as the Chairperson for the VPT. Janet is continuing to work with the Personnel Committee to complete the two new job descriptions.

Business Old and New

News/Notes/Sharing

Closing Prayer – Pastor Heidi