

Grace Lutheran Church Council Minutes

September 25, 2014

In Attendance:

***Pastor Paul Bulgerin**

Pastor Heidi Borkenhagen

***Ruth Schmidt**

***John Conto**

***Mara Schwartz**

***Cindy Witt**

Trudi Biefeld

***Lisa Bernd**

***Roger Goecks**

***Melanie Arndt**

***Aimee Lempke**

John Walch

Scott Donovan

***Katie Eippert**

The meeting began at 7:20p.m. With President Mara Schwartz presiding. Mara opened the meeting with a prayer.

DEVOTIONAL: Mara Schwartz

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 2014 MINUTES:

PASTOR PAUL'S REPORT:

Operation Inasmuch: September 7 was a great day for Grace! God blessed us with beautiful weather, the worship service was full, the meal delicious and then about 140 of our members went out and spent the afternoon on thirteen different service projects. With the exception of one project at a senior citizen's home, where the person ended up in the hospital and our crew couldn't do their work, all the projects went well. People had a good time, helped out others and felt good about serving in our communities.

Those of us on the planning team all believe this should be the first of many Operation Inasmuch days and that this should be an annual event.

Several of the people who were helped felt moved to give gifts to the church. We are using these funds as "seed money" for next year's Inasmuch Day.

Fall Stewardship: The dates for our two Sundays dedicated to stewardship are October 5 and 12. The theme is "Grace-Filled Hearts and Grace-Filled Giving". As I stated in my report last month the major emphasis for our fall stewardship is to encourage the congregation to generous giving so we can give raises to our church staff.

The first letter to the congregation is being mailed the week of September 21. Faith commitment cards will be available on October 12 and members can start returning them October 19.

New Members' Classes: These will be held on Sundays, October 5, 12 and 19. We will receive new members at both worship services on October 19 and also, if necessary, on Thursday evening, October 16.

Building Program: I want to give my thanks to the Building Committee for their hard work this past summer which enabled the congregation to meet on September 14 to vote to hire Groth Design Group as our architect for the building program. I look forward to the next stage of our program as designs are created that will lead to a ground-breaking ceremony some time in 2015.

Beth Walch: Beth is doing her congregational contextual education work, part of her seminary training, at Grace this year. To help her gain practical experience in the area of Christian Education Beth is observing our Wednesday confirmation classes and will teach several of them. She will be working with me to lead the monthly ninth grade confirmation classes and will attend the January retreat. She will also be involved in some high school classes and lead an adult Bible study, which she has written, later in the year.

Nominating Committee: I have set up a meeting on September 28 to begin the work to recruit candidates for the council in 2015. We will be looking to fill the positions of President-Elect, Chair of Christian Care, Chair of Fellowship and the Chair of the Property Committee.

The members of the committee are Joan Tuttle, Chris Utecht, Jim Schmidt, John Walch, Pastor Heidi and me. Mara Schwartz is our advisory member.

PASTOR HEIDI'S REPORT:

Change in Hours: Things have been busy as they always are at this time of year. I am usually in the office Tuesday-Thursday, though there is some flexibility with this. It is great to have more time with my kids, but it is definitely a challenge not to have as much time in the office, especially with some of the things I'd like to add.

High School Youth Group: We're heading to Alice's Garden on October 12 to walk the labyrinth and maybe do a service project there.

Lydia Circle: We had a great start to the year, adding two new members. There are 21 ladies in the group.

Continuing Education: Lisa and I leave this weekend for the conference in Boulder on cross generational ministry, thanks to a grant from the synod. I'm very much looking forward to learning and seeing how we can implement some of these things at Grace.

New Women's Group: I would like to start another group for women (something I've been wanting to do for years). I will be using the book "Carry On Warrior: The Power of Embracing your Messy, Beautiful Life" by Glennon Doyle Melton. She is a very popular blogger. From what I posted on facebook there's quite a bit of interest, and maybe a couple different groups (moms of younger kids/moms of older kids). I would work with someone else to lead the older kids group, as I wouldn't have time to do both. I will be looking into times/dates in the coming weeks.

AIM RUTH'S REPORT:

Sunday School: Sunday's worship was a great Kick-off to our food focus – *Serving in God's Diner*. 90 parents and rotation students gathered in Fellowship Hall. We also had a good # of little ones in their classes and a good start to our 7th & 8th grade class. We are truly blessed at Grace with so many great families.

On the first Sunday of every month we will be taking a special food collection in our TouCan Plan Barrel. These donations will be added to our One Can Plan. We're also having parents sign up to prepare and serve a special food snack on that Sunday. The snack will relate to the Bible story for the month. We know the kids will love it and hope it will help more parents to connect with their child's Sunday School experience.

Confirmation: Our 7th and 8th grade classes have met twice so far and are on their way into the first semester. We have 11 students in our 8th grade and 16 in our 7th grade. I wish you all had a chance to meet these great kids. I'm thrilled with the new **re:form** Old Testament DVD and the kids loved it last night. It's good to have Beth visiting our classes. September 28th, I will meet with the 7th graders for their 4 hour workshop about our call to Serve others.

Women's Brunch Bible Study: Some of the newer women to the group have really bonded with those that have been coming for over 20 years, making for such a great group of faithful women.

Operation Inasmuch: As others have mentioned, Operation Inasmuch was a great success. The food and talent served up at the Senior Center was a great way for intergenerational ministry to take place. We had volunteers in middle school & high school all the way to adults in their 70's. I think the food servers and talent providers had as much fun as the audience.

Synod Conference: I'll be attending the Fall Synod Theological Conference at Green Lake Conference Center this coming Monday and Tuesday.

DIRECTOR OF INVOLVMENT:

Trunk or Treat & Christian Care: Korey Gierach will be helping me run Trunk or Treat! She is super creative. The bounce house has been reserved & sign up's will be put up at the beginning of October. Again, if the weather is bad, we will have table or treat in Fellowship Hall.

Time & Talents: I will be bringing a copy of last years' time & talents sheet with me to the council meeting. Please look at it & make any updates to your section.

New Members: The new member reception will be Sunday, October 19. I will be having it in between the services again. It seemed to work out a lot better during that time frame for people.

Sunday School & Confirmation: I have gotten all of the Sunday School name tags, attendance charts, reminder post cards, registration forms, updating all of the students information in our church management system, sending out an informational letter.

Confirmation information has been updated; attendance charts have been made for the year, sermon & worship notes sheets have been updated & made available for the students, plus much more.

Counters: I have started to contact people to count for the 2nd Sunday of the month. I will let you know when I have that position filled.

Cross Generation Ministry Seminar: Pastor Heidi & I will be attending Killing Sunday School & Birthing Cross + Gen Workshop Conference in Boulder, Co September 27- October 1. We leave on Saturday, September 27 & return home on October 1. I look forward to taking this class.

50th Anniversary Celebration: I have started to ask people to serve on the 50th Anniversary Committee. I plan on having the first meeting on October 16 at 7:00 p.m. If any of you would like to be on this committee, please let me know.

PROPERTY:

Our infected tree was cut down and disposed of.

Carpet cleaning is almost completely done.

A new vendor for our cleaning chemicals is being investigated as to price point and comparable quality of chemicals.

The roof leaks have been stopped, we are now dealing with a roof drain leak in one of the classrooms on the West side of the building.

Nothing further to report.

FELLOWSHIP:

We have not met in September and we do not have an event planned for October.

We plan to host a Fall Bingo Night on Saturday, November 15th starting at 6 p.m., preceded by a soup dinner and desserts later. We plan to have a bingo emcee again to provide some music and jokes to go along with the bingo and we will give out little prizes to the winners. We also will have kiddie bingo, with fall-related pictures instead of numbers, in the back of Fellowship Hall.

Also in November, on Wednesday the 26th, we will be hosting the Thanksgiving pie social after the 7 pm. service.

Our next meeting will be in early November.

****Important** – Please be aware that when I step down as the chairperson of the Fellowship Committee in early 2015, all of my committee members (Mari Goecks, Jackie Dhein and Alissa Burgos) have decided to leave as well. However, if we are needed, we all are willing to assist with the annual summer picnic. We are sorry this is the situation but we all feel it is time to let others step up with their fresh ideas and energy, while we move on to other areas in the church that can use our time and talents.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION:

Christian Ed has not met since our last meeting, so I have no report.

OUTREACH:

September has been a quiet month for Outreach. The children's coat collection is still in progress as well as the One Can Plan.

I met with Pastors Paul and Heidi on the 16th to go over the next steps with All People's Church participation. The coat drive delivery will be held off until the end of November to coincide with Pastor Heidi's sermon at the end of the month. The coat drive will be uplifted during the announcements for increase participation. Also discussed was the new tutoring programming being held on Wed nights at APC. Outreach will include the information in Grace Notes and the Good News. The participation will be individuals instead of a group going down due to the time frame of the tutoring (afternoon hours). Future participation was discussed with APC involvement with the DePaul Meal Program. This will start after their kitchen remodeling. Also discussed was Nov/ December's activity for small Bingo type prizes for Lasata. This will coincide with the youth's activity also.

I will work on getting the Outreach section of Grace's website updated.

Next St. Ben's Meal Program date is Oct 16th.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Offering is down \$31,089 compared to budget (Offering is \$289,044 while the budget is at \$320,133).

Offering is below last year by \$2,421 as well.

Staff Salaries are below budget by \$9,983 (Salaries are \$214,387 YTD with a budget of \$224,370).

Total Expenses are below budget by \$12,928 (YTD Expense \$309,405 with a budget of \$322,333).

YTD Revenue is under expenses by \$17,807 ((Total Income of \$291,598 with expenses of \$309,405).

Notes from Ed. Things of note this month include:

1. Capital Campaign income for August was \$8920.00 – with no expenses.
2. Eryn Durlam was added to the payroll – with pro-rated (2/3) pay for August. That ends (for the most part) paying substitute organists.
3. The Skyranch Mission trip did well financially – Carry-over from last year was \$200.00, Income was \$17,126.50 and expenses were \$16,023.73 – netting \$1,302.77 that we can carry forward for the next H.S. youth mission trip.
4. VBS financials are almost all in (might just have a small expense or two that has not yet been booked) – spent \$200.00 of \$200.00 from budget account, and from the ‘Specials’ accounts, had income of \$1521.00 and expenses of \$1346.00 – netting specials income of \$175.00 – so overall we are in good shape for this year and will carry over about \$700.00 into next year.
5. We received \$65.00 from Wells Fargo – from a program they have where their depositors can designate Grace as a beneficiary of some of their earnings (similar to Thrivent Financial’s program). This is the first time we have received any funds from this program – and it should be an ongoing source of income.
6. We sent a check to the Ozaukee Habitat for Humanity project - \$543.50 total – of that, \$108.25 was from donations collected through VBS this year, and \$435.25 was from Heidi’s ‘Lego’ program collected in 2013 – but not given to them then because they were not yet organized at that time.
7. Our balance in the Money Market account is currently at \$125,094.25 (no deposits during August to that account other than interest). Total interest earned in that account since we opened it in March is \$94.25 – better than nothing!
8. We received a check from the IRS for our Health Tax Rebate – total of \$6265.03 which will show up in the September report as a positive impact on our total Health Insurance cost. (It was not deposited until September.) I had applied for that several months ago, but it first came to us now.
9. There are a couple budget accounts to keep an eye on:
 - Conventions & Leadership Retreats – The Budget for 2014 is \$1775 (was lowered from \$2070 in 2013). With the increased costs of the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly we have gone over that amount. The council will examine the costs for 2015 when the assembly will be held at Carthage College in Kenosha & not the Country Inn & Suites in Pewaukee.)
 - Grounds and Maintenance – budget is \$16,100.00 – and we have spent \$12,809.80 – should be at about \$10,733.00 at this point. The detail is in the normal file as attached.

The Finance Committee met for the first time last week. We are in the process of researching various options. As of right now, the reports are still being generated so I will send them to you as soon as I receive the email with information.

WORSHIP:

A report on comparative attendances rates at several churches in our area was reviewed. Grace has the highest % of members attending services of any of the churches reviewed.

Beth spoke about a paper she wrote on the demographics of Grace Church and this is available for review for anyone interested.

Ruth will be delivering children's message: Putting on the Armor of God until Advent.

Pastor's reports:

Our worship attendance at Grace is up 9% over last year through July.

Encouraging all groups to actively identify and recruit new members.

One Sunday of each month will follow the theme of "Serving in God's Diner" which is the Sunday school theme for 2014-2015.

Meg Boren will preach on Sept 18 and 21.

Exploring involvement of youth in worship, including serving as "Kid Assisting Minister"

Summer services were discussed, including 1 v 2 services and special music.

Ideas discussed related to Advent midweek services, using Holden/Advent themes for Thursday evenings.

Weekly Services:

9/4&7/14: Project Inasmuch Day, "Why we do what we do" is Pastor Heidi's theme. Communion

9/11&14/14: "Serving in God's Diner" Pastor Heidi preaches. Jubilation choir is singing.

9/18&21/14: Meg Boren and the Circle of Empowerment. Handbells at both Sunday services.

10/2&5/14: "Grace-Filled Hearts" Pastor Paul is preaching. First Stewardship Sunday. Communion. Baptism for Jace Dodge at 10:30

10/9&12/14: "Grace-Filled Hearts and Grace-Filled Giving" Pastor Paul is preaching. Jubilation Choir singing. No Communion.

10/16&19/14: "Serving in God's Diner" Pastor Paul preaching: Remembering Others as God Remembers Us. Communion. No special music is scheduled. Return commitments cards during the offering. Receiving new members at both services

10/23 & 26/14: "41,000 Flavors" Reformation Sunday. Pastor Heidi preaching. Jubilation Choir.

10/30 & 11/2/14: "Serving in God's Diner" Pastor Heidi preaching. Handbells
The Service of Remembrance will be held at 7:00.

Next meeting scheduled for Oct 7, but this is subsequently changed to Oct 14 due to conflicts.

VPT:

VPT met with both Pastors to discuss their vision of staffing after Ruth's retirement. We had some good discussions and feel like we have a better idea of what the goals are and what tasks may be needed. We are meeting in October with Stephanie Luedtke, AIM, Director of Cross+Generational Ministry for the Synod. We hope to learn the current thinking from the greater church of what this role may look like in the future.

I would also like council to vote to add Dick Duncombe to the VPT. We are currently down 3 members and are still looking for additional suggestions. A motion was made by Katie Eippert to approve Dick Duncombe to be a member of VPT, this was second by Amy Lempke and carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Finance Committee

NEW BUSINESS:

Portico Health Insurance Plans

CLOSING PRAYER: Pastor Paul