

Minutes – New Journey Lutheran Church Council – November 14, 2023

Present: Pastor Beth Gallen, President Cindi Brady, Vice-President Lou Hutchinson, Secretary Mike Bartanen, Treasurer Helga Essert, Pete Galindez, Karl Flormoe

Meeting was convened at 5:30 pm.

Pastor Beth led us in prayer.

- 1. Minutes of the October 3rd meeting were approved as amended.**
- 2. Mike Bartanen discussed data pertaining to a five-year analysis of income and expenses in graph form as proof of concept for developing dashboard indicators to help guide council decision-making. Discussion identified some general trends: a) increasingly income spikes in January, June and December with an income lull in Summer months. b) There is no indication so far that the larger mission plan for 2023 is below the 5-year trends. c) During most months spending exceeds income.**
- 3. Treasurer’s Report. No significant issues other than a low balance in the checking account. The Anniversary Committee requested a certificate of insurance for renting space in the Community Center. The current certificate expires on February 7th, prior to the event. The insurance bill is usually paid in January or February. Council President will ask Denny Rubenow to work with the committee to resolve the issue with the Community Center as he works with them on Food for Kidz.**
- 4. Ministry Reports action items:**
 - a. Stewardship Committee requests a council representative to work with them.**
 - b. Financial Secretary will hand-off overseeing tracking of pledges to the treasurer in the new year.**
 - c. Social Ministry reported that the mission plan request for \$1000 for heat respite will not be needed due to a commitment by a NEVC partner to cover expenses for an expanded program in 2024.**
- 5. Old Business:**
 - a. Financial Procedures Document revisions were discussed. There were several suggestions. Secretary will prepare a clean document for consideration for adoption at the December council meeting.**
 - b. Bookkeeper proposal was discussed. Pros and Cons of hiring an outside bookkeeper were raised. Pro: Would increase accountability and avoid difficult conversation if internal bookkeeper was not performing to expectations. Would align our congregation with guidance from the synod and the practice of other congregations.**

Would be helpful in implementing the division of responsibility between treasurer and bookkeeper positions. Con: A new expense to be added to mission plan.

- i. Helga is going to gather information about hiring an accountant to assist with taxes this year since bookkeeping program does not support on-line completion of tax forms. She will bring cost and details to December meeting.
- ii. After further discussion it was decided to keep the position in the 2024 mission spending plan.

6. 2024 mission plan. Discussion continued from October meeting.

- a. To date, \$112,500 has been pledged from 28 of the approximately 52 giving units. The stewardship committee will send out electronic reminders to those who have not yet pledged and encourage them to make their pledge on-line so as to facilitate planning. Deadline is December 3rd.
- b. Karl and Pete volunteered to make calls after that deadline to those who still have not pledged to ascertain plans or concerns.
- c. Line-items were discussed:
 - i. NELM benevolence line of \$600 was discussed. There does not appear to be a clear understanding of how this donation is used and what impact it has. Consideration will be given to leaving the line item out pending either a visit to or from them or other means of gathering information.
 - ii. Discussion of compensation matters for Pastor were discussed in executive session with the Pastor being excused. Further information on benefits package and it's 2024 cost will be gathered prior to finalizing a recommendation in the mission plan.
 - iii. Discussion of compensation for Communication Coordinator and Music Accompanist occurred.
 1. Annual performance evaluations were received.
 2. Request from Communication Coordinator to increase weekly hours was not approved due to budget concerns. Request to increase accompanist hours by the equivalent of 9 additional weeks to compensate for choir leadership was approved. Salary decisions for both positions was deferred to December meeting.

7. Council members for 2024 were discussed. Karl is serving a 2-year term, Pete a 1-year term which expires. He hopefully will continue for a full 2-year term. Mike Wilson has graciously

volunteered to serve a single 2-year term.

8. **Brief announcement: floors will be cleaned after Thanksgiving. Lou will take fire-extinguishers to be recharged this week. Lou reported that a congregation member raised the issue of ending practice of using hand sanitizers during communion. After discussion, it was agreed that continued use was worthwhile but that anyone had the right to decline at any time.**
9. **Next meeting: December 12th.**
10. **After the Lord's Prayer the meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Bartanen, Secretary