

**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Meeting
Monday, April 24, 2023 Minutes--For Council Approval**

Mission: Engage and Equip people to Embrace Jesus Christ

Vision: To be a growing and Christ-centered, Spirit-led community

Worship gather, praise and pray **Love** welcome, care and serve **Grow** learn, discover and equip **Give** time, treasure and talents

Council Present or excused:

Dean Brown, President	Connie Moll
Mark Scott, Vice President	Joel Murphy (absent)
Jolie Hoffmann, Secretary	Carlton Potts
Steve BeMiller, Treasurer (absent)	Carla Snell
Tammy Fahling	Shari Buckellew, Exec. Dir. Business Operations
Randy Holthaus	David Glesne, Senior Pastor
David Johnson	

Call to order and opening prayer. The April 2023 meeting of the St. John's Congregation Council was called to order by President Dean Brown at 6:30pm and opened with prayer by Tammy Fahling.

Consent Agenda. Without objection, the consent agenda was approved by voice vote, including the meeting agenda, the minutes of the March 2023 Council meeting, and leadership reports. Reports and minutes can be found on Dropbox.

Staff Report. Amy Rademcaher, Director of Children's & Youth Ministries, and Emily Lewis, Family Ministry Associate, joined to present on the Family programs. Year of changes with it being Amy's first year overseeing the 3 programs and Emily being a new addition to staff as of August. Has put a lot of thought and energy into the programs and is excited to see how they will continue to evolve through this year of transition. Highlights:

- There has been a drop in attendance in Jr/Sr High. Devoting time to brainstorm and explore reasons, noting impact of the Pandemic and general trends across the board as well as scheduling demands impacting opportunities for youth to attend
- Focusing on building relationships with the kids and helping them get and stay engaged. The kids that are coming consistently seem to really love attending and so while smaller in numbers, they are a tight knit group.
- The older youth who attend are also invested in growing the program and committed to helping with the Children's Ministry which has been very promising and encouraging
- Will be changing Joyzone location from PLC to the nursery hallway, allowing all the kids to be in the same area and all on the same floor. There will be 4 different rooms available allowing Joyzone to continue functioning within a station rotation

Upcoming events:

- Garage Sale – Set for May 6th. Have had good response in terms of help from the church but still seeking additional volunteers. Will be doing things a little different this year, including introducing a silent auction for some of the bigger ticket items.
- Vacation Bible School – June 12 - 15. Hoping to get about 75 - 100 children this year. Registration has started and there is a donation station set up in the lower balcony to help get needed supplies.
- Summer – Talking about having monthly programs for Jr and Sr High youth for June, July and August which could include a Service Day to get our youth together to do some community mission work, as well as having some fellowship nights. Sr High students continue to meet with Chaos throughout the summer but the Jr High kids don't and so looking to provide some opportunities for them as well for social connection and fun.

Treasurer's Report. In Steve's absence, Tammy reviewed the Finance Report, noting that Cash and Investments remain stable across funds with a year to date net income of just over \$35k and are expected to be good next month with Easter. Talking about how to roll out a debt reduction campaign and thinking of introducing something in late 2024/early 2025. Currently benefiting from the rising interest rates and with current pledge commitments and contributions, we are on track to pay our debt service through the first half of 2025, but will want to be monitoring and making sure that we have a plan in place moving forward.

Personnel Updates. Pastor David's review was completed by the Executive Committee on April 17th providing opportunity to discuss strengths, areas of growth and short term goals. Discussed probability of a Sabbatical for Pastor David for which he will be eligible starting in July of 2024. He will be providing a plan as to what that could look like as well as looking into applying for a grant that could help with funding.

Call Committee. Ministry Site Profile (MSP) in process. Once completed will be shared with the Council members for review.

Status of Worship Strategy/Focus Subcommittee. Mark shared that meetings had been paused over the Easter season but will be reconvening again starting next week. Reiterated that the goal is really outward facing so as to see how we are doing worship, how we define worship and discussing what is meaningful and encourages growth. Committee will be looking at how to bring in members of the congregation who expressed interest when completing their surveys and seeking ways to be more proactive, rather than reactive, in our conversations and engagement.

Endowment Fund Committee. Has not met since early Covid so wanting to get a committee back together and so needing to rebuild. Would like a member of the church council on the committee and so if interested, please let Shari know. This group focuses on the encouragement and engagement of the congregation, addressing marketing, thanking, and reminding people with regard to educational programming going on through the ELCA.

Date for Council Elections. Will be held on 10/21/23 and 10/22/23, with a forum or meet and greet the week prior to allow opportunity for the congregation to meet the candidates. When discussing the upcoming election, the question regarding structure and size of the Council was raised. Church had brought in a consultant (Susan Beaumont) back in 2015 at which time recommendations were made to reduce the size of the council to between 9 to 12 members (which was 15 members at the time). Size has since gone to 12 members but continue to question what size would be most appropriate for the Council based on how we want the Council to function. Mark made a request to have Susan's report made available to Council members for review prior to next month's meeting to allow further discussion.

2023 Synod Assembly. This year's assembly will be held in two parts, as has become the general practice. The first stage was held via Zoom last month at which time nominations for Bishop were made. The Assembly will meet in-person June 1 – 3, at the Embassy Suites in East Peoria. Pastor David, Deacon Lyn, Joel Murphy, David Johnson, Jolie Hoffmann, Barb Haab, and Cynthia Davis have volunteered to represent St. John's as delegates.

Council/Staff Planning Retreat. 2023 will focus on adapting to our new realities, coordinating with council and staff as to how we can grow the membership and engage and expand our outreach with direction from the Worship Strategy/Focus Subcommittee. Further topic for consideration would be to address the size and function of the council moving forward. No updates regarding projected timeline. Will continue to talk about possible times next month.

Executive Committee and Staff Reports

President's Topics

Dean asked for volunteers to open future Council Meetings with prayer. Still looking for a volunteer for the month of December. Monthly commitments:

- May – Jolie
- June – Joel
- July – Mark
- August – David J
- September – Steve
- October – Randy
- November – Randy
- December – ??
- January – Randy

Senior Pastor's Report

- Easter went well. Amazing how things have fallen into place with planning and implementation, including intinction for communion on Palm Sunday weekend.
- Completed annual review which opened up some helpful conversation, including early discussion pertaining to a sabbatical in 2024.
- Looking forward to some upcoming Continuing Education opportunities.

Executive Director of Business Operations. Shari provided a few highlights regarding NA from her report:

- Touched on NA financials, noting that they are doing very well.
- NA is completely full for next year with the exception of one class.
- Also, noted that they should be starting the fence project soon pending final quote and permits. Expected cost is \$12,000 of which \$8,000 will be covered by a grant and an additional \$2,000 which was raised to donations and the free will offering at Easter.

Upcoming Council Meetings

- Executive Council, May 15th at 5:30 pm in the Conference Room
- Church Council, May 22nd at 6:30 pm in the Loft

Meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Jolie Hoffmann, Secretary