**Lebanon Lutheran Church Council Minutes - Tuesday September 19 @ 6:00 PM** - In person in church lounge

**In Attendance:** President Cheri Crouch, Vice President Wietse Schaafsma, Treasurer Terry Beekman, Financial Secretary Curt Crouch, Al Wheeler, Laura Hollister, Sarah Schmalz, Secretary Meg Eaton, Pastor Doug Ogden, Intern Leah Bereniova

Cheri called meeting to order @ 6:07 PM.

Cheri called for the **Agenda Review.**  Wietse requested that we add an item to New/Urgent Business to evaluate the cleanliness of the church. Agenda accepted as amended.

**Opening Devotion**: Cheri led a devotion from “Christ in Our Home,” a publication we buy and make available in the church. The devotion was about choosing a way to live that makes a difference through forgiveness. Cheri said that forgiveness can be about small things, not necessarily huge or threatening. We can also forgive someone and not say that the hurt they caused is ok. We do not have to invite the person back into our lives, but we can say “This is a child of God, loved by God, just like me.” Forgiveness can change us by releasing us from the power that pain can hold over our lives. We ended with prayer.

Future devotions: October, Wietse. November, Brian. December, Terry

Participants shared **recent signs of God’s grace.**

**Secretary’s Minutes:** Council reviewed the August minutes. Al moved to accept, Sarah seconded, the motion passed unanimously and minutes were accepted as written.

**Pastor’s Report**: Pastor reports many home and hospital visits with Leah, a goal for the Slovak intern program. He is covering hospital visits and emergencies for Sarah Samuelson, who is on disability leave, and for Jack Ferra, who is on vacation. Food Pantry Administration will be tentatively taken over by Lisa R., a big help for Sandy R. who has led the administrative side. Color Tour is set for Oct. 6th. Changes are happening at Samaritas with eliminating senior housing programs which may impact the long tradition of Color Tours with Grand Rapids Lutheran facilities. Smorgasbord is set for Thursday Oct. 12th and Hayride is Sunday Oct. 29th. Pastor is continuing to think about moving the idea of stewardship to generosity, and will talk to the Generosity Committee about that goal. Long discussion about how to create events or fundraisers that help people get excited about raising money for things they believe in, similar to the Samaritas strategy Pastor reported on raising funds for refugees and foster kids.

**Financial Reports:** Curt reported on church finances. August was a good month, approximately $7,000 over last August. Budgeted expenses are still on target at approximately 66%, or 2/3. However, revenue may fall short this year since this year’s budget is slightly higher than last year’s.

**New or Urgent Business:**

1. **Upcoming Events: Color Tour, 10/6; Smorgasbord, 10/12; Hayride 10/29**: Flo is organizing signups for Color Tour and Smorgasbord. Mike S. is fixing pulled pork for Hayride.

1. **Thrivent Action Cards**: Many thanks to Terry for getting an action card for Backpacks and using Thrivent to fundraise for Smorgasbord. Meg will see if Glenn will do one for Hayride. There may be a need for a card for Shut-In Baskets.
2. **Calendar:** Thanks to Margaret for adding the Calendar to the Council Packet. It helps when we are planning.
3. **Question on Investments:** The investment fund has gained 39% this year and endowment has gained approximately 23%. Terry investigated the value of shifting endowment to a similar fund as investment and found that the balanced fund approach for the endowment fund is still a sound, secure strategy. He looked into balanced funds with a slightly higher return record than the one we have, but the Finance Committee felt that the fees and cost of moving the funds did not make up for any slight possible advantage. No one on Council objected to keeping the funds we have.
4. **Celebrate Summer Successes:** There was a strong feeling by the Executive Board that this has been a great summer for bringing back creative variations on our old summer programs: VBS for little kids, Swim Lessons, the Backpack Event, and the Slovak Intern Program. Cheri proposed a simple event on Sunday Oct. 8th with a short talk during *Signs of God’s Grace*, fellowship time sponsored by the Council, and a slide presentation during fellowship highlighting summer programs. All agreed this was a good idea. Sarah will put together the slides and Meg will use the Weekly to ask people to send them to Sarah. Cheri signed the Council up for treats on Oct. 8.
5. **Evaluate Church Cleanliness:** Wietse said there have been some complaints that the church is not as clean as it should be, even immediately after it has been cleaned. After some discussion, Pastor agreed to contact the cleaning company and see if they can add a layer of supervision to the cleaner we have now.

**Emphases of the Month -**   September – Faith Formation; October – Samaritas; November - Generosity

**Unfinished Business:**

1. **Update on Speakers:** Mike has updated the sound system in the sanctuary and people are reporting much better ability to hear the worship service. Many thanks to Mike for his work on this!
2. **Outdoor Sign:** Messages for Ragnar Relay and Smorgasbord are already up. Many thanks to Marcia for updating the sign so faithfully.

**Adjournment**

At 8:20 PM Cheri asked for a motion to adjourn. Wiestse moved, Al seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

*Submitted by Meg Eaton*