**Minutes – Lebanon Lutheran Church Council - Tuesday January 16 2024 @ 6:00 PM - In person in church lounge and via Zoom**

**In Attendance:** President Cheri Crouch, Financial Secretary Curt Crouch, Treasurer Terry Beekman, Vice President Wietse Schaafsma, Brian Jaekel, Al Wheeler, Secretary Meg Eaton

Cheri called meeting to order @ 6:07 PM.

Cheri called for the **Agenda Review**. Agenda accepted as written.

**Opening Devotion**: Meg read from a recent prison sermon by Nadia Bolz-Weber, The Baptism of Our Lord. Excerpt: *God did not say “this is my son in whom I am well pleased because he has proved to me that he deserves it, he has quiet time with me each morning and always reads his Torah and because boy can he heal a leper.”  Nope. As far as we know Jesus hadn’t even done anything yet and he was called beloved*.

Future devotions: February, Al

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

**Secretary’s Minutes:** Council reviewed the December minutes. Al moved, Wietse seconded, and minutes were approved as written.

**Pastor’s Report**: Pastor is coaching luge tonight so Cheri reviewed his report with Council. In the report there were three requests for votes on membership categories. Meg moved and Wietse seconded that a group be moved from Inactive to Addresses. Wietse moved and Meg seconded that a second group be moved from Inactive to Addresses. Al moved and Wietse seconded that a third group be moved to New Members. All three motions passed unanimously. See Pastor’s Report for more details.

**Financial Reports:** Curt reported on church finances. After falling below budget all year, budgeted expenses at the end of the year were 102.66% over budget. Budgeted giving was $14,153.01 below 2023 budget even with leftover land contract interest moved to the general fund to offset the deficit. One reason was that Property Maintenance was very expensive and over budget this year, in part due to approximately $4,000 in elevator maintenance. Investments are doing well and the checkbook funds are sufficient to pay the bills. Non-budget income is way up ($94,099) due primarily to interest on investments and the sale of the land contract house.

**New or Urgent Business:**

1. **Affirm Budget Vote:** An email vote was taken in early January to approve the 2024 Budget ahead of the Annual Meeting. The Budget passed via email. Wietse moved and Brian seconded to affirm the email approval; the motion passed unanimously. Cheri thanked Terry on behalf of the Council for his many hours of work on the budget. Members noted that the “Action Card” and “Fund of the Month” notations next to categories that don’t receive direct funding help maintain those priorities without depleting budget funds.
2. **Review Ballot and Annual Meeting Plan:** Ballot is complete. Thanks to all who contacted nominees. The Annual Meeting is Sunday January 28th after worship and potluck. Meg will ask Margaret to include the Constitution vote on the Agenda in the Annual Report. Amy will take minutes. Sarah will pass around a sign-in sheet and walk around with a microphone for speakers to communicate with Terry B. on Zoom. Meg will publish the Annual Report and Annual Meeting date for at least 2 weeks in a row in January and include a link to the new draft Constitution and information on how to connect via Zoom. Al will present and answer questions about the Constitution. Terry B. will present and answer questions about the budget. Curt will present and answer questions about the financial reports. Cheri will lead the meeting. Doug will set up a sound system in the lounge so Terry can hear and be heard by meeting attendees.
3. **Vote on membership roll changes:** see Pastor’s Report section above
4. **Review letter of member’s suggestions for giving:** A member of the congregation sent a letter suggesting that we better communicate the Funds of the Month. Council agreed and discussed publicizing the funds better and across more platforms. Several council members mentioned that we don’t want to pressure people to speak in front of church if they don’t want to, but we will continue to seek volunteers. The letter also suggested changing practices during the offertory and most council members felt this time is currently handled sensitively and well with the return of the Hymn of the Day. Wietse will get back to the letter writer about our discussion. Meg will contact them about helping with articles for two of the Funds (see #5 below).
5. **Review and vote on Funds of the Month for 2024; create awareness plans for each fund:**  The list of Funds for 2024 was suggested by the Finance Committee and Council agreed to them unanimously without a vote. The list is:

**January: Quilting Group**

**February: Kids Klub**

**March: Good Gifts**

**April: Good Gifts**

**May: Synod Benevolence**

**June: Slovak**

**July: Vacation Bible School**

**August: Backpacks**

**September: Faith Formation**

**October: Samaritas**

**November: Worship**

**December: Music**

After discussion we decided to ask volunteers to create articles about each fund to publish in the Light, with shorter highlights to be published in the Weekly. We will continue to seek volunteer speakers for each month. Meg will make sure the highlights go in the Weekly every week and that Margaret has articles for the Light. Curt includes the monthly Fund totals in his Yellow Pages updates. A list of the funds will go on the website and on the bulletin board or whiteboard.

1. **Emphases of the Month:**  **January – Quilting; February – Kids Klub; March – Good Gifts** (plans discussed under Funds of the Month, above)

**Unfinished Business:**

1. **Outdoor Sign** **for January/February –** tabled until we have Pastor’s input

**Adjournment**

At 7:36 PM Cheri asked for a motion to adjourn. Meg moved, Al seconded, motion passed unanimously. Meeting closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

*Submitted by Meg Eaton*