

**MINUTES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
on Thursday, May 18th, 2023 at 7:00 pm**

Vision Statement: *Peace Lutheran Church is a welcoming, worshipping and witnessing community in Jesus Christ through whom healing, wellness, love and peace are offered unconditionally to all.*

Mission Statement: *Celebrating and Sharing God's Love for All.*

ATTENDANCE:

In-person (Hern Room): Janet Van der Wees (Co-chair), Rosie Lantzsch (Co-chair), Fiona Haapalehto (Secretary), Mike Balzer, Analisa Chand, Sirkka Taylor, and David Wishart.
Pastor Ronnie Smith.

Via Zoom: Sunny Wishart (Treasurer)

Guest via Zoom: Wayne Ruhnke, Chair, Finance Team

1. **Call to Order:** Jan called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. **Opening:** Sirkka did the opening devotion. Analisa will do it for the next meeting.
3. **Approval of the Agenda:**

Moved by: Sirkka, seconded by: Rosie

THAT the agenda for Thursday, May 18th, 2023, be approved, as amended.

Discussion: A rental request was received by Pastor Ronnie. This was added under Correspondence. **CARRIED**

Note – items not on the Agenda:

- **David Wishart had done some research on church finances which he offered to share with the Council. This is included under New Business.**
- **A report by the Olive Branch was received from Rosie. This should be a regular Committee report and added to the Agenda starting next month.**

4. **Approval of the Previous Minutes:**

Moved by: Rosie, seconded by: Mike

THAT the Minutes of the Church Council Meeting held on April 20th, 2023, be approved, as amended. Discussion: Fiona mentioned there was an comment regarding the Pastor's Report that should be removed. **CARRIED.**

5. **Treasurer's Report:**

- \$4,331 for the ADT/Telus security install came out of the Property Maintenance Reserve fund this month.
- The Discretionary fund is in a deficit, Ronnie purchased some supplies for Taylor. Ronnie has offered to direct his offering towards the Discretionary fund to net out this shortage, we could consider leaving it 'as is' for April and Ronnie to make a note to allocate future offering to the fund? It was noted that Ronnie did announce in the service May 7 that the fund needed directed donations. Rosie offered to also mention this in the June newsletter.

- It is worth noting that our bank balance last May was just shy of \$70,000 and this May it is around \$49,000.
- It's even further important to note that the YTD deficits are at 78% of the annual budget and we are 33% into the year.
- There is a GIC up for renewal on June 8th for \$18,525. Current Corporate Rates at CIBC are not great. 30days-3% or 270 days-3.5%. The actual interest is only \$22 for the longer term. Our next GIC matures in January. We want to keep them 6 months apart to take advantage of different market cycles. The summer will be lean so we probably should not lock the funds in for a long term

Moved by Mike, seconded by: Sirkka

THAT the April Financial Statements and Treasurer's Report, be approved.

Discussion:

- It was noted that we could create a GIC against a one of the Special Purpose Funds that have sufficient balance e.g., Capital Projects. There was a suggestion that we postpone starting on the door replacements as no work has started. A consultation with the Property committee should be held.
- Rosie needs to be added as a signatory on the CIBC Bank Account. Sunny will arrange this for the same time she goes to renew the GIC.
- When asked, Sunny noted that we need \$10-15K / month to run the church.

CARRIED.

Moved by David, seconded by: Mike.

THAT we authorize Sunny to renew the GIC maturing June 8th for 90 days.

CARRIED

6. New Business:

a. Financial Team Report (Wayne) – Report Accepted

Wayne went through the items on the report and the recommendations from the Finance Team.

- Sunny will follow up with the CIBC Manager on banking issues we have faced with a goal of smoothing the relationship with CIBC
- Wayne has assumed responsibility the task of keeping proper records for the organization as per the Charities Handbook of the Canadian Council of Christian Charities
- The Finance Team has acknowledged that Pastor has taken on the administrative duties in the office.
- The Finance Team is recommending that Motions for all Payments on non-budgeted General Fund items be voted on by Council and appear in the Congregational Council minutes. Occasionally this has not taken place. Sunny should withhold payment until properly authorized.
- Restricted Funds Guidelines in the Charities Handbook restricts the organization from unilaterally changing the conditions of the donation, or asking the donor(s) to waive the conditions. The Finance Team recommends having a restricted gift policy and to make donors aware of the policy whenever asking for or accepting restricted funds. This Policy will be added to the Financial Handbook. Wording of the policy was submitted to Council.
- Wayne will submit a revised Financial Handbook to Council next month.

- As per the Charities Handbook, Wayne will review Contracts for parking and space rental for compliance with CRA and Insurance Policies
- Relationship with Copetti was discussed. Sunny liaised with them to resolve issues that were experienced. Currently all government forms are current and have been sent in on time.
- The Ceridian relationship is good.
- The ELCIC-GSI benefits group relationship is being reviewed but the goal will be to improve it. Responsibilities for communicating with CRA and ELCIC-GSI have been included in the Financial Handbook so that timely communication happens updating these entities after year-end changes have gone into effect.
- A variation was found in the February/23 statement and was identified. The Finance Team recommends a closer review of allocation of expenses before payments are made.
- A large expense in the March/23 accounting fee was a result of annual year-end reporting to the CRA. This fee will go back to the usually monthly amount.
- The 2024 Church envelopes have been ordered and the price has increased. There are two kinds of envelope packages-one for weekly & special envelope donors and the second kind for people donating electronically but only needing special event envelopes (i.e. Christmas, Easter, etc.) Fewer people are using envelopes but if we choose to lower the sets of envelopes we order, the cost per set goes up.
- The congregation should be kept apprised of the church's financial position. The Finance Team is recommending adding this to the monthly newsletter. They supplied three sample formats. Option 2 was the choice of the Council. The figures will be submitted to Rosie each month.
- The Finance Team considered a suggestion by David Wishart to make a QR code link to the Canada Helps site. Since Canada Helps charges a fair amount per donation, we would prefer regular donors use other options, however, visitors might prefer Canada Helps. The QR code could be made available in the pews and various locations around the building, making access to the Canada Helps site easier for visitors. They could make their donation right from their phones while in the building. David will work on that.
- Our Insurance renewal will be due in June. The renewal cost will be provided when it arrives. A change this year will be to ensure adequate insurance coverage for our new Stained-glass windows.

Sunny & Wayne left the meeting at 7:50 pm

b. Building up the Discretionary Fund for Future Emergencies

- See also the Treasurer's Report - Ronnie announced this in church and Rosie will put a request in the June newsletter

c. Summer Meeting Schedule

- The Council will meet in July, and no meeting in August, unless there is a need.

d. Review of Income vs Expenses - David

- David informed the Council he has done research into how our income and expenses compare to the rate of inflation over the period from 2009-2020. Council was interested to hear his analysis.
- Donations have outpaced inflation over that period, but since the pandemic donations have suffered.

- Expense -wise we're under-pacing inflation. Our current deficit is mainly as a result of reduced rentals.
- David provided a chart that could go in the newsletter.
- A discussion ensued about how we could use our property assets to help boost income, e.g. parking spaces – which we need to offset snow removal/ salting costs. Pastor Ronnie suggested we could charge new parkers a higher fee. The parking renters are currently paying \$70/month which was increased from \$60 in 2021. The parkers are the Dentist's office and people who live in the neighbourhood.
- We need a communication/rental/marketing strategy for building rental. We could market to music teachers for recitals. We would need a budget to do that.
- We need more people to come here but they need to know about us. We could ask our congregation to leave a Google review about the church to promote awareness of the atmosphere and what is available here.
- David recommended that the aim of our property rentals should be for sustainability of our operating & improvement costs.
- We would need separate strategies to attract people to worship services or to attract renters.
- This information was received with interest. We need an action plan and to assign responsibility for the strategie(s).

7. Old Business:

a. Partnering with DARS

- Pastor will be following up with them about using our kitchen for their cooking school.

b. Community Garden

- The seedlings will be purchased by Ronnie and have them available on Sunday. Planting day will be Monday, May 22.

8. Prayers for the People

Ronnie regularly shares names with the intercessors.

9. Correspondence

• Rental Request from Greater Grace Christian Fellowship

- Pastor Ronnie forwarded a letter on May 18th from Candia Modeste, Pastor, requesting Sunday rental for worship services and fellowship from 1-3pm Sundays starting in June.
- They have suggested paying \$400/month which is well below our rental rates for use of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. For all rentals we need to ensure they have adequate insurance. They are a new church, so they may not yet have funds to provide this.
- Pastor asked for the Council to send their questions regarding this potential rental before we make a decision. He will tell them we are still considering their request.

10. Reports:

• Property (reported submitted by email-Tapio) (Liaison Mike)

- C&R Paving invoiced \$678 for 8 additional saltings above the 10 saltings which are included in the 2022-2023 contract. We did budget 10 extra saltings in preparing the 2023 snow clearing budget.

- Spring Clean-up 2023 was held on the rain date of May 6th. Most of the various indoor and outdoor tasks were completed by 7 volunteers. The 2 lists with outstanding tasks will be left in the Narthex until Sunday, June 4th to allow others to complete some of them.
 - Ronnie suggests we do not install the A/C in the office, but mentioned the A/C units will impact the livestream audio in the Sanctuary. There is no good solution as we do need them on hot Sundays so parishioners don't faint in the Sanctuary.
- Elizabeth has offered to plant flowers along the north-east corner of the building.
- On May 11th, CP4CP emailed the church with the following "...the performance of the bins we have placed at your church, and are not producing enough to pay their monthly fee. These bins will need to be removed or have their monthly fee waived." Jeremy and I recommend the bins be removed to eliminate dealing with litter left around them and to allow the potential of rental of at least one additional monthly parking space.
 - Council agreed with the recommendation. The bins are to be removed.
- Fernie Works performed the first grass cutting service on Monday, May 15th. Jeremy reported being very satisfied with the quality of the service performed. We received a letter of thanks from them as Tapio had supplied a letter in support of a grant application they had made.
- The intermittent problem with the altar microphone cutting in and out of operation is waiting for Cameron to relocate its receiver from the audio booth to somewhere closer to the altar.
- Tapio has no progress to report on obtaining quotations for replacement front doors with automatic door openers.
- **Worship & Arts: (email report – Rosie – Fiona was not able to attend recent meeting)**
 - May 28 is Pentecost so the original plan for a healing service is on hold, instead Bethan Riehle will officiate, but there will be no communion, instead a Pentecost activity will take place. The Lord's Prayer will be said in various languages by members of the congregation.
 - June 18 – during sermon time Rosie will deliver part 2 of her presentation on the Olive Branch
 - June 25 – Pastor Ronnie will hold a special service for National Indigenous Peoples' Day
 - Discussions are ongoing about how to blend some of the older, more traditional elements of worship services with some of the newer elements incorporated by Pastor Ronnie.
 - Kirsten is away June 13-July 14. Eleanor and Ellie will fill in.
 - A sign-up sheet will be placed in the narthex to see if there is a demand for Bible Study to resume, either in person or on Zoom
- **Mutual Ministry: (verbal report -Fiona)**
 - No report this month.
- **Congregational Life: (email report -Sirkka)**
 - the upcoming events have been planned:
 - Sunday May 28th, 2 PM Concert
 - Sunday June 25th, Noon Strawberry Social
 - Sunday August 6th, Sunday Sundaes
 - Sunday September 3rd, Watermelon party
 - Saturday October 7th, 5:30 pm Travelling Dinner
 - Sunday October 29th, Reformation Cake
 - Sunday December 3rd, Bake / Craft sale
- **Olive Branch (verbal report -Rosie)**

- Rosie heard from people who really enjoyed her presentation last Sunday.
- Part 2 will be on Father's Day.
- **Pastor's Report**
 - **Hours**
 - Monday: 10-4 (work from home)
 - Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 10-4 (in the office unless visiting)
 - Friday: Day off. Do receive some phone calls, texts and emails.
 - Saturday: Depending on the week, 4-8 hours preparing for the service. Includes some Tech Team stuff and/or sermon writing.
 - Sunday: 7-2. Finalizing service plans, reviewing sermon. Open the church, get Tech Team and Music Director set up. Music Team rehearsal at 10am. Service starts at 10:30. Close the church after Coffee Hour.
 - On call outside of these hours.
 - **Camp Lutherlyn Confirmation Camp.**
 - We have 5 students attending Lutherlyn this year, July 9-14. The cost to send the Pastor will be \$450. Multiple students need financial assistance from the funds we have been setting aside. Any left-over money will be forwarded to Camp Lutherlyn.
 - **Durham Multifath Community:**
 - Indigenous Canada Study is ongoing. We have had five people from Peace participate. Once this course is completed. I will look to facilitate the Study at the church. (Winter 2024)
 - Peace is participating in the June 24th Multifaith Prayer For Peace service at All Saints Anglican Church at 2pm.
 - **Peace Food Garden**
 - Coordinating the project this year. Happy to report that several new people are serving this ministry. No expansion of garden beds this year but we will want to apply for a Mission Grant for next year to continue to grow our ability to provide fresh produce to local food banks.
 - **Rentals**
 - Long & McQuade are renting our Sanctuary on June 10th, 17th and 18th. They hope to rent twice a year for their recitals. Income for June recitals is \$2175
 - Greater Grace Christian Fellowship is asking Peace to make the sanctuary available for rent for the purpose of holding worship services.
 - **Pastoral Acts**
 - Performed 2 funerals at Ogden Funeral Home in Scarborough to cover for Pastor Jordan Smith.
 - Performed last rights at Ajax/Pickering Hospital for a family with no affiliation to the church.
 - **Discretionary Fund**
 - Budget line has been exhausted. All of the grocery gift cards have been handed out to people in need who approach the church for help. I went over the limit on this line to move Taylor off the Peace grounds. Required a dump run and a trip to Canadian Tire. Purchased a new tent, sleeping bag and backpack. We'll need to top this up at some point as the needs are great and expected to grow moving forward.

- **Interior Designer**
 - We had two designers come in to see the church. They had contractors come and give estimates about potential work in the church, i.e., painting, new floors, reupholstering the pews, etc. It is not cheap.
 - Given the financial climate at Peace I don't think we are in a position right now to pursue this further. We did have our blue prints of the building repaired for \$120.23.
- **Durham Youth Services**
 - We have been letting them use the Hern Room at no cost to hold offsite staff meetings. Usually once per month for about 6 hours.
- **Vacation Coverage**
 - I will be away May 22nd to May 29th. Pastor Dennis Becker from Faith Place in Oshawa will cover any pastoral care emergencies (905-576-8619).
- **Finance Team**
 - See New Business

11. Closing Prayer: Sirkka did the closing prayer.

12. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.

Next Council Meeting – **Thursday, June 15th, 7:00 pm via hybrid Zoom & in person model.**