

**MINUTES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
on Thursday September 14th, 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, David Wishart, and Pastor Ronnie Smith.

Regrets:, Sunny Wishart (Treasurer)

Via Zoom: Sirkka Taylor

Guest: None

1. **Call to Order:** Jan called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.
2. **Opening:** Jan did the opening devotion. Mike will do it for the next meeting.
3. **Approval of the Agenda:**
Moved by: Rosie, seconded by: Fiona
THAT the agenda for Thursday, September 14th, 2023, be approved.
Discussion: None. **CARRIED**
4. **Approval of the Previous Minutes:**
Moved by: Analisa, seconded by: Rosie
THAT the Minutes of the Church Council Meeting held on July 19th, 2023, as amended, be approved. Discussion: Bill Gregor provided some clarification for the item on Insurance. These amendments should be incorporated. **CARRIED.**
5. **Treasurer's Report:**
 - As Sunny was not able to attend, she emailed the reports in advance of the meeting.
 - The reports included revised July financials and August financials.**Moved by: Rosie, seconded by: David**
THAT the amended June Financial Statements, and Treasurer's Report, be approved.
Discussion: Sunny sent out amended financial report on July 20, 2023.
(CARRIED)
Moved by: Fiona, seconded by: Rosie
THAT the July Financial Statements and Treasurer's Report, be approved.
Discussion: David clarified the General Rentals amount for July, which was \$3400. It was determined this was the Long & McQuade and Quilters Guild.
(CARRIED)
Moved by: Fiona, seconded by: David
THAT the August Financial Statements and Treasurer's Report, be approved.
Discussion: None.
(CARRIED)

6. New Business:

a. Wayne and Joan's Retirement

- Wayne & Joan Ruhnke will retire from their positions as Financial Secretary and Chair of the Finance Team at the end of 2023. They agreed to pass on their knowledge to the new candidate(s). A couple of candidates were proposed and Jan and Rosie will speak to them about assuming these duties.

b. Approval of the latest revision of the Financial Handbook – see Finance Team Report

c. Approval of the Revised Form for Counters – see Finance Team Report

d. Riipen Level Up – David

- Sunny and David proposed that we seek funding to pay for upgrading and facilitating ongoing modifying our web presence over time (Digital Integration Officer).
- Riipen Level Up is a government sponsored fund to pay for students. The proposal should be an 80-hour work project. It works out to about \$17/hr to be paid by Riipen Level Up.
- The project could be largely done virtually by a skilled individual.
- Pastor Ronnie & David will put together the tasks that could be incorporated into this project. It would be January before the application would be available.
- We might also look at a Synod Mission Grant, if needed, to extend the funding beyond what Riipen Level Up might cover.

7. Old Business:

a. Setting a Date for Welcoming New Members

Worship and Arts discussed this and recommends it be set for Reformation Sunday, October 29, 2023. Pastor will contact new members to advise them and confirm they will participate. Rosie will announce it in the Newsletter.

b. New Rental Fees Update

The fee schedule was circulated with the Property Report.

Moved by: Rosie, seconded by: David

THAT the Rental Schedule be approved, as amended.

Discussion: Pastor Ronnie reported that we are getting more rentals. Jan recommended the hourly rental for the Sanctuary should be increased from \$75 to \$100, rather than the \$90 as listed.

(CARRIED)

c. Connecting with DARS

- Pastor Ronnie followed up and met with the DARS staff. They have amended their request for use of the Peace Fellowship Hall.

Moved by: Rosie, seconded by: Fiona

THAT Pastor Ronnie be authorized to set up an agreement with DARS to provide a community dinner on Thursday night and to set up a food pantry.

Discussion: They now want to serve a dinner one night a week for 30 people and a maintain a food pantry. Pastor Ronnie offered them a Thursday night for dinner. They asked for room for the pantry and agreed to merge the church pantry with theirs. Pastor Ronnie offered them some space in the electrical room for their use as an office, provided we retain access. They will ensure the Fellowship Hall is cleaned after the weekly dinner.

They have sent a revised letter. They asked us to consider installing a laundry on-site. We don't need to do that right away
(CARRIED)

Moved by: Rosie, seconded by: Sirkka

THAT the Thanksgiving collection be directed to the DARS Food Pantry.

Discussion: On a related note, Rosie recommended that instead of supporting the food bank at St Paul on the Hill, we change our traditional donation at Thanksgiving to the DARS Food Pantry.

(CARRIED)

d. Webpage Overhaul - Dave

- At the July meeting David outlined a variety of tools for implementing an enhanced church web presence.
- Pastor Ronnie and David met with "Tithe.ly".

Moved by: David, seconded by: Mike

THAT the Council authorize the creation of a budget item for the annual amount of \$2400 to establish a project with Tithe.ly to overhaul the digital presence at Peace.

Discussion: Pastor and David feel what Tithe.ly offers is a good way for people to be connected to the church. It is the most affordable for the full suite of modules.

The fee for Tithe.ly is US\$119 per month and includes the website builder, mobile app, giving tools, and church management software. Twenty-four hundred dollars (\$2400) gives us enough to cover the CAD equivalent cost with room for exchange rate fluctuation.

We have connected with people on their computers but connecting via a mobile app would be the next step. David will do a presentation to the congregation about this initiative on Reformation Sunday and also mention how we intend to pay for the start-up costs (Riipen Level Up & Synod Mission Grant).

CARRIED

Clarification: These funds to be added to the \$600 in the budget line for website development.

e. Growing Together in Peace, PLC 2023/2024 Growth Strategy - Dave

- No update this month. We are already working on several initiatives.

8. Prayers for the People

Pastor Ronnie regularly shares names with the intercessors. Pastor would like to consider setting up a Prayer Wall for people who want to request prayers from the congregation.

9. Correspondence

Jan had a thank you letter from St Paul's on the Hill, from CLWR and from the ELCIC for donations.

10. Reports:

- **Property (reported submitted by email-Tapio) (Liaison Mike)**
 - Tapio has worked with Pastor Ronnie and Jan to prepare and adopt a revised 2023/2024 Rental and Parking Fee Schedule – see attached.
 - Tapio has approved two service proposals that PLC requested from our cleaning service Task-Co. A copy of each is attached. They will scrub, wax and buff the basement tile

floors at a cost of \$720 plus HST and will steam-clean all carpeting on the main floor at a cost of \$600 plus HST. Pastor Ronnie will work with Task-Co to schedule them. The floors were last waxed five years ago and the carpets were cleaned three years ago.

- C&R Paving is currently preparing the 2023-4 snow clearing contract for the church. Tapio will forward to Church Council for approval if the total exceeds our budget.
- Fall Clean-up Day will be Saturday October 28th, 9am to-noon with a rain-date of November 4th. (Rosie will post in the Newsletter).
- On Aug. 4th, Pastor Ronnie discovered water on the floor of Fellowship Hall storage room where the tables are stored. This water had leaked down the north wall directly under the old Narthex entrance. He called Tapio, who then contacted Butler Drain and Waterproofing whom PLC has engaged twice in past 5 years. Within 2 hours Max Butler visited the church and reported that the suspected source of the problem was missing parging between the sidewalk and the threshold of the old Narthex entrance. Max returned on Aug. 14th, to parge this area. He wouldn't accept payment. This water leak issue has not re-occurred.
- Phil Plath spoke to Tapio that he is concerned about the liability risks from falling dead limbs from the large popular tree by the west driveway ramp. He offered to cut down the entire tree or at least trim off the worst dead limbs. He also offered to rent a woodchipper to dispose of the wood. He asked for some volunteers to assist him. He proposed it be in the latter part of this fall. He said he is capable of climbing the tree to perform the work versus using a cherry picker. Tapio needs to meet jointly with Phil and Jeremy to discuss this project. In June of 2021, Tandem Tree Service removed a large branch and some other deadwood from this same tree at cost of \$375 plus HST. Their quotation to remove the entire tree was \$4,000 plus HST.
- Tapio will be seeking quotes to a) repave and paint the parking lot or b) just seal and paint it. Last fall, PLC did receive a quote of \$5,000 plus HST for sealing and painting.
- Pastor Ronnie has suggested that we consider the installation of an EV charging station to raise income. Jeremy and Tapio will meet to discuss the pros and cons. Also, they will discuss the potential of installing solar panels since both have up-front costs and have significant impacts on the church's electrical room.
- Pastor Ronnie would like to ensure some rental income is set aside for repaving the parking lot. This should be raised with Bill and the Finance Team when we work on the 2024 Budget.
- **Worship & Arts: (Fiona/Pastor)**
 - The last meeting was held September 13th.
 - Reformation Sunday will be a special service to welcome new members.
 - Carol and Ann will lead a project to reinstitute Name Tag Sundays so that new and old members can get to know each other better.
- **Mutual Ministry: (verbal report -Fiona)**
 - No report this month.
- **Congregational Life: (email report -Sirkka)**
 - The watermelon party was attended by 27 people on Sept 3rd.
 - The travelling dinner is coming up on Saturday October 7th. One of the hosts has canceled for the main course. Gloria was to asking Pastor Ronnie to send an email out requesting volunteers to participate.
- **Olive Branch (verbal report -Rosie)**
 - Rosie reported just over \$1600 was received through the fundraiser on September 10.

- Pastor Ronnie reported that people were really moved by the presentation on Sunday.
- **Pastor's Report**
 - **Youth Group**
 - Building on the relationships built at Camp Lutherlyn, the youth have asked for the development of a Youth Group. In early September I lead the group on an outing to Canada's Wonderland at their request. We will be having a youth sleep over at the church on October 21st. Youth have been increasingly involved in Tech, Team, worship and coffee hour. Will continue to promote ways to build the group and provide support.
 - **Congregational Redevelopment Advisor**
 - On September 24th, Rev. Jennifer Hoover will be visiting us from ELCIC Eastern Synod to discuss her new role as CRA and help us explore/vision opportunities in this area. She will also be guest preacher.
 - **Vacation:**
 - Pastor had two weeks of vacation for 2023 in August. He prepared the services ahead of time to make things as easy as possible for lay leaders to lead services while away, avoiding pulpit supply costs and reducing disruption to weekly services.
 - **DARS:**
 - Pastor met with Margaret from DARS this Thursday to discuss next steps in determining partnership possibilities between our church and DARS. As their mission is to serve Durham's homeless population, it is incumbent upon us to assist as we are able.
 - **Rental Rate Increase:**
 - Pastor informed all of our renters that we have unfortunately had to raise our rates given the inflationary pressure we are facing. So far, all current renters have agreed to the new fee schedule. We should see a significant increase in rental income for 2024, global pandemics notwithstanding.
 - **Indigenous Canada Study:**
 - Still participating with the study with the Durham Multifaith Community. Pastor intends to offer to facilitate the course again to Peace and the wider church community in the winter/spring once the course is completed.
 - **Sunday Services**
 - Weekly sermon preparation, reading, writing, collegial discussions.
 - Produce/coordinate services, order of service, full and concise versions. Excel sheet for use by the Tech Team, help coordinate volunteers/worship assistants, live stream uploads and distribution, tech support, etc.
 - Music Team rehearsal each Sunday, hymn selections in coordination with Kirsten and Eleanore, etc.
 - Introducing a lot of material from All Creation Sings.
 - **Communications**
 - Email, phone calls, zoom calls, texts, social media posts, visitations, newsletter/gratitude corner submission, review of Synodical and National church communications, etc.

- **Office**
 - Duties include financial records management/assistance, answer phones, checking mail, and mailing newsletters to congregation members, management of rentals, etc. –
 - Management of rental arrangements for parking and building.

YouTube Statistics (July 19th – September 11th):

Subscribers: 288 + 18

Views: 2,744

Watch Time (hours): 376.6

* Began uploading Children’s Messages as individual video content/playlist.

* The Direct Experience of God: With David Maginley has 13,232 views.

Facebook Statistics:

Followers: 560

Posts: 13

FB Visits: 151

New Likes & Follows: 14

- **Finance Team**

- The Financial Secretary has revised the Form for Counters. She has asked that it be approved.

Moved by: Rosie, seconded by: Sirkka

THAT the Revised Form for Counters dated September 21, 2023, be approved.

Discussion: Rosie had asked for clarification about some of the accounts but was satisfied.
(CARRIED)

- The Finance Team has updated the Financial Handbook. They have asked that it be approved.

Moved by: Fiona, seconded by: Analisa

THAT the Financial Handbook dated September 21, 2023, be approved.

Discussion: We quickly reviewed the amendments that had been made and were itemized on page 27.

(CARRIED)

11. Closing Prayer: Jan did the closing prayer.

12. Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:56pm.

Next Council Meeting – **Thursday, October 19th, 2023, 7:00 pm via hybrid Zoom & in person model.**

Online Votes held between Council Meetings:

1. Approval of the Amended Letter of Intent with DARS

Background:

On September 19, 2023, an email was sent to Council with DARS' amended Letter of Intent dated September 14th for Council to review.

*It was moved by **Rosemarie Lantzsch**, seconded by **Analisa Chand**,*

THAT Council accepts the amended Letter of Intent from DARS dated September 14th, 2023 for DARS to hold weekly dinners. Further, THAT an agreement is made with DARS, that Peace agrees to host DARS on Thursday evenings at Peace Lutheran Church in their Outreach Program and that DARS will be responsible for clean-up and disposal of their garbage.

Fiona, David, Janet, Sirkka and Michael voted to approve. Approval was given September 21, 2023.