

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
12650 JOHNNY CAKE RIDGE ROAD, APPLE VALLEY, MN 55124

Minutes of Church Council Meeting

Date: 9/21/2023

On-Site Community Room

Attendees:

Melissa Taphorn, President
Paul Moyer, Vice President
Dick Rank, Treasurer
Carleen Crouse, Secretary* (absent)
Amber Kocemba
Bernie Zimmermann
Jon Hohenstein
Merilu Narum

Pastor Rick Summy
Rachel Wermerskirchen
Robin Robinson
Shirl Alojado
Melissa Tapper
Jennifer Davidson*
Alyssa Isaacs*
Kelsey Young*

*denotes non-voting member

Call to Order: President Taphorn called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. President Taphorn welcomed Merilu Narum, who joined Church Council in August 2023. Pastor Summy introduced a book study based on *Growing Young* and tasked councilmembers with reading the introduction and first principle/section prior to the council meeting on Oct. 19, 2023. President Taphorn initiated monthly council meeting prayer sign ups; she is scheduled to lead the prayer during the next council meeting on Oct. 5, 2023.

Call Process: Bishop Patricia Lull of the St. Paul Area Synod will meet with the SOTV Church Council on October 5, 2023. President Taphorn shared basic information about the call process and roles of the bishop, synod, council, and call committee. Pastor Summy and Jennifer Davidson answered additional questions about the call process. Jennifer Davidson summarized the bishop's agenda: provide a call process overview, explain the procedure and timeline, discuss what happens during the interim period, and answer councilmember questions.

Vision and Leadership Teams Reports:

CYF: Kelsey Young provided a CYF report. The first full week of 2023-24 programming has concluded. Overall, there are currently 542 registered students in CYF programs. Enrollment is the same as last year at this time, and it is 60% of enrollment at this time in 2019 (pre-pandemic). Middle school enrollment is up year-over-year, whereas enrollment for younger children is down year-over-year. The Pre-K/K director position is open; the ideal candidate would have a significant ministry background. Shepherd's Kids in Worship is a new initiative this year: 5 dates are designated for Pre-K through 3rd grade students to attend worship with their families in lieu of regular Shepherd's Kids class, and worship will incorporate elements that cater to that age range.

Ministries and Communications: Alyssa Isaacs provided a report on ministries and communications. The Mission & Ministry Fair on September 17 and September 20 were well attended and fostered both excitement and interaction. New this year, the fair spanned 2 days instead of 1 and incorporated more lay leader volunteers to represent the various ministries rather than being completely staff-led.

A Stewardship/Engagement Leadership Team event called Sundae Sunday was held on August 27. It was a lay-led fellowship initiative, and we served 300 ice cream sundaes.

Alyssa and Julie Opheim started a project to inventory all groups (both active and inactive) at SOTV and ensure that each has a designated staff point of contact. This project has been completed successfully, and Alyssa reported that 50 different groups meet in our building. All groups now have a confirmed staff contact.

An initiative to review the tracking metrics for SOTV's weekly online worship for accuracy has concluded. It indicates that we do in fact have significant online worship attendance; therefore, we will be prioritizing ways to engage with that community.

A new communications style guide and post-event feedback email mechanism are now in place. On our web site, the Reconciling in Christ page has been updated. Alyssa plans to collaborate with several staff members to work on updates to the "About Us" section.

The new SOTV merchandise shop is open through September 24. The proceeds benefit the SOTV winter outerwear drive. We intend to re-open the shop a few times per year with new apparel options; proceeds will benefit the SOTV drive/collection ministry that is currently in progress.

SOTV will host a "Growing Hope" event on Sunday, November 5, to tie into Stewardship Sunday and celebrate the "Planting Hope" initiative. More details are forthcoming.

Operations & Human Resources: Jennifer Davidson provided a report on operations and human resources. The SOTV Neighborhood Block Party on September 9 was successful with attendees from both our church and the greater community. We served 475 hot dogs. New this year, there were multiple staff owners of the event. Staff will evaluate the debrief feedback to determine improvements to implement for next year.

Addison Lyon recently joined staff as a live sound technician assistant. Human Resources is in the process of interviewing additional candidates to join the audiovisual technology team.

A congregational meeting will be held on September 24 at 12:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary to approve the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget.

The worship planning team for the 11:00 band-led service is seeking feedback from the congregation on the worship experience to help the team decide on whether the service can move from the Sanctuary to the Great Hall. Congregation members at the 11:00 service will be invited stay after worship on October 8 for further conversation. Staff will test using the Great Hall as a worship venue on October 18.

Fellowship will remain in the Narthex through October, at which point staff will assess the location and decide whether to move it back to the Great Hall until summer or keep it in the Narthex.

Secretary's Report: The council reviewed the minutes of the August 17, 2023 Church Council meeting. Bernie Zimmermann moved to approve the secretary's report of the Church Council meeting of August 17, 2023. Jon Hohenstein seconded the motion, and the council voted unanimously, 12-0, to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2023 Church Council meeting.

Finance Report: Treasurer Dick Rank provided an overview of the financial reports for August 2023, the first month of the fiscal year. Net income for August 2023 was \$19,329. Total actual income (including tuition/fees) was about \$5,100 over the budgeted amount, whereas actual expenses were about \$37,300 under budget. The minimum mortgage payment with no additional principal was made in August. Pastor Rick reported that we anticipate \$90,000 in Planting Hope pledge funds to still come in from September through December 2023. Jennifer Davidson reported that the council will have the opportunity to consider authorizing an additional mortgage principal payment and staff salary increases upon reviewing the Q1 financial report at the November 2023 meeting. Pastor Summy made the motion to approve the August 2023 financial reports. Shirl Alojado seconded the motion, and the Church Council voted unanimously, 12-0, to approve the August 2023 financial reports.

Jennifer Davidson presented the council with a Housing Allowance Resolution for an adjustment to the 2023 calendar year as the result of a home purchase. She explained that one change in the calendar year is allowed. Jon Hohenstein moved to approve the housing allowance adjustment. Bernie Zimmermann seconded the motion. The Church Council voted to approve the housing allowance adjustment with 11 yes votes and 1 abstain.

Nominations: Jennifer Davidson reported there are no nominations updates at this time.

New Business: Alyssa Isaacs presented an Equity Leadership Team recommendation to create an LGBTQIA+

Justice steering team. The proposed mission of the steering team is to deepen and expand the ways in which SOTV includes, affirms, and advocates for people who are LGBTQIA+ within the church and in the greater community through programmatic implementation. Melissa Tapper made a motion to approve the recommendation. Rachel Wermerskirchen seconded the motion, and the Church Council voted unanimously, 12-0, to approve the recommendation to create an LGBTQIA+ Justice steering team.

Adjourn: Bernie Zimmermann moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. Jon Hohenstein seconded the motion. The council voted unanimously, 12-0, to approve the motion to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Rachel Wermerskirchen, Church Council member

Next Council Meetings:

Thursday, October 5, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., in-person, Community Room with Bishop Patricia Lull (President Taphorn to lead the opening prayer)

Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 6:30 p.m., in-person, Community Room