

**St. Michael Lutheran Church
Council Retreat Minutes
February 11-13, 2011**

Present: Peter Strub, Mark Haller, Tonjia Groblewski, Bonnie Cook, Donna Weathers, Jackie Frederick, David Cooke, Sandy Daughtry, Andy Celinskis, Pastor Robert, Nancy Adair, Linda Harriz

Absent: Pastor Elise, Sarah Williams, Angela Bostick

The meeting was opened with devotion and prayer led by Pastor Robert.

Pastor Robert advised the Council of the death of Marge Wylie earlier in the day.

Approval of Minutes:

December 12: Sandy, Andy. Approved by acclamation

January 23: Nancy, Sandy. Approved by acclamation

Columbarium Update: Peter brought new members of Council up to date on the columbarium status: Council determined in Spring 2010 that the Columbarium would be located in the Courtyard of St. Michael. Peter has been doing a considerable amount of investigating. Some plans cost on the order of \$100,000; the Columbarium treasury is currently \$46K. Peter is now in touch with Tom Ramsey at Messiah, which did a Columbarium for much less. Tom Ramsey will come to St. Michael and look at our space. He is a builder and was instrumental in the design and building of the Columbarium at Messiah. Peter projects that St. Michael could have a functional Columbarium by summer. It will likely not be handicapped accessible.

Tonjia spoke to this. She has been waiting for 5 years and is anxiously awaiting the time when she can have some closure. Andy commented on another service that he was present at, where the ashes were sprinkled in a garden associated with a Columbarium.

Pastor Robert: when we get it where God wants it, it will work out. Seems natural, instinctive location is the courtyard. We got away from that by trying to honor the physically challenged. Location is no longer in question, as the Council voted to place the columbarium in the courtyard last year. The way we do this is a profound statement of theology, so it needs to be low key and nestled.

Billy asked the question of having a plaque on the wall and a general garden area for sprinkling remains. This has not been formally addressed, but will be soon enough.

Peter states that once we have something built, more people will buy in.

Foundation Update: A new draft of the endowment policy and guidelines has been presented to Council. This guideline is set up as a By-Law to our Constitution. Decisions still to be made include, how the funds can be invested, how the proceeds can be distributed, whether or not the donor can dictate how the funds are invested or distributed, whether or not the principal be used in special circumstances, etc. This will go back to the Finance Team to be hammered out. It is the intention that the Council take action on the proposal in March.

Also noted during the discussion of the Foundation:

- Trinity Lutheran Church granted \$85K in 2010 from their endowment to support various social agencies in Greenville, seminary students, and more.
- Donna had investigated the need to have insurance coverage to protect the Foundation trustees.
- Donna met with the Thrivent folks
- Sandy offered to see what she could find out about how Trinity invests and determines distributions.
- Robert noted that Trinity LC's Foundation allowed for balanced investments and balanced distributions: 1/3 for seminary students, 1/3 for local social ministries, and 1/3 for Trinity missions that could not otherwise be funded (building up the church).
- A possible sticking point: Section III.A of the proposed Foundation
- Discussion/question of how this gets adopted (C.16 of the constitution).
- The congregation will need to be educated
- The Congregation Council has 2 responsibilities: oversee finances, set mission and direction.
- United ministries endowment
- Also, if made a bylaw or amendment to the constitution, then it's there forever. A simple policy could disappear in a notebook
- Need to be open about the upcoming vote. Get congregation on board before meeting to approve.

To be addressed:

- Escape hatch
- Seminary – stipulate **ELCA** seminary
- Balanced distribution
- How TLC invests money
- Did TLC set it up as a by-law?

Discussion of financials deferred until morning when Sarah is here.

Breakfast is at 8:30

Peter thanks the group for a good meeting.

Meeting adjourned for the evening with prayer.

Reconvene Saturday, February 12, 2011, 9:30 am

Present: Peter Strub, Mark Haller, Tonjia Groblewski, Bonnie Cook, Donna Weathers, Jackie Frederick, David Cooke, Sandy Daughtry, Andy Celinskis, Pastor Robert, Nancy Adair, Linda Harriz, Sarah Williams, Angela Bostick

Absent: Pastor Elise, Donna Weathers

(Pastor Robert advised the group that Donna Weathers was called away early Saturday morning due to the unexpected and sudden death of a close cousin).

Review of Design for Ministry

The review of the Design for Ministry brought discussion as noted:

- We need a dedicated team to take photos/video AND rip, burn, slideshow, post, etc.
 - o Randy Christ, from T&T, Howard Leonard, Renee castor, Carol Drake, Sarah Gullick, Lewis Kay
 - o Peter will call Randy Christ & Keith Allen to get ideas on getting A/V Team going.
- **Worship & Music** - needs more assisting ministers at 8:30.
 - o David Cooke will send to Linda "How to be an Assisting Minister."
 - o Sandy making phones calls; getting ready assisting minister training, altar guild training, etc.
 - o Sandy talk to Sandi regarding children's choir.
- **Youth & Athletics** will have their first meeting on February 20
 - o Nancy & Mark will be calling folks to build team this week
 - o LCY is coordinated through end of school year.
 - o Cynthia Trout will officially retire from LCY leadership at the end of this school year.
 - o Young Youth – people have been generously filling in during Pastor Elise's absence (Kathleen Monn, Jennifer Chassereau)
 - o CRAWL - Angela Bostick & Heather Hester filling in during Pastor Elise's absence.
 - o Need someone to coordinate spring softball
- **Evangelism** – looking for host/s for new member dinner on March 26.
 - o Discussion of April Table Rock event. See details at www.stmichaelelca.org/boating.
- **Social Ministry** – Bonnie – Operation Inasmuch will be April 30.
 - o Linda Cramer will do Hospice Bags for Open Arms on this day. Alexa Moon cook for Loaves & Fishes; Sarah Williams will contact Free Medical clinic.
 - o Added Habitat for Humanity to this area, as we have already participated in 3, and are preparing to do another.
- **Finance** – Rick Richardson does not want to be chair. Perhaps Sarah Williams could be chair.
 - o PR, PE & Bill Henry met in fall with Melanie Hendrix about making Thrivent more visible at St. Michael. Melanie Hendrix is scheduled to be at St. Michael on March 6, but this will likely be deferred.
- **Property** – Andy is looking for someone to chair this area.
 - o Most helpful has been LMM.
 - o PR spoke to not burning out Andy, but instead implementing a five-year plan to build up a cadre of property caregivers. We have a large campus which needs close and careful attention.

- **Mutual Ministry** – David Cooke expresses his concern for Pastor Robert. We had two people with two distinct jobs, and we are now back to only one person. This means that we will need to prioritize; and this means that some things will not get done. Pastor Elise will be out for some extended period of time. We, the Council, need to be very mindful that 50% of our pastoral care staff is out of the ballgame right now. Pastor Robert was solo pastor for many years, but with the addition of Pastor Elise, we expanded our activities, and Pastor Robert cannot do all those things himself. He needs to take time off, but feels he cannot at this time.
 - o What about supply pastors? Sabbatical – no funds.
 - o No funds for supply pastors, or continuing education.
 - o David will be working on that, along with annual employee evaluations.
 - o Can Pastor Elise's salary that is not being used at this time be reallocated to some other needs? This is a Finance question.

Pastor Robert addressed these concerns:

- He is not so much worried about Sundays as he is with other days. Many supply pastors and supply organists out there.
- He is a plow horse – as long as there is a row to plow he's staying to plow it. Tell him to go home.
- With regard to a Sabbatical, grants are out there. The Lily Foundation grants lots of money every year. Lily grants supply funds to pay the pastor on sabbatical and an interim pastor
- The challenge for Pastors Elise and Robert is that they know they can serve God in growing the congregation, but are now in a holding pattern. St. Michael's is about 100 people short of funding all the things we want to do.
- This is an opportunity to work smarter, not harder, and is a learning experience for us.

The question was asked, "what does Mutual Ministry entail?" This led to a discussion of personnel items, such as vacation, salary & benefits, vacation policy, evaluations, etc. It is also a safe place for the called staff to meet with the MM Committee in order to discuss personal concerns regarding their called ministry job.

We are trying to become a program centered-congregation. The transition from pastor-centered to program-centered is very difficult. We have been working on this for 3 years, and have not self-destructed.

Adjourn for lunch.

Reconvene Saturday, February 12, 2011, 1:30 am

Meeting expectations: this was a brief discussion of Council Meeting expectations.

The remainder of the afternoon was spent in discussion using materials from A Renewable Enterprise, The Renewable Organization: A Workbook for Faith-Based Organizations.

Relationships, Seeds and Visions

Our Purpose: A Self-Evaluation – p 67

- Are the majority of the people in our faith community deeply passionate about our common purpose? Yes: 3; No: 11;
- Can we identify what sets us apart (really and truly) from other organizations or communities like ours? yes: 14
- Do people in our organization or faith community understand their role in fulfilling our common purpose? yes: 3; No: 7; IDK or other: 4
- Would the majority of people we serve beside be willing to change any practice or process for the sake of fulfilling our common purpose? Yes: 5; No: 6; IDK or other: 3
- Do people on the outside – in our community, neighborhood or wider context – know what we stand for? yes: 4; no: 7; IDK: 3
- Would our nearest neighbors (go ahead and make a mental picture of who they are – they may or may not be geographical neighbors) say we are fulfilling our purpose? (If you're not sure, ask them): Yes: 8; No: 1; IDK: 5
- Would anyone in our neighborhood or wider community notice or mind if we weren't here anymore? Yes: 14

- Reflect on getting serious about a process that invites people to think with you about God's purpose for your organization.

- Have we done an effective job of communicating that we are trying to change from pastor to program centered church? How can we do better?

- Common purpose: is everyone at St. Michael passionate about the SAME common purpose?
 - Refer to Alice Mann size transition. Who are we? What are we here for? Who are our neighbors?

 - What's the point? A new way of thinking.

Renewable and Consumable

Jesus came to give us life, not suck the life out of us.

God has a mission. Our January 23, 2011 meeting was a good start to this discussion.

The PowerPoint slides that were used to facilitate the discussion are attached to this email. The entire group, including the Secretary participated in the freely moving discussion, so the discussion is not recorded; however, the slideshow gives points of discussion.

Financial Discussion

- St. Michael had a better year in 2010 financially than was predicted, due largely in part to careful spending across the board.
- However, at the same time, this is tight budget/spending is consuming Pastor Robert and Charlie Jones. There is no budget for supply pastors or supply organists. Need to rectify this.
- Discussion of including complete mortgage amount in YTD budget and YTD expenses.

Meeting adjourned for dinner and fellowship time.

Reconvene Sunday, February 13, 2011, 9:30 am

Present: Peter Strub, Mark Haller, Tonjia Groblewski, Bonnie Cook, Donna Weathers, Jackie Frederick, David Cooke, Sandy Daughtry, Andy Celinskis, Pastor Robert, Nancy Adair, Linda Harriz, Sarah Williams, Angela Bostick

Absent: Pastor Elise, Donna Weathers

Size Transition

Pastor Robert led this morning's discussion regarding size transition. The discussion was again freely moving, enhanced by two handouts (one from Alice Mann and one from the Alban Institute, and included a number of points:

Handout 1: From Alice Mann's book, "The in-between church, raising the roof," "The In-Between Church," showing family-size, plateau, pastor-centered, plateau, and program-sized churches which are assessed by average worship attendance levels. St. Michael's average weekly attendance has never been more than 208, and usually hangs around 175.

To move from pastor-centered to program-centered requires change for most, including and especially Pastor Robert. This is the hardest transition of all. Pastor Robert will have to change the way he has worked for the last 30 years.

Handout 2: From the Alban Institute, writing by Alice Mann entitled, "Should We Be Growing?" Emphasis here is on communication. To bring everyone with us and lose as few as possible, we need to communicate what we are trying to do.

Review of website and calendar.

The group discussed and looked at the website and calendar. There is great opportunity for publicity and sharing on the website and interactive calendar. Each ministry area leader was asked to review their page on the website for accuracy and improvement. Linda manages the website and calendar.

Where and what does God want St. Michael's to be in ten years?

- Size transition – up and running program-centered church, vibrant.
- Continue BGWG Phase II.
- Family life center – place for youth
- Transparent
- Develop Sunday school program – then they will be church-goers as adults
- As a church, do we want to grow? This question was asked in late 90s by David Cooke. Astounding numbers projected as a result of BGWG, but did not happen. How do we kick it in gear? Do we want to kick it in gear?
- David Cooke reiterated that we are still some number of people short of supporting our second pastor. It is not an expense problem, it is an income problem.
- Need to have a critical mass.
- Cannot solve a problem as long as you're still thinking the way you were thinking when you created the problem.
- Third service – needs leadership other than pastors.

T.E.A.M. – Together Everyone Accomplishes More

We will make it happen!

Peter thanks all for coming and for their contributions.

Next meeting: March 20, 2011 (Linda not present – Sandy will take minutes.) 1:15 pm.

April meeting: April 10, 1:15 pm (moved up to avoid Palm Sunday and Easter Egg Hunt and Easter)

The meeting is adjourned for a brief worship service with Holy Communion and then departure for home.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda B. Harriz
Congregation Council Secretary