

**St. Michael Lutheran Church  
Congregation Council  
Minutes  
April 19, 2009**

**Present:** Linda Harriz, Robert Miles, Sue Clarke, Nancy Adair, Bill Henry, Wilson Worley, Sally Sizemore, Greg Monn, Sally Taylor, Peter Strub, Dave Cook

**Absent:** Steve Baker, Elise Stringer, Miki Wolff, Blake Castor, Ruth Howard

**Guest:** David Cooke

**Packets distributed included:** Agenda, Financial Statements, Finance Recommendation, Social Ministry Report

**Open Meeting:** Peter Strub opened the meeting at 1:15 pm, asking Pastor Robert to pray. Pastor Robert referred to the day's Gospel text, which talked about disciples hiding away, and Jesus showing up despite the locked doors. That's what community is about. We need to be supportive of one another; we can't lock Jesus out. Sometimes we may want to run away from, instead of toward, community; sometimes we're too busy with our stuff. The Good News of Easter is that Jesus keeps on coming to create community. Jesus comes, brings peace, sends us and gives The Holy Spirit.

**Approval of Minutes from March meeting:** Wilson asked a question regarding the statement in the Spending Management Plan discussion "right now, everything gets paid." This was clarified to by Linda to mean that St. Michael's standard practice is to pay our bills when they are due, and to send our benevolence payments (to SC Synod and to local ministry organizations) on a regular (monthly or quarterly) basis. With the tight financial position we are currently experiencing, we are not paying any benevolence at this time, with the exception of funds given with specific designations. Motion to approve the minutes as published by Sally Sizemore, seconded by Wilson Worley. The minutes from the March 15, 2009 meeting are approved by acclamation.

### **Liaison/Team Progress Reports**

**Finance** (Miki Wolff, *absent*) – Recommendations from the Finance Team sent by Team Chair Rick Richardson are included in the packet. Rick Richardson has stepped up to be the chair of this team. Peter reviewed recommendations. Discussion points:

Finance Team recommends that:

- Council plan on receiving only \$350,000 income based on first quarter income and past history.
- Council either reduce budget further to \$350,000 or determine how to increase giving to \$400,000.
- Cash reserve through March 31 was \$170,000, a large portion of which is designated, leaving \$49,000 available.
- Cash reserve NOT be used to close the \$50,000 gap.
- Council needs to adopt the revised spending plan. The only approved spending plan by congregation is \$476K, then Council modified at Retreat (to \$441K), and was subsequently further modified (to \$400K).

David Cooke leads discussion on behalf of the Stewardship Team. Points made, questions asked:

- One-page synopsis of spending plan's 3 versions has been produced by Linda Harriz.
- Need to share with congregation – are any revisions desired by council members?
- A cover letter would be necessary with an explanation of what prompted revisions. Review: first revision based on pledges, second revision based on 1<sup>st</sup> quarter income and economic situation.
- Further, the cover letter should state that we used \$30K of our reserves, and have already expended \$10K of reserve funds this year.
- Note that we traditionally spend 15% more in the first quarter than any other through the year.

Dave Cook arrives here.

- We need to emphasize to the congregation that we need to know what we can anticipate financially so that we can plan our mission and ministry.
- David Cooke notes that 1<sup>st</sup> quarter income is approximately what was pledged.
- Do we send a blanket letter to all members; go to folks who haven't pledged, call, or all three?
- Recommendation that we send a blanket letter to congregation along with one-page synopsis and a pledge card, with a deadline for response.
- Many attempts were made to come up with final column numbers; these figures were not simply grabbed out of the air.
- We are trying to become a program-centered church – we have really cut the budget for that.

- Council members need to be prepared to respond to questions or dissatisfaction – show what was cut and why and ask for their position on that and where they would cut.
- Need to let congregation know that it is Council's desire to pay all of Synod apportionment.
- Need to be fiscally responsible. Can the letter convey that we're not fearful either? Need to send message of faith and hope; responsible, but not scary.
- Dave Cook notes that expenses are down this year, but we haven't paid any Synod apportionment.

Wilson Worley moves: That Council adopt the second 2009 revision of the Spending Plan to \$400K; and authorize the Stewardship Team to implement a plan to be presented to the congregation to raise the additional income above the anticipated income of \$350K and this budget number. Nancy Adair seconds the motion. Discussion points:

- Town meeting for discussion and questions? Calling an informational meeting of congregation will spike anxiety. If a letter goes out, folks will come and engage in conversation with council members. The way you handle that will be your leadership.
- Rick Richardson has agreed to chair the Finance Team. The Finance Team is being anxious about the financial position of the congregation so that we don't have to be, so that St. Michael will always be a place of peace.
- Part of our strategy is to deal with anxiety here. There is no need to be anxious about numbers. People always respond to authenticity. When Finance put clear information in the bulletin in March, several people said "thanks for sharing."
- Question: what if we anger somebody? You will anger them if you presume to answer the question for them. Today's Acts lesson is the scariest place in the New Testament. Disciples sold off everything and started a commune. Nature of community is that we are willing to both give and receive help – Servant Song. Nature of community is that those who have abundant resources share. Part of community is that we do this together.
- We don't have a special fund. Consider this need a fund. Whenever there is a need, we ask and receive. We simply need to continue to make the need known and ask for help.
- Part of moving to where we want to be is laying the groundwork and the plan.

There being no further discussion, the Motion is approved by acclamation.

**Learning** (Steve Baker - *absent*) – no report

**Program Development** (Ruth Howard - *absent*) – no report

**Property** (Sue Clarke) – Property Team met this morning, but Sue was not present. Linda Hunt is working on inventory for kitchen. Peter Strub continues to work on the replacement logistics of the sanctuary lighting. Has some information on scaffolding; planning to work with Howard Leonard this week so that some will be fixed before weekend. Bill Henry noted that in Clemson the firemen came in and changed the light bulbs. There were 12-15 folks at the Property Work Day on April 4. Not a lot, but enough for what we did. Again, the need to energize the younger folks was mentioned – average age was 55 or higher. Dave Cook notes that paint is peeling off of soffit on corner of building. Andy is aware of that; Andy is also planning on cleaning carpet. It was noted that sign-up sheets do not work to recruit first –time helpers; phone call invitations are needed.

**Social Ministry** (Bill Henry) – Report in packet. The main project at this time is Operation Inasmuch – we have a lot of volunteers among the Lutheran churches in the Greenville area, approximately 80 are from St. Michael; however, there are still many projects unmanned or only partially manned. Note that the family who was in the basement shelter has resigned from the GAIHN program. This change does not reflect a problem with our space or our hospitality.

**Stewardship** (Greg Monn) – see above discussion with Finance.

**Worship & Music** (Sally Sizemore) – Notes from meeting handed out. Sally notes that April is very busy month. Special music was provided two times this month, with the funds for this music provided by special anonymous donations. Thanks to Greg Monn and Wilson Worley for gift of new flower urns. Good attendance on Easter. Anyone take photo of cross? Need to get on slideshow and website.

**WOW** (Blake Castor - *absent* & Sally Taylor) – Minutes will be sent. First meeting early in April. Some people have agreed to take on some responsibility. Next meeting will be next week. There are a lot of items still to be taken care of. Folks present at first meeting willing to step up and help. Pastor Robert shows a 2-page list of visitors since first of year. We could well receive a record number of new members this year with people and a system in place. Need to give our seat – move over and make room – to other people. Peter noted that there were two new visitor cards filled out and placed in the offering plate today.

**Youth & Athletics** (Nancy Adair) – Adult softball begins April 30. Older youth returned from a successful retreat weekend earlier today. May 3 is Youth Sunday. Follow up on Concession Stand item – opportunity to earn funds by manning concessions at Greenville Drive – not sure of outcome, but will follow up ASAP. Sally wonders: do we need activities for Youth – ie movie night with popcorn; Sally would like to host such an event. Youth Gathering is just over

3 months away. Fundraising has gone tremendously – Shrove Tuesday through Variety Show was down slightly over 2006, but not bad considering economy. Funds are sufficient to send all to New Orleans.

### **Energy Assessment**

**What gives energy?** Sue Clarke: Easter Sunday service – church beautiful, flowers, music, sermon wonderful. Nancy Adair: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday. Pastor Robert: St. Michael is in a good place right now, in terms of many different good things happening, demographics, and new leadership, lots of young families and lots of newer senior adults. Personal – when first came here, thought St. Michael could be a 700 member church and has plenty of times despaired of getting there. Joy now in coming to work, and in “marketing” St. Michael.

**What takes energy?** – Peter Strub: budgeting issues and finance situation. Believing, we see. Sometimes we are more of a doubting Thomas, needing to see to believe.

### **ACTION ITEMS –**

**Treasurer’s Report** (Dave Cook) – Financial statements through first quarter in packet. Total first quarter expenses \$97,443 + mortgage principal: \$103,000. No synod apportionment included. Extrapolating this first quarter out through 12 months comes very close to our revised \$400,000 spending plan. Dave notes that some ministry areas have designated funds available for their use.

Questions:

Negative number on P&L – does this mean we are over budget or under budget? No, this is an under budget figure.

Designated funds – Greenville Drive showing -\$192? This is an in-out fund, and usually a wash, but sometimes funds go out before some come back in – some show on different month...just holding in trust – doesn’t show on regular expenses or income.

Newsletter deadline tomorrow -

### **Calendar items**

- LCY Awanita Retreat, 4/17-19
- Greenville Drive Outing, 4/19
- Newsletter Deadline - May/June issue (4/20)
- Operation Inasmuch, 5/2
- Youth Sunday, 5/3

No new business.

### **Next meeting, May 17 – 1:15 pm**

Closing prayer by Pastor Robert

Meeting adjourned 3:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted  
Linda Harriz  
Council Secretary