

St. Michael Lutheran Church
Council Minutes
February 21, 2010

Present: Peter Strub, Angela Bostick, Tonjia Groblewski, Bill Henry, Donna Weathers, Ralph Mellom, Billy Koch, Sandy Daughtry, Linda Harriz, Nancy Adair, Pastor Robert, Steve Baker, Scott Lesiak, Sarah Williams

Absent: Pastor Elise, Sally Sizemore

Also Present: Dave Cook, Howard Leonard

Peter opened the meeting at 1:15 pm.

Opening Devotions: Pastor Robert opened with a Renewing Congregations activity, based on the scripture Isaiah 2:2-4.

Isaiah 2:2-4

²In days to come

the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

³Many peoples shall come and say,

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴He shall judge between the nations,

and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

Answer the questions: What does God want to see happen in the world through the Church? What's on God's bucket list (for you and for us together as the body of Christ? "We need to bring the word of God to people – mountain of the Lord figurative." "People recognize good things and will go to them." "God wants the church to be a place where the people can be with God." "Elevation – symbol of lifting ourselves up to be better and closer to God." "Canadian mountains – Olympics – no swords, all getting along, not about who wins." "Peace on earth, good will toward men." "Venn diagram – interconnected – family, church, community. Focus on all 3 achieves God's plan. 3-dimensional." "Heart – peace, love, caring, helping, concern, sharing. Contribute so much to Haiti, etc., need to accept that that is our responsibility to share."

Approval of Minutes: Council Retreat, and November 2009. **Motion:** That the minutes from November 15 and November 29, 2009, be accepted as record, and that the minutes from the January 15-17, 2010 Council Retreat be approved as distributed: Sandy Daughtry, seconded by Scott Lesiak. Approved and Accepted by acclamation.

Team Reports: Would like to have team reports ahead of time to include in packet, and can email ahead. This will cut down on time spent on this at Council meetings.

Youth & Athletics – Nancy Adair, Billy Koch: The basketball banquet to celebrate the 2009-2010 season is scheduled for Sunday, March 7. Softball season begins in April.

Evangelism – Tonjia Groblewski: No Report

Finance – Donna Weathers: The team met and discussed an endowment plan, set up an audit committee to audit books for 2009, and announced new teller input systems. Rick Richardson – (team chair) notes that income for January was down about \$4000 compared to January of 2009; utility costs in January were higher than normal due to very cold weather. The team will meet again Tuesday, March 16.

Learning – Angela Bostick, Steve Baker: The Learning Team met on February 9. Because last year's intergenerational Summer Sunday School program was so well received, the team has decided to do it again, with the theme Create in Me. The first Summer Sunday School date is June 6; they are currently brainstorming new teachers for this. Our current teachers are pleased with Augsburg Fortress' Spark curriculum. The team will be looking to recruit new teachers for fall 2010 (losing B&B teacher and 2-3 yrs teacher, middle school). Plans for the March 28 Easter Egg Hunt are in place. Rally Day is scheduled for Sunday, August 29; the team is leaning toward a cowboy/girl theme.

Property – Ralph Mellom: The team met this morning, February 21, and will continue to meet on the third Sunday of each month, 9:45 am in the Fellowship Hall. Andy Celinskis (team chair) has developed a list of projects around the campus, which will be placed in the Gathering Area with a sign-up sheet so that individuals may sign up to take on a project. A Property Clean Up day is scheduled for March 27. The Property team asks for Council approved to dispose of dilapidated picnic tables in the back yard. It is noted that these picnic tables were the Eagle Scout project of Scott Hiller. **Motion:** that Council grant the Property team leave to move forward on disposition of tables: Steve Baker, seconded by Tonjia Groblewski. An email will be sent to Scott Hiller to inform him of picnic table status. Approved by acclamation.

Stewardship – Scott Lesiak: No report.

Social Ministry – Bill Henry: Report included in packet. Bill reports that Operation Inasmuch information has appear in the Sunday bulletin for a number of week, but he has received no response from the congregation and wonders how interested the congregation is in doing this project again this year? It is suggested that someone make announcements in church regarding OIA, and that we join together with other churches as we did last year. Pastor Robert shared that Bp Yoos encourages us to work in our neighborhood with non-Lutheran congregations. Andy Daughtry, Newell Nelsen, Sarah Williams are lined up to lead projects. Bill suggests a

project to aid the hungry in the community and allow families to work together - solicit at grocery stores (need to coordinate with store).

Thrivent – Bill Henry, liaison to Thrivent for St. Michael, notes that Thrivent Financial for Lutheran's Giving Plus program (a matching funds program) no longer exists. It is being replaced by a new program, Thrivent Choice, which will involve Thrivent members voting on where funds will go. St. Michael does not have very many Thrivent members, so this may mean that St. Michael will not be the recipient of Thrivent funding.

Worship & Music – Sally Sizemore, Sandy Daughtry: The team met on February 8. Everything is in place for Lent, Palm Sunday and Easter. A new sign was made to announce our Lenten and Easter services in the front yard.

Recording Ministry – Steve Baker: Steve notes that our CD burner is having technical difficulties and is in the shop – possible warranty fix; we are currently using a loaner from Pecknel. Estimate \$800 for professional quality CD burner (like the loaner we have from Pecknel). We can buy commercial grade CD burner for about \$200. Need to replace or repair. Donna notes that considerable amount of money in W&M memorials that could possibly be used for this.

Treasurer's Report: Peter introduced Sarah Williams, our new Treasurer, and thanked Dave for his 2 years of service and his assistance with Sarah's transition. There are 3 signers on our bank account – Peter Strub, Sarah Williams, Dave Cook). In her new job, Sarah will be traveling out of country once a month until summer. Stacy is working with Sarah to do checks early on those weeks. Dave reminded the group that some expenses in January are annual occurrences, which sometimes make the expenses look too large. February giving is off to a good start. Dave states that he enjoyed the many meetings he attended and was grateful for the opportunity to serve as St. Michael's Treasurer. His thoughts and prayers will be with St. Michael so that we can support agencies in Greenville that aid the needy.

Action Items

Columbarium – Howard Leonard: Peter reviewed briefly Howard's visit and report to Council at the January retreat, reiterating that a straw poll taken at that time favored an outdoor location as opposed to the indoor location proposed for the Green Room.

Howard invites group to walk outside to courtyard to view site and answer questions.

Considerable discussion in courtyard including these 4 items which Howard was asked to address at the Council Retreat meeting:

- To construct a columbarium we **DO** need a building permit
- The plan/design/financing to construct a columbarium in the courtyard **DOES NOT** include security lighting
- Water runoff **IS** sufficiently handled at this time, and is not anticipated to damage proposed columbarium structure
- Landscaping **IS NOT** part of plan beyond direct area of columbarium because of lack of funds

Further discussion inside:

- Review of cremation statistics
- Temporary vs. permanent location:
 - Steve Baker (member of Columbarium Committee) notes that the Columbarium Committee is not yet in agreement of the permanence of the location.
 - Howard maintains that relocating the columbarium is not a problem; families will need to be notified that remains will be moved, and a worship service should be observed.
 - Peter maintains that whatever is done in the courtyard be permanent. By the time the columbarium needs to be moved (when 128 niches are filled), it will long be out of this Council's purview; it will also likely be difficult to find families of those inurned.
 - Final resting place is just that: final. Build a new columbarium, but do not move those remains already in place in original columbarium.
- Let the process work itself – perhaps invite the Site Planning Group, under the leadership of Tom Hartz, to aid this placement process
- What would the cost be if the columbarium were built in phases?

Pastor Robert makes three points:

- 1) We started talking about this in 1998. One thing people purchase is permanence – want to know that in 150 years earthly remains will still be here.
- 2) When you create cemetery space, you create sacred space. Churches already have sacred space – sanctuary. This new sacred space near our already sacred space makes sense
- 3) In 1998, we did not have gathering area. Issues then included how to gather and hear during inurnment portion of service. We now have the Gathering Area, climate controlled and audio enabled.

Motion: that Council send the columbarium proposal back to the Columbarium Committee, which will avail itself of all St. Michael's intellectual resources, and return to Council with a revised proposal for a location/structure that is permanent. Steve Baker, seconded by Tonjia Groblewski. Discussion:

- Good idea to involve the Site Planning Group in this project and process
- Not rejecting courtyard site; rejecting temporary plan
- Would like to see the whole courtyard utilized for the columbarium, not just the lower space
- Awareness of budgetary constraints; what would a phased approach look like, in terms of schedule and cost?
- Will Council allow the entire courtyard to become dedicated to columbarium space?

Pastor Robert notes that there is already a motion on the table. Do we add a second motion that the Council allows the devotion of the entire courtyard to columbarium space? (No action on this question taken.)

The original motion is approved by acclamation.

Tonjia Groblewski leaves

Pictorial Directory – Linda Harriz: Handout with pictorial directory information distributed. Briefly, our last pictorial directory was made in Fall 2006. Since that time, St. Michael's has received 31 new families, and some 19 families photographed in 2006 have changed in some way. Motion: that St. Michael have a pictorial directory produced in Fall 2010. Scott Lesiak, seconded by Ralph Mellom. Approved by acclamation. This falls under the Evangelism umbrella; Linda has already discussed with Tonjia. Bill offers that Barbara Henry has already said that she is willing and interested in leading this project.

Child Protection Policy – Peter Strub: St. Michael's has a Sexual Misconduct/Child Protection Policy, as mandated by the SC Synod. It states that Council will review and revise as appropriate each year. Motion: that the St. Michael Policy on Sexual Misconduct and Child Protection be accepted as written. Scott Lesiak, seconded by Sandy Daughtry. Approved by acclamation. Signed by Peter Strub, Council Chair, and Linda Harriz, Congregation Council Secretary.

Synod Apportionment – Peter Strub: Each Fall we are assigned Synod apportionment, based on our Confirmed-Contributing-Communing membership. For 2010 we are assigned \$42,451.71. We accepted – and included in the 2010 Spending Plan for Ministry - \$20,000. Peter proposes that rather than waiting until December to write a large check, he would like to see St. Michael pay on a quarterly or monthly basis so that Synod can pay their expenses. Discussion:

- How do we determine amount to pay?
- Let Finance recommend at end of quarter.
- Billy Koch expresses disappointment that we are not giving to local agencies through United Ministries and others that we have contributed to in the past. He feels strongly that that should be addressed before we deal with Synod apportionment.
- Peter states that Synod apportionment was agreed to by the congregation when it adopted the 2010 Spending Plan for Ministry. Not giving to local agencies continues to be a cause of great concern. Can we support those agencies in other ways? In another month we will have a clearer picture of how we are doing financially; we may need to "bridge the gap" again to meet current budget. The question on the table now is how to pay our Synod apportionment.
- Nancy notes that other groups within St. Michael benefit from Synod apportionment funds, specifically the Youth when they attend Synod-sponsored events, such as retreats.
- Nancy, referring back to earlier discussion on Operation Inasmuch, observes that if many feel as strongly as Billy about supporting local agencies, then we should have not problem garnering participation in Operation Inasmuch.

The Finance Team will bring a recommendation regarding payment of Synod apportionment to the April Council meeting, once first quarter financial information is in hand.

Endowment – Donna Weathers: The Finance Team is in discussion on this item, and anticipates having a draft of an Endowment Foundation Plan for review at the April Council meeting. Once we have a plan in place, we can advertise and promote so that people can identify gifts to endowment. Referring back to the discussion regarding funding for local agencies, Donna notes that there has been considerable discussion of using endowment proceeds for social ministry in the Greenville community.

Reception of New Members – Pastor Robert: committed last year to asking Council to approve new members. He currently has a list of 6 families that are close to joining in mission and ministry with the people of St. Michael. Definite family is Sean and Maria Miller, son Ethan; they will be received on Sunday, March 7, 2010.

Information Items

Renewing Congregations Information Event – March 6, in Columbia. \$20 includes lunch. This event encourages congregations to learn to function in renewable ways. Our Council researched this extensively in 2009, but determined this was not the time for St. Michael. Process that is starting begins now, and invites those on the fence to see what is happening. More info on SC Synod website (www.sclutheran.org)

Follow Up on Day of Holy Conversation, February 6 at Newberry (this event was conversation regarding the actions taken at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly last August) – Pastor Robert reviewed:

- South Carolina is the only synod (of 66) that has done this so far.
- Nobody's mind was changed, but they came closer together
- Bar graph of results of day is a predictably backwards bell curve
- Ten resolutions were presented; none have life beyond February 6, none go to synod assembly in June.
- St. Michael's Constitution states that Council appoints lay delegates to Synod Assembly. It is time now to do that. St. Michael is entitled to one male and one female delegate, an additional delegate based on our baptized membership, and one an additional delegate under the age of 30. Our two pastors are also voting members of the Assembly. (See Addendum 1, an excerpt from the SC Synod Constitution which outlines delegates to Assembly.) We can also send visitors to the Assembly (no voting privileges).
- Synod Assembly in June will deal with resolutions that go both ways. Those resolutions are now on the SC Synod website (www.sclutheran.org)
- 2 churches have already voted to leave ELCA, another 6 are in conversation about leaving
- Pastor Robert wants very much to help those wrestling with this; he is as confused as anybody else.
- What is the best way to help our congregation move forward?

Follow Up

Steve Baker is interested in serving as a delegate to the SC Synod Assembly in June.

The Council will appoint delegates at their meeting on March 14, 2010.

Pastor Robert will address the documents' content at the Council meeting on March 14, 2010

How do we determine who will be appointed as delegates to the SC Synod Assembly, June 2010?

Pastor Robert and Pastor Elise are asked to address groups already meeting (ie, Sunday School or teams) with regard to these Churchwide actions and the upcoming SC Synod Assembly.

New Business

Annual Congregational Meeting: moved to March 7, for reception of annual reports, financial update, identification of team liaisons. We will be recognizing Faye Moss and Dave Cook for their service.

Calendar update:

- o Basketball Banquet – March 7
- o Congregational Meeting – March 7
- o Variety Show – March 14
- o Music Extravaganza – March 21 – 3-5
- o Sean Miller’s Ordination at St. Michael – March 21, 4:00 pm
- o Property Work Day, March 27
- o Operation Inasmuch – April 24
- o Youth Sunday – May 2
- o Lutheran Choir presentation of Haydn’s The Creation – May 23, 5:00 pm,
Daniel Chapel, Furman University
- o SC Synod Assembly, June 4-5, 2010, Newberry College

Energy Assessment: What gives us energy? What takes energy away? God Sightings?

Pastor Robert noted that he was given energy when another patron in a restaurant remarked to him that she was glad he reminded her that it was Lent – he was wearing his ashes from the noon Ash Wednesday service.

The Churchwide Assembly actions are consuming energy.

Next meeting: Sunday, March 14 (early because of ordination and Musical Extravaganza), 1:15pm

Meeting adjourned with prayer at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Harriz
Congregation Council Secretary

Excerpt from CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS
SOUTH CAROLINA SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
(as amended through September 2007)

***S7.21. The membership of the Synod Assembly, of which at least 60 percent of the voting membership shall be composed of laypersons, shall be constituted as follows:**

a. All ordained ministers under call on the roster of this synod in attendance at the Synod Assembly shall be voting members.

b. All associates in ministry, deaconesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and diaconal ministers, under call, on the official lay rosters of this synod shall have both voice and vote as lay voting members in the Synod Assembly, in addition to the voting membership of lay members of congregations provided in item *S7.21.c.

c. A minimum of one lay member elected by each congregation with fewer than 175 baptized members and a minimum of two lay members elected by each congregation with 175 or more baptized members related to this synod, normally one of whom shall be male and one of whom shall be female, shall be voting members. The Synod Council shall establish a formula to provide additional lay representation from congregations on the basis of the number of baptized members in the congregation. The Synod Council shall seek to ensure that, as nearly as possible, 50 percent of the lay members of the assembly shall be female and 50 percent shall be male. Additional members from each congregation normally shall be equally divided between male and female.

d. Voting membership shall include the officers of this synod.

S7.21.01. Each congregation shall certify to the synodical secretary at least 30 days before the assembly the names of the regular and alternate voting members elected by the congregation. Any changes in lay voting members must be certified to the synodical secretary before the beginning of each business session.

S7.21.A07. Each congregation of this synod shall be entitled to at least two lay voting members. Each congregation having 300 to 649 baptized members shall be entitled to one additional lay voting member. Each congregation having 650 to 999 baptized members shall be entitled to two additional lay voting members. Each congregation having 1000 or more baptized members shall be entitled to three additional lay voting members. Baptized members shall be based on the annual congregational report of each congregation for the year preceding the assembly.

Each congregation of this synod shall be entitled to one additional lay voting member who is under the age of thirty at the time of the assembly.

S7.22. This synod may establish processes that permit retired ordained ministers, retired associates in ministry, retired deaconesses, and retired diaconal ministers on the roster of this synod to serve as voting members of the Synod Assembly, consistent with *S7.21.c. above.