

**St. Michael Lutheran Church  
Congregation Council  
Minutes  
November 29, 2009**

**Present:** Linda Harriz, Pastor Robert Miles, Nancy Adair, Sally Sizemore, Ruth Howard, Peter Strub, Bill Henry, Pastor Elise Stringer, Sue Clarke, Wilson Worley

**Absent:** Steve Baker, Greg Monn, Miki Wolff, Blake Castor, Sally Taylor, Dave Cook

**Packets distributed included:** Proposed Budget for 2010, synopsis for 2010, Finance Minutes, Report of Nominating Committee

**Open Meeting:** Peter opened the meeting at 1:10 pm, and asked Pastor Elise to pray.

There were only two items of business on the agenda.

**Nomination of candidates for Council and Treasurer**

The Nominating Committee was: Peter Strub – Chair, Sally Sizemore, Wilson Worley, Elaine Holland, Ed Winkler, Jeffrey Stringer, Pastors Elise and Robert – Ex Officio

Peter reported that the Nominating Committee had prepared a slate of nominees to fill seven Council positions for the 2010 – 2011 term: Ralph Mellom, Tonjia Groblewski, Angela Bostick, Scott Lesiak, Billy Koch, Sandy Daughtry, Donna Weathers. **Sally Sizemore made the motion to approve the slate as presented.**

Nancy Adair asked if these individuals had been advised of attendance requirements for Council membership. Pastor Elise noted that the individuals who spoke with her about their nomination to serve on council mentioned to her that they had been informed of meeting commitments. Bill Henry, further addressing the attendance issue, asked if anyone had inquired about what keeps Council members absent from meetings. There is some brief discussion about unavoidable absences, and the possibility of changing meeting times. Pastor Robert notes that meeting time is always brought up and discussed at Council Retreat, with a consensus of when the group will meet throughout the year.

**Sue Clarke seconded the motion. Slate of candidates approved by acclamation.**

The question is raised regarding the nomination/election of a Treasurer. The ELCA recommends that a Treasurer serves only 2 consecutive years. Peter and Pastor Robert both noted that the Treasurer is elected by the Council, not by the congregation. The Nominating Committee has considered this, and has individuals in mind to contact.

Peter noted that he was apprehensive about having to identify seven candidates for Council nomination. He was pleased and thankful for a good committee and process.

**2010 Proposed Spending Plan for Ministry**

The Finance Team met on November 17 to review income and expense trends and build a Proposed Spending Plan for Ministry for 2010. It is likely that there will be a Temple Talk to celebrate the outcome of our difficult year. Our initial large Spending Plan for Ministry for 2009 was reduced twice, we had a "Bridge the Gap" campaign in May, resulting in a projected overall income of \$370K - \$390K this year. Current expenses projected to be about \$375K, which puts us in a position to send about \$20K to SC Synod. Peter thanks the Council and teams for their wise and careful spending this year.

Based on these conditions, the Finance Team recommends a \$395K spending plan for 2010. Current pledges and anticipated income above pledges would likely bring 2010 income to about \$350,000, which would mean that we would need to cut items, or use cash reserves. Depleting cash reserves in 2010 would mean that we have no cash reserves for future years. From a fiduciary standpoint, a church should have roughly three months operating costs in cash reserve. For St. Michael's, that totals about \$90K. A

brief discussion which clarifies discretionary vs. non-discretionary items, non-discretionary being fixed, or not negotiable items (utilities, mortgage, salaries, etc.) Discretionary items are those that we can choose to spend or not, or defer.

There is also some discussion of the Stewardship Campaign process. Wilson suggests going back to the Saddlebag program or something similar that involves people and increases awareness and energy. The possibility of sending out a letter in the next several weeks, asking folks to reconsider their pledge, and increasing it if possible is discussed. There are pros and cons, including angering folks who have already dug deep and asking for more now rather than waiting until or summer.

Sue inquired whether our local ministry recipients had received notification from St. Michael, indicating that they would not be receiving funds from us in 2009. No one at the table knew of any such communication. It is advised that St. Michael should inform those community ministries that we are unable to fund them in the next year.

Sally Sizemore raised the question of how funding was determined for this new Spending Plan, noting that a number of ministry areas were cut in half. It seems as though these areas are being punished for careful and wise spending, and deferment of purchases. Is there not enough faith to keep the 2009 revised numbers for 2010? In particular, there is discussion of adding funding back into the plan for instrumentalists, although the point is made that all areas were cut, and putting in everything that we wanted is got us to a \$476K budget that we couldn't meet in 2009. Local ministries has been cut to \$0. Peter advises that we can cut the \$395K plan any way we want, but advises also that we could increase a bit to between \$395K and \$400K. Using reserve funds is an option, which we had already voted on in 2009. There is a lot of angst and pain among members regarding the lack of funding sent to the Synod beyond what was specifically designated by congregation members.

By consensus, the total Spending Plan proposal is increased by \$1300, bringing the total to \$396,300. With regard to other cut funding, it is suggested that we make good use of our time and talents – in-kind services – in lieu of dollars.

The discussion returned to whether or not to send a letter now asking for increased pledges. Our current projected income is an historical high. Also, there is some discussion regarding when & how to pay Synod Apportionment.

The letter question is a strategy question, to which there is no answer. We need to lift up that we have had great year, in spite of job loss, economic downturn. There was a lot of talk last year that we talked too much about money. We played it low key this year. Instead, we could target groups in ways we think will be helpful. We are here discussing this so that Peter can stand up in front of congregation and say that eight people worked and talked to bring this proposed spending plan to the congregation. We can say this is the proposed plan, we are short 97 pledges; the congregation can vote up, can vote down, can amend. However, there is strength in preparation of leaders, so it is important the Council members know what the numbers are, and why. The Council needs to continue to encourage people to give and to pledge.

Motion to adopt Proposed Spending Plan for Ministry for 2010, as amended with regard to W&M area, and recommend adoption by the congregation: Bill Henry, Nancy Adair, second. Motion passed by acclamation.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35 pm with prayer by Pastor Robert.

Respectfully submitted  
Linda Harriz  
Council Secretary