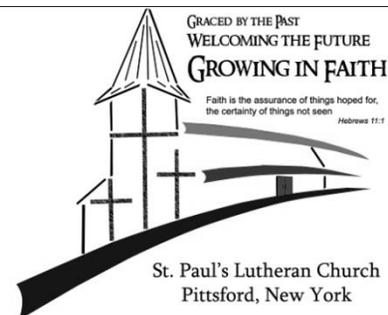


Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Pittsford, New York
Sunday, January 28, 2018



DRAFT

Call to Order --Kiki

Acting Council President Kristin (Kiki) Coffey called the meeting to order at approximately 11:00 AM.

Opening Prayer Devotional – Pastor Sharon Hanks

Pastor Sharon opened the meeting with a prayer of unification.

Quorum Declaration -- Kiki

A quorum was declared with the required number of voting members in attendance.

Roberts Rules of Order

Kiki referred all to the Roberts Rules of Order as included in the provided packet.

Review of 2017 Annual Meeting Minutes (Vote) -- All

Members reviewed their copies of the 2017 Annual Meeting minutes.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the minutes for the 2017 Annual Meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

Gary Schwartzbauer raised concern that minutes had not been made available for perusal within 3 weeks after the meeting as agreed upon during 2017's meeting. Kiki clarified that we did post them online within that time frame and an effort will be made to bring this to the congregation's attention in the future.

President's Report – Tom Piccirilli

Former Council President's report from 2017 was submitted in the packet. Acting Council President Kiki Coffey invited the congregation to ask Tom any questions they might have at this time. No questions were asked of Tom.

Nominations for Synod assembly representatives (Vote) -- All

Reid Cunningham explained that the assembly includes all the upstate churches and pastors, and typically one man and one woman act as representatives of the congregation. Devin Rosenbauer and Sharon Southard volunteered.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, a unanimous vote was reached to approve Sharon Southard and Devin Rosenbauer as representatives of St. Paul's Lutheran Church at the annual Synod assembly, June 3 through 5, 2018.

Prayer -- Pastor Hanks

Pastor Sharon led us in prayer acknowledging Council members leaving their posts. Mara Berndt presented each departing member with a gift.

Nominations for new 2018 Council members (Vote) -- All

Kiki announced that Jamie Foster and Jennifer Olivo would be joining Council, pending the congregation's approval. With a need for additional members, Kiki opened for anyone volunteering to join Council. Holley Haynes mentioned that a youth member position is available. There were no new volunteers at the time.

Upon motion being duly made and seconded, the congregation unanimously welcomed Jennifer Olivo and Jamie Foster onto Church Council.

2017 Financial results and 2018 budget (Vote) –Mike Patchen/All

Mike Patchen, as 2017 treasurer, reviewed his financial report as shown on the screen and provided in each packet, explaining the shortfalls and gains, ultimately concluding that our financial situation remains sound and stable at this time. Regarding the \$26K surplus, the Finance Committee has recommended this excess be safeguarded in a reserve account with anticipated giving for 2018 being lower. In an effort to maintain a balanced budget for 2018, the committee feels it necessary to reduce its annual giving to the Synod from 11% to 2.75%, keeping local benevolence at the same rate. They also recommend withholding and setting aside the 4th quarter 2017 Synod payment. Harry Fitzsimmons raised the point that the sale of Trinity was to go to benevolence, and Mike Patchen confirmed that this money would remain for benevolence. Jen Canning indicated she'd be happy to explore where she could direct funds that are being held, and Mike Patchen said that Council is always receptive. George Harris supported Jen's idea that we should be able to give any extra money to whoever we want. As a member of the Call Committee, Laura Patchen felt that the Synod has not done what they said they would do and supports withholding payment; there was applause in response. Mike McNamera voiced his strong opinion that the Synod doesn't appear to be working for us and that we are suffering for not having a permanent pastor after a long wait. John Heiman felt that our reduced income is a result of our being collectively unhappy with the call process. Devin Rosenbauer expressed that by sending less money to the Synod we may be harming ourselves. Jamie Foster agreed, and added that this creates a kind of business relationship rather than a spiritual one. Reid Cunningham said he feels committed to the Synod because they, in turn, support other organizations in need. Reid suggested an amendment that would allow for an increase in benevolence in the event receipts exceed our budget. He moved that the 2018 budget be amended so that any surplus above our usual expenses be committed to increasing our pledge to the Synod up to 11%, with

payment at the discretion of Church Council, and the current amount of benevolence be increased from 10K to 12K, as suggested by Harry. Vote results were: 36 yea; 35 nay. A second vote was taken (not a recount) and the results were: 37 yea; 38 nay. The amendment failed. This leaves the decision up to Council as to how payment to the Synod for the remainder of 2017 will be handled.

2018 Budget Vote – Mike/All

A vote was taken for approval of the 2018 budget as presented. Results were: 69 yea; 1 nay. The 2018 budget was approved. John Heiman asked if progress had been made toward investing funds from certain accounts as he suggested to Council in 2017. Mike Patchen explained that Council did invest conservatively as John proposed. Gary Schwartzbauer noted that our water expense has been unusually high. Holley Haynes mentioned washing the church building may have been a contributor, but the issue will be further explored. Ann Peterson asked how often audits are performed on budgets. Mike Patchen estimated they were done every 5-10 years. Alisa Piccirilli said the last was done in December 2016.

Special thanks--Kiki

Kiki took the next few minutes to thank those who served St. Paul's throughout the year, especially the volunteers for the 150th Committee, the Call Committee, Jen Canning, Mara Berndt, Holley Haynes, Sue Wyatt, Barb Serve, Bryn Tayman and Laura Patchen.

Prayer—Pastor Sharon

Pastor Hanks led the congregation in prayer in anticipation of our open discussion.

Open Forum—Kiki/All

2017

Kiki began by suggesting we all keep in mind that we are here to carry on Christ's mission and work together to achieve our common goals. She acknowledged that we all have opinions and that we're somewhat divided. She then asked if anyone had any thoughts or comments about 2017. Elizabeth Dodge said she appreciates everyone who has been at the pulpit for their different perspectives. She feels it is fine to express that we are unhappy with the call process, but not to use that as an excuse to default on our promises. Devin Rosenbauer sensed that some people seem to think there's a shadow organization running things, which doesn't have the congregation's good health in mind. He pointed out that Council has been open and anyone can attend meetings if they like. Kiki said it is the Council's mission to be even more transparent. She asks that everyone read all the communications offered, speak to Council members to stay current and get any questions answered. John Heiman reminded us of Martin Luther's conviction that all Christians are co-equal ministers. Alisa Piccirilli offered examples of cases where this view wasn't always fully recognized by pastors, resulting in a somewhat weaker support

structure. Kiki concurred that Church Council feels its mission is more challenging since Pastor Hedin retired, but that its body of members is deeply committed to acting on behalf of the congregation with the Lord at the helm. Kathleen Wakefield shared a disappointing experience from recent meetings with the Synod during which poorly-chosen words were spoken about Pastor Hedin.

2018

Robin stood and announced that she commits to being the best she can be in 2018 and is going to do the Lord's work; she was applauded. John Heiman asked why Chris Petit was asked to resign. Jim Berndt responded, acknowledging the expectation that many would be unhappy, but that they did their best to reach out and solve the issues. With the congregation's best interest at heart, they made their recommendation to Council only after debating and struggling with the decision for over a year, speaking to clergy for guidance. He expressed that all those who were not privy to the personal information they feel it necessary to protect would arrive at the same decision. He reminded everyone that Reid Cunningham had spoken to the congregation in an effort to explain what happened to the best of his ability. Whitey Link said that for 17 years people loved coming to St. Paul's for the music; one day it was gone and he had no idea why it happened. Those in support applauded. Jim raised the point that our music was great even before Chris came on board. Frank (?) felt that everyone should have a chance to express why they feel the way they do and wanted specifics for why Chris was let go so everyone understands. Jim said that it is out of respect for Chris that we maintain confidentiality; that it is for his sake that we offered him the opportunity to resign and whatever we can to help him get to the next stage, including appropriate financial support. Dave Pixley wanted to make a motion to give Chris 26 weeks' severance pay, along with good recommendations; Kiki added 4 days' unused vacation pay. Laurie Zaucha pointed out that this is symbolic only because this is a Council matter, and that it was already done. Reid suggested we call it an endorsement of Council's decision. The majority raised their hands in support. John felt we should honor Chris for his 17 years of service; Kiki said that Chris was offered a party, but that he declined. Kathleen asked if reasons could be given for why he wasn't allowed to come back into the church. Kiki explained that feelings changed after conversations with him, raising concerns that it might not be done in a cordial manner. Mara spoke about Chris's non-musical duties, saying that a solid music program takes a team that works together. As a person who has worked behind the scenes, Gary Schwartzbauer said he was in support of this decision and surprised it took this long to reach it. Whitey felt that the timing was poor and asked why it couldn't wait. Kiki answered that they certainly took that into account and it was decided that there would never be a good time, especially considering how it could effect a new pastor's experience. Ann Peterson asked why Worship & Music was not involved in the decision, whether the choir will disseminate, and if people are leaving the church because of this. She expressed concern about the tight-knit organ community at Eastman reaching negative conclusions about us. Holley Haynes identified this as another reason why it is important we remain professional, treating Chris fairly, and giving him positive recommendations as we have done. She added that she and Brad Batz would be taking care of things temporarily and would be supportive. Ann suggested we give Chris 2 days

to organize music for the next Minister of Music. Jim, Mara and Kiki said Chris will be allowed to come back, but Kiki stipulated that a Council member, Mutual Ministry member, or staff member must be present. Mike McNamera turned discussion back to the pastoral call process and said he was upset about the attitude that has developed here. He felt the Council, Dean Frank, and Bishop Macholz were all doing nothing to hire a pastor. Kiki acknowledged that many of us have similar feelings, but Council is doing its best. She said there is plenty of room on Council for any who would like to participate in guiding the church, and questions are always welcome. Mike then said he feels we should hire an employment agency. George Harris said there should have been an explanation offered about Chris the previous week. He feels the congregation should be asked whether Chris leaves or not, and whether to move to one service. He asked specifically about the Congregational Vote and Kiki clarified that, according to the constitution, only 3 things are up for a congregational vote: a pastoral call; purchase of property; removing ourselves from the ELCA. She again suggested that people talk to those on committees or join one, finding a way to participate. George said he feels Council and Mutual Ministry are not listening. Jay Metzler asserted that the Synod has not performed well and wasn't convinced the Bishop was forthright when he visited. He described Church Council in critical terms. Jori Cincotta rose and identified herself as an active member who has been involved in many aspects of the church over the years, thus understands the demands of most of the different volunteer positions. She said that one reason she loves St. Paul's is that she feels her family is part of a bigger family; that families disagree sometimes, but all viewpoints are valid. She continued that she has been expressing for years that important things have been lacking in the music program, and she knows she's not alone in that opinion. In fact, she knows of young families who have left over the past year because of the music program as it was. She felt that to say that our Council is not working for us is unfair. If anyone is unhappy with the status quo, then it's time to step up to the plate instead of complain. She concluded by saying that her family chooses not to walk away just because things have gotten uncomfortable. Her words were enthusiastically applauded.

Adjournment

A motion was made to end discussion on 2018 activity to date. Upon the motion being seconded, the remaining congregation agreed to adjourn and the meeting ended at 1:06 PM.