

**Grace Lutheran Council Meeting
Tuesday, December 13, 2011**

Members Present: Matt Dettmer, Rick Morris, Charlie Priebe, Diane Beckman, Sarah DenOuden, Pastor Paige, Connie Larson, Mark Christiansen, Cap Peterson, Ward Ask, Brad Connors, Robin Dulas, Julie Oslund

Guests: Audra Nissen Boyer, Larry Draheim, Kent Schultz

Not Present: Marty Aberle, Tricia Vasquez, Pastor Roger

The meeting was called to order by Matt Dettmer and opened with devotions and prayer from Pastor Paige. Matt called for motion to approve the minutes of November Council meeting; motion was made and approved the minutes.

SCRIP REPORT – reported by Ward Ask: Another record set- most ever made in 1 week, \$1188.00, in November.

3rd GEAR – report submitted by Marty Aberle: 3rd Gear **Wednesday Nights** continues to be good turnout; **Sleep Out Event** for homeless awareness was attended by 3 youth, Pastor Paige, and Marty. **2 Mission Trips in 2012** 44 spots for the Youthworks trip to Cortez, CO and a strong interest expressed by 6-8 Seniors to participate on a mission to Guatemala. Both trips will be in July. **M&M Fundraiser** raised approximately \$1500 so far. Containers may still be turned in to the church office **Potato Bake** many people turned out to help (God is good!) not so many turned out to eat! /about \$640 raised less than half the amount than last year. Thoughts of having the potato bake after the Grace (and St. John.) Christmas program in 2012 were expressed for consideration. **An Evening with Dora Oney** youth met at Real Life Cooperative after serving an Advent Meal at St John's to listen to stories from a member of Grace who is 100 years young! 16 students gathered to hear the life and times of Ms. Oney. She was presented with chocolate and a Christmas cactus. The event was captured on video. **Upcoming Events** Packing and delivering gifts to Pine Ridge; Operation Christmas Joy-distributing cookies to elderly residents and members of the churches who “don't get out much”; a request for caroling may be granted! January small group training and sign up for high school students.

GRACE GARDEN – no report. (see discussion Financial report)

Motion made and approved to accept the reports.

MANAGEMENT – submitted from Brad Connors: I have had a couple of meetings with Robin in past several months regarding her position and hiring a part time person to assist her. Her position has changed somewhat with the additional work from the endowment funds. There are funds set aside each year that should be booked to help offset this expense. So, even with the difficulty with Grace Garden, there are funds available for this part time person. It should be discussed at the board meeting with Robin present to answer questions regarding this matter. I would suggest with her not being available in December that you table this discussion for the January meeting. I also suggest that Mark makes sure this item is being booked each year in the budget of the endowment funds so it's accounted for. Also, I've met twice with Kent Schultz representing the Endowment Funds and especially on the Investment Policy Statement. Kent was great to work with and took my suggestions and then met with his board. We then reviewed it a final time. I approve this Investment Policy Statement as presented and would encourage others to do the same. One thing to note, the investment committee did enter into a Variable Annuity with Principal this summer and it does have a 5 year surrender period. Thus, these funds will need to stay there for that long even if they feel a change is warranted. Lastly, I have decided that if the board would like me to work with the Endowment, Distribution and Finance committees that I will begin working on structure for each one of these to have continuity in the future.

PROPERTY – submitted from Cap Peterson. The property committee met on Monday, December 12th. First on the agenda was putting heat tape in the valleys behind the bell tower to replace the old ones that were installed years ago and have since worn out due to exposure to the sun. The issue was tabled till next fall due to the lateness of the season, lack of snow so far, and the expense of the project. Our committee feels we can keep it clean on our own or use Ivan's steamer he uses for work. Next was the carpet for Grace Garden child use areas. We will have the carpet measured and delivered to the youth center and will then schedule with Tricia for installation. Misc. wiring and light bulbs have been installed by Schumacher Electric and they are currently working on the projector and screen in the social hall. The carpet in the social hall has been cleaned thanks to Ivan and ServiceMaster. Thanked him for doing a great job and he will be doing the 2 entryways after the New Year. We will be getting together with the Worship Committee to work out a rental policy for church facilities and furnishings, etc. Coffee cabinet under the big coffee maker should be repaired and large tray under coffee maker will be done in January.

STEWARDSHIP – report submitted by Charlie Priebe: Review of 2011 events – It was felt that the monthly stewardship talks were successful. The events that led up to Consecration Sunday could have been better. Follow up on pledge card return - We have 99 pledges with a total of \$206,649.00 being pledged. Ministry Fair – When and how? What outcomes are we looking for? Planning for Ministry Fair in October 2012. Member terms & numbers- It has been really difficult to find an acceptable meeting time when all 5 of us could meet. It was felt that maybe we should have 1 or 2 more members so that 3 or more persons can attend and committee business can move forward. Who determines how many persons should be on the committee? What is the length of each term? It was felt that maybe we should have a little more diversity on the committee. Stewardship Theme for 2012. “Behind the Scenes” using visuals/videos/speakers to show all the things that go on at Grace.

WORSHIP – no report.

EVANGELISM: submitted by Diane Beckman: Thursday, November 17 **Game night** was very well attended. Sloppy Joes with the fixings were served. Games for all ages were enjoyed. Great fellowship time. Thursday, December 15 – **Grace Fellowship** will include a white elephant gift exchange and a Christmas craft for the kids. Chili will be served with a sundae bar. Thursday, January 19 – Grace Fellowship will be pizza and a movie. Babysitter will be available. A suggestion for this fellowship time would be to do a service project. **Fellowship hour** between services has been well attended. Groups have been contacted to each take a month to provide coffee and goodies.. The quilters are hosting November. Confirmation students will be hosting December. Please invite friends to attend our many activities. There is something for everyone at Grace Lutheran Church for spiritual growth and belonging.

EDUCATION: reported by Sarah DenOuden: Pastor Paige: Is continuing to work on the survey for Bible Studies. **Confirmation:** Is currently on break until January 11th. The confirmation students are staying on track with their work. New deadline for confirmation students to have their work completed is June 1st.

Sunday School: Continues to practice for the Christmas program. Thank you to Trudi Connors and Linda Berndt for organizing this year's program. Thank you to Jodie Thompson for working with the children to learn their songs. December 25th and January 1st Sunday School will be on break, resuming January 8th.

Motion made and carried for approval of all Ministry Team reports.

TREASURER REPORT submitted by Mark Christiansen: November statements look good for this time of the year. We should end 2011 on a high note for the operating fund. Comparison to past Novembers finds us ahead of previous years but down for income and expenses. Grace Garden financial is attached. You will see a significant loss and it will grow before the end of the year. We are working on the causes and how it can be fixed for next year. 2012 budget has been changed. If you review the file 2012 changes you will see the increases and decreases for 2012. I have taken away the extra staff person and added 20,000 for Grace Garden. We will need this amount for next year.

Motion made and approved to accept Treasurer Report.

PASTOR ROGER'S REPORT – sent text to Pastor Paige stating “I’m fine. Eating chicken beaks and feet; a world wind of activity.” from Tanzania.

PASTOR PAIGE'S REPORT – **Current Projects:** -Bible Study Survey-Fellowship Fun nights (w/ Evangelism Committee) - Advent Worship Services-Attending Evangelism, Education, and Worship Ministry Team Meetings (along with Property & Stewardship while Roger is in Tanzania)-Attending Investment Committee meetings -Sunday School Opening-Funeral, Baptism, and Wedding ministries at Grace-Pastoral Care Visits-Jr. High Mission Trip summer 2012 & Fundraising -Attending 3rd Gear events when possible-Weekly Text Study in Owatonna-Meet with WELCA Circle Members for monthly Bible Study Prep. -Video Interviewing with Anniversary Committee **Future Projects/Ideas:** -**Bible Studies:** Look at response from Surveys and consider what times and studies to offer -**Congregation Care Cards:** Working on an accurate list of homebound members in a spread sheet so we can create cards. Also determining which members have received communion from a Pastor in December and who has not. -**Jr. High Sunday School:** Robin and Twyla have been in communication about new opportunities for this age group -**Creative Worship Ideas:** I have talked with a member who is an artist and as long as she has enough notice she would be open to creating a painting based on the texts during worship -**Mid-Winter Convocation in St. Paul:** A continuing education event that is focusing on change in technology use in congregations. Since this is an area I would like to explore at Grace I think this gathering would be very helpful. Feb. 1-3, 2012 -**Seminar about Confirmation at Luther Seminary:** What is confirmation and how can it be presented in a way where youth don't see it as a 'graduation' from Church. Feb. 27-29, 2012

BUSINESS and DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Audra Nissen Boyer presented a project idea called Katy's Crops. This is a non-profit organization granting \$500 scholarship to youth, to address hunger in their community. Audra's daughter, Olivia, applied for the grant. Her plan is to rent garden space at the Community Garden and donate produce to the Food Shelf. The project must be student led. Audra would like to address the Confirmation groups to take on the project. Motion made and seconded to approve the garden project.

Larry Drahiem presented information on Thrivent Choice Dollars. Policy holders designate where their donation is given. \$5800 was donated to Grace in 2011. Thrivent advocates at Grace recommended where donations could be spent, in various ministry areas. Council discussed moving the line item on the budget showing these dollars to a Ministry Account which are designated to specific groups, projects, or activity. Motion made and seconded to approve disbursement of donations to specified groups.

Kent Schultz presented the Endowment Funds Investment Policy Statement. His committee discussed Council recommendations from November meeting and also met with Brad Connors. Kent reviewed in detail the policy statement and some changes will be made, to clarify the statement. Motion made and seconded to approve the policy statement. Kent added that bylaws will need to be written on the member appointments, as we move forward in putting in place the Financial Ministry team.

Mark Christensen led discussion on Grace Garden financial situation, with significant loss of \$20,000. Council discussed Action Plan that the Grace Garden director will present to the Council at the January meeting, presenting the 2012 budget, and operation details. Mark and Brad will meet with the director to give direction. The Council's expectation is that the director of Grace Garden will attend all Council meetings and have detailed report each month. Motion made and seconded to approve Action Plan.

Mark Christensen led discussion of 2012 budget, discussing changes made, and differences from the 2011 budget. Motion made and seconded to approve the 2012 budget at \$390,000 (an increase of \$15,000 from 2011). Council also discussed Marty Aberle's pension plan, which will come from both St John and Grace, but each congregation will have separate accounts. Motion made and seconded to approve 3% match be offered (\$600) for his 403B.

Matt Dettmer reviewed the Council member position and term for the Ministry teams. The Education and Worship teams have 5 members each; the other teams have 4 members; each member has 3yr term and maximum of 2, 3 yr terms. The Nomination Committee works to find church members to fill these positions as they become open. The Annual Meeting is will be January 15th. Reminder to Ministry Teams to have their annual report to Robin by December 19th.

LISTENING POST:

◇Many comments have been made on the wonderful Sunday School Christmas program presented during the 2nd service. Thanks to the Education Ministry team and their volunteers who put many hours in working with our children.

◇The parsonage is in need of a house number. It was discovered during the Christmas House Walk that there is not one posted on the home. Cap will take care of this.

◇Question of fundraising policy for Grace – will table this discussion for January meeting.

A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. Motion carried. The meeting was closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Larson
Council secretary