Salem Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

April 4, 2024, 6:30 pm

We exist with God’s help, to provide leadership for the Salem Lutheran Church Congregation.

MSC=The motion was seconded and carried.

* Call to Order

Members present: Pastor Amanda Kempthorne, Mark Boike, Lynn Hansen, Jason Kempthorne, Nathan VanRisseghem, Peter MacKay, Julie Fritz, Sherri Godfrey, Tina Royer

Members absent: Sylvia Hoge, Don Hales

* Opening Prayer by Pastor Amanda
* SOS Announcement: None
* Approval of Agenda: MSC
* Approval of Minutes:
* Motion to approve minutes of February 22, 2024. MSC
* Approve February Financials:
* Motion to approve February 2024 Treasurer’s Report. MSC.
* Pastor’s Report:
* New AED arrived and is installed.
* Within the realm of administrative tasks, on March 18, a discovery of an IT hack and bank fraud was made. All appropriate steps were taken with Deerwood Bank to stop additional transactions from occurring.
* Aimee is updating the Church financials to Quickbooks online. Pastor Amanda is supporting all her efforts!
* The Easter season was busy and successful. Easter Sunday worship services had: 8:00am – 55 and 9:30am – 195.
* The Church Directory is in its final stages of updates. The release date will be the end of May.
* **Thank you, Aimee!** The Council wishes to extend kudos, a shout out, spot on, what would we do without you, and on and on to our Salem Financial Manager, Aimee Watson. Throughout all the challenges and changes the church has endured, Aimee has approached every task and responsibility with a can-do attitude, an open mind, special expertise, great problem solving and critical thinking skills, and warmth and smiles that make her so very easy to work with! No small feat when money and how it’s handled is at stake! Thank you, Aimee.

* Outreach Report:
  + Salem Pancake Breakfast: Breakfast followed the Adult/Teen Challenge worship service. Expenses were covered and a small profit was made. Loose offering from the service =$244.00, which was given to the organization, along with a donation from Salem Outreach for a total of $750.00 in support.
  + The front door is contracted to be replaced.
  + Garage Sales: the sales are set for May, August and September. Specific dates TBD.
* Old Business
* Audit: A motion was made and seconded to hire the accounting firm, Clasen & Scheissl, CPAs, Ltd. of Pequot Lakes, to perform the church audit. An amendment was made to add that no more than $15,000 will be spent to cover audit requirements. MSC

The audit will be conducted this summer (June, July or August). The council is hopeful that auditors will set us up so we are able to conduct internal audits on our yearly budget.

* Volunteer Appreciation Dinner: Tuesday, April 23. We will ask the congregation to donate gift baskets as door prizes and will investigate getting other prizes. Doors open at 5:00 pm, dinner is served at 5:30 pm. Stations will be set up to serve dinner. We need council and OGB members to help set-up and clean-up.
  + Block Party Report: Date-Saturday, July 20, 2024. Time-11:00 am til 6:00 pm. Battle of the Bands is the main attraction with a $500 grand prize donated by Roth RV. A variety of games and activities will be available for all ages. Food options will be available for purchase, as will soft drinks and water. A variety of games and activities will be available for kids of all ages! Discussion was held regarding inclusion of a beer garden, but the idea was dropped due to so many potential legal issues and most importantly, that the focus of the day is on family fun. More information will be available as planning details progress.
    - Motion was made and seconded to refrain from any engagement in community plans to replace Summerfest. MSC
* New Business
* Schwanke Trust proceeds transfer to Initiative Foundation Fund - The Salem Church Council is the Trustee of this fund, and all financial decisions are made by this group. After discussion, a motion was made and seconded to approve the $11,000 dividend from 2023 be delegated to the Memorial Committee to distribute funds as appropriate that support the mission and strategic plan of Salem. MSC.

The stipulations of the remaining funds are that no money can be withdrawn from the principal amount and only the interest can be accessed after 3 years due to the money being in the Initiative Foundation investment portfolio.

* Donor Thank You policy approval - A motion was made and seconded to approve the policy as written. MSC.
* Capital Appeal discussion - The mortgage looks positive with the caveat that some donate once per year in January.
* Aimee Watson’s authorization as an internet banking user for Deerwood Bank, and Amanda Kempthorne’s authorization to request information from Deerwood Bank – A motion was made and seconded to authorize Aimee Watson, Salem Church Finance Manager, authority to conduct church business as an internet banking user; and authorize Pastor Amanda Kempthorne to request Salem information from Deerwood Bank. MSC.
* BLACF Award. Request for another table - Salem is receiving the International Philanthropy Award for its missionary work in Honduras. Don Hales is requesting funds to reserve a second table of 10 for the celebration. The cost is $1, 250 for a table of 10. Adding another table will enable Pastor Amanda and Jason, Director of Outreach, to attend along with 8 more participants. The Council directed this to the Memorial Committee for consideration.
* NEMN Synod event: The “Walking Together” synod event requested Salem to host the event on October 12th. The council determined that our facilities can’t handle the amount of rooms and space that is needed.
* Committee Reports:
* Capital Appeal – Lynn Hansen. An April 9th meeting is planned to build a presentation on Planned Giving in July.
* Columbarium – The committee will plant flowers in the courtyard in May.
* Facilities – Nate VanRisseghem. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Facilities committee purchase of a water softener for the kitchen cost up to $2,950. MSC with 1 abstain.

1 bid has been received for striping the parking lot and sealing cracks. The committee will wait a while longer to see if other bids come in and check with Deerwood Bank on their possible investment of the maintenance expenses.

Lighting options and issues – The Sanctuary lighting is good. The Fellowship Hall remains a problem. It’s dark with the LED’s that are currently in use. It was suggested that the committee consult with Ernie Erickson and another Master Electrician for guidance.

Church clean-up is Saturday, April 20th.

The Salem West leach field is failing and will need to be replaced. The OGB is looking at ways to obliterate the problem, and has ceased washing clothing. The cost for replacement is estimated $50,000 to $100,000. Note: The church council has fiduciary responsibility for all Salem West buildings.

* Faith Formation – The committee is gathering information on what people want to study in the next session of Women’s Bible Study.

This year VBS will be free of charge for all students.

There are 5 boys ready to start confirmation.

The final day of Sunday School is May 19th.

We have 2 high school graduates this year. Sherri will make a cake for the grads as we honor them for their achievement.

* Memorial – Peter MacKay. The committee is focused on bringing activities/events to Salem. They are generating ideas and encourage church members to do the same and share them with the committee. $30,000 was pulled from the Memorial account savings and invested in a 12-month CD.
* Stewardship – Lynn Hansen. The committee is planning to remind members of the different kinds of stewardship that exist in the church. A presentation is planned that visually shows the impact that volunteering and other forms of stewardship has in our community.
* Technology – Julie Fritz. NR
* Welcome – Tina Royer. New Member Orientation is presently underway, and New Member Sunday is scheduled for April 28th.

We have a New Member meal and information gathering session planned for May 15th, to ask if the Orientation was helpful, if there are still lingering questions about Salem membership and expectations. Also, has Salem met the members’ expectations? Where can we improve, what are we doing well, what things could be done to bring in more members? And so on. This event is designed for those who have joined in the last 1-2 years, and those who have joined in the past 7 months.

More Visitor Bags are needed for Sunday mornings.

It is suggested that a training and operating guide on how to operate the Fetch system, our sound and visual system, so more people can help with the services.

* Worship and Music – Julie Fritz. Wednesday night Lenten meals and services had a solid 30 people each week. Positive comments were offered for both the Lenten and Easter services. Easter service attendance was: 8:00 am – 55, 9:30 am – 195.

The committee is researching the idea of offering an outdoor service at Serpent Lake. The service would be west from the Serpent and the public access.

The committee is also generating ideas to add some freshness/different approaches to the church service.

* Outreach – Sherri Godfrey/Jason Kempthorne. The Board consented to installing a new door for Salem West.

Hiring is underway for summer employment. 37 have submitted applications.

For additional information, please see the Outreach report given earlier.

Discussion on a Suggestion: A request was made to install a refrigerator next to the Food Pantry, so people have access to perishable foods. The Board determined that this is too problematic for several reasons: 1). High risk of being stolen, 2). The need to get electrical services to the appliance, 3). High risk of food spoilage, and 4). Who assumes oversight? The Board respectfully declined the request.

Announcements:

* Executive Team meeting- April 16 at 3:00 pm
* Council meeting- April 25 at 6:30 pm
* A motion was made to adjourn at 9:07pm. MSC

Close in the Lord’s Prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Royer