Salem Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

January 26, 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, Don Hales, Tina Royer

Members absent: Sherri Godfrey, Sylvia Hoge

* Opening Devotion and Prayer by Pastor Amanda
* SOS Announcement: None
* Approval of Agenda: MSC
* Approval of Minutes:
* Motion to approve minutes of December 2023, Council meeting as corrected. MSC
* Treasurer's Report:
* Motion to approve January 2024 Treasurer’s Report. MSC.
* Pastor’s Report: Present and future actions and responsibilities.
* Vacation- January 29-February 4. Guest preacher will conduct service.
* Battery is out of AED, needs to replaced. Battery is expensive, defib. is old. Time to buy a new one? Perhaps this is a request that the Memorial committee could consider. Will continue to research options.
* Lenten activity planning in full swing.
* Outreach Report:
  + Salem West assisted 644 referrals from various social service agencies, serving 1156 individuals, and totaling at least 20,000+ volunteer hours. If Salem West volunteer hours and donations were paid ministries, calculations would put them at $302,000 (goods) and $800,000 (labor).
  + Chocolate Extravaganza fundraiser monies will go to Honduras.
  + This month the new bailer recycled 30,000 lbs. of clothes.
  + A part-time hire for the Mustard Seed will work with the clothing department.

Old Business

* Pastor Amanda 2024 Housing Designation
* Pastor Amanda has set her housing allowance at $24,000. It is the pastor’s prevue to make this yearly determination.
* Retreat: Set goals from Strategic Plan- Jason indicated that we will set 2 goals under each identified objective.
* Please refer to document at end of meeting minutes.
* Parent’s Night Off, Next Date
* Sometime in March or April. Announcements during services and in bulletin will ask adults to volunteer.
* Summerfest-Discussion on other ideas that included:
* Hold something at Salem West during Crosby Heritage Days
* Battle of the Bands with Raffle(s) and Dinner
* Event 2x/yr. that includes dinner and various types of raffles.
* These ideas, and any others, will be fleshed out by the February meeting.
* Audit
* Received call back from Clifton, Allen, Larson CPA’s. 3 proposal’s were offered that ranged from full service smorgasbord of coverage to consulting services only. Prices of the proposals were: Plan A- Comprehensive Audit $20,00-$30,000, Plan B- An audit consisting of financials, practices and policies, and specific areas of concern $12,000-$18,000, Plan C- Focus on set number of specific areas of concern $$7,500-$10,000.
* Mark and Aimee will continue to seek additional sources that could better fit our needs. The audit is scheduled to begin in July.
* Our version of Quick Books is too old to support new revisions, so we must

Consider updating the system.

New Business:

* Easter Worship Times
* 8:00 am and 9:30 am Sunday, March 31, 2024.
* Donor Thank You’s sent:
* We have been remiss in sending thank you letters to donors of OGB and the Church. We need to set a threshold of how much money given will trigger a thank you response to donors. It was discussed and decided upon that $100 of special gifts donations (excluding offering) will be sent a card/letter of thanks signed by the OGB or Council, depending on the nature of the gift. In the interim 60 days, Aimee will send a letter of thanks. This requires policy and cultural change to work. Amended MSC
* Lent Schedule: February 14-March 20, 2024
* Ash Wednesday and every Wednesday in Lent, services are at 6:30, with a meal or dessert prior to the service.
* HOLY Week is March 21-28 and a noon meal will be served on Thursday, March 28th.
* Committee Reports:
* Capital Appeal – Lynn Hansen. Committee decided to keep mortgage payments at $9,000 per month, and will make payments beyond that, if funds are available. This will be re-evaluated in April.

-Planned Giving - A future presentation will be made to the congregation.

-Another person is needed for the team.

* Columbarium – Don Hales. NR
* Facilities – Nate VanRisseghem. NR
* Faith Formation – Next meeting is beginning of February.
* Memorial – Peter MacKay. Peter will bring AED issue and potential AED expenditures to committee. Also questioned if thank you notes/letters are policy or practices.
* Stewardship – Lynn Hansen. Time & Talent forms updated and ready for use.
* Technology – Julie Fritz. NR
* Welcome – Tina Royer. Next meeting is January 31st at 2pm.
* Worship and Music – Julie Fritz. Committee has a facilities issue, whereby the LED lights in the choir/bells area are not long enough. We could also use track lighting in other spots of the choir area and Fellowship Hall.
* Outreach – Sherri Godfrey/Jason Kempthorne

SOS: nothing submitted.

Announcements:

* Executive Board meeting- February 13 at 3:00pm.
* Council meeting- February 22 at 6:30pm.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:35pm. MSC

Close in the Lord’s Prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Royer

**Salem Lutheran Church Council**

**Strategic Plan 2024 – 2029**

***Vision Statement***

*Welcome, Equip, and Send*

***Mission Statement***

*We exist to Welcome people into Jesus Christ, Equip people with faith that works in their lives, and Send people into the world in Jesus’ name.*

At the January 6, 2024, Church Council Planning Retreat, 4 primary areas of fulfilling our mission and vision statement were identified, along with 13 Long-Term Strategy Objectives to support them. Additionally, 6 Short-term Initiatives/ Projects were created for 2024, which were ranked from lowest to highest priority.

Council members were tasked with setting up goals for each aim. The ideas generated would either be given to the appropriate church committee, or a team formed to accomplish the goal. Listed below are the 4 Long-term Strategy areas, their corresponding objectives, and the goals identified that will get us to what we want to be as a vital congregation.

***Objectives***

**Member/Community:**

1. Increase church visibility in community:

* Target mailing to area neighborhoods.
* Participate in community events. E.g. Music in the Park sponsorship
* Floats in area parades
* Committee – Welcome

1. Engage Individuals in ministry needs.
2. Improve music participation & quality.

* Establish choir, bell choir and Praise team practice times that give members more time to learn and practice music.
* Offer training to people who want to play the bells but don’t know how or what to do.
* Committee – Worship & Music

1. Reduce organizational risk:

* Conduct internal audit in July/August of 2024
* Conduct external audit in Fall 2024

1. Increase financial revenue:

* Change restricted fund policy so that church has access to more unrestricted funds to meet myriad needs, and to provide funding to groups and individuals with projects that focus on church growth and enhancement.
* Create and maintain a 180 day Salem cash reserve.
* Improve participation in member giving.
* Committee – Stewardship

1. Present a united vision and articulated mission:

* Display our mission statement on all written/printed materials.
* Create large, portable church banner displaying Vision and Mission statements, and church logo.

1. Develop Congregational Care Ministry:

* This area is also listed as a high priority for 2024.
* Provide opportunities for more human connection; e.g. Communion teams.
* Identify a leader who is responsible for establishing a Care Team, coordinating events and activities, provide training as needed, and scheduling team personnel and activities.
* Committee – Faith Formation

1. Activate lay-led volunteer teams.
2. Develop adult education opportunities:

* Offer 2-3 adult learning and discussion sessions (Mini series) in 2024, that are informal get-togethers and focus on Bible stories. Sessions would be held off-campus and open to Salem members and the public. Each session would be stand-alone – not reliant on earlier or future meetings.
* Committee – Faith Formation

1. Develop creative worship experiences:

* The pastor will take more creative risks while delivering the sermon.
* Fifth Sundays will be reserved for kids’ taking part and leading the service.
* Involve different groups to participate in services.
* Committee – Worship and Music

1. Incorporate doctrine and basic Christian teaching into worship and education opportunities:

* This goal was determined to be self-explanatory; however, it is important to keep these ideals front and center in all the work we do at Salem.

1. Improve internal communication of Council activities:

* Make better use of our website and social media outlets and provide proper maintenance/updates of these areas.
* Share this plan with the congregation
* Schedule quarterly, after service listening sessions to keep our pulse on issues of concern and provide answers to questions/problems.

1. Strengthen leadership.

***2024 Initiatives and Priorities***

**High Priority**

* Engage lay leaders in all areas of ministry
* Reactivate dormant ministry teams/leaders using the Time and Talents survey.
* Recruit and train 3-4 home communion teams.

**Medium Priority**

* Complete external audit on 2023 financials and current P&P.
* Stewardship events to encourage giving to general fund and mortgage
* accounts.

**Low Priority**

* Engage local community through marketing and outreach campaign.
* Work with music staff to increase participation and find appropriate practice times.

The Council completed good, hard work on the Strategic Plan at its January Council meeting. This plan is a working document that will change in some areas and remain fixed in others. Obviously, we need to be more specific, action oriented and identify the outcomes we want to see happen so we can know and celebrate our successes!, and keep moving forward as a healthy congregation.