

Minutes
Little Home Church Council Meeting
September 10, 2013

In Attendance: Sandy Antonelli, Carol Berger, Anne Haben, Kathy Haben, Lori Haseltine, Ann McLaughlin, Ron Purser, Dan Roach, Jane Shelton, Kathy Thorne, Susi Winqvist, and Art Zwemke.

Absent: Valeri Baldwin, Anne Bouchard, Susannah Lesswing, Karen Hansen, Kathleen Sullivan Kaska, Louise Aughnay and Jan Marchese.

Moderator Kathy Haben called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m. and noted that Anne Haben was there to represent Outreach in Valeri's absence and Kathy Thorne was acting as Church Clerk while Jan was out.

Kathy asked if there were any prayer requests and Pastor Ron gave the opening prayer. Lori read her favorite Bible passage, Philippians 4:8 and 9.

Approval of Minutes: Kathy asked if there were any changes to the August Council Minutes; no discussion; minutes were unanimously approved.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Ron has been quite busy with weddings and memorial services. Roger Kotecki's daughter was one of the weddings and the Grimes family was the other. Request was made at this point for the church secretary to pass names and addresses of couples married here to Evangelism Ministry chair for follow-up. Ron said there are several persons interested in joining soon: Lynn Tuttle, the Odegards family, Mary Fleischman, and Maureen O'Donnell. Pastor Ron will speak with them and organize meetings.

Art asked how many weddings have been at the church this year. Pastor Ron stated they have taken a nosedive with the poor economy – somewhere around five or six. Art asked if we should promote ourselves as a wedding venue; do we need to look at and adjust costs? Pastor Ron will check prices of neighboring churches and adjust ours accordingly. Nancy Schatzeder has agreed to perform wedding ceremonies when Pastor Ron is not available. Kathy will put an article in By the Way to see if someone is willing to take on the position of Wedding Coordinator. Evangelism should be sending cards for one-year anniversaries.

Treasurer's Report: Art pointed out Total Operating Receipts Year to Date is 70.21% of Total Receipts Budget for 2013 vs. the 64.5% three-year average which is good, but it does include over \$17,000 from a special fundraiser that was not in the budget. Pledges stand at 61.81% vs. the 64.49% three-year average; this is a concern. A few bookkeeping errors occurred in July that were cleared up in the August report. Our year to date deficit is (\$27,228) vs. the projected (\$18,873); if not for the special fundraiser we would be sitting at (\$44,228). Our overall financial position has declined approximately \$26,000 since December 31, 2012; most of that is due to the two properties we own. Ann moved the Treasurer's Report be accepted; Anne seconded and motion carried.

Peterson House: The potential buyer says things are moving along; he plans to have 40% down and is optimistic about the financing. September 13 is the end of the extension on their contract. Several council members do not have a lot of hope that the financing will go through. The house will remain on the market at \$185,000 and Karen Ashe will continue to list it. She has had three recent calls on it and one person came and walked around. We could always have her schedule an open house. The neighbors to the north are considering selling their home as well.

Dixon House: The current tenant made a verbal offer of \$69,000 “as is” but requested water and septic tests; we requested a written offer. The well and septic tests have been performed and we are waiting for the results.

The current tenant is two months behind on his rent and September’s has not been paid yet either. We do expect that back rent should be brought up-to-date no matter what.

Realtor disclosure forms need to be completed; the property manager has declined to do this but said we would provide input for them. Dan Roach and Karen Ashe should be able to handle this. The disclosure forms need to list material defects in the property – mold does not have to be disclosed, but radon does.

Art suggested we give this a week to ten days to settle and then close it off at that point and list the property on the market for \$85,000. Carol thought we should reconsider because it is a nice family who really wants to rent the house, even though they are in arrears. She asked if we know why this is and if should be more charitable about providing them a home if they are in a bad situation; after all we paid \$185,000 for the house, what if we hold off selling it for another two years and see if the market turns around so we re-coup more of our cash. What is it costing us to hold on to it? Our tenants are always short on cash which appears to be related to his employer not paying in a timely manner; they fall behind, eventually catch up, and fall behind again. Art said these are not “good” renters, they are spotty at best. Their two-year lease expired in June 2013 and we moved into a month-to-month basis, they are often behind in their rent. Real estate taxes on the property are \$5,000 per year, insurance and expenses run approximately \$1,000 per month and the rental income is \$700 per month, when we get it. He suggests giving them 30 days to get a loan, keep the house on the market at \$85,000, put a for sale sign in front of it, and telling renters they need to be out by October 31. Ann moved we place the house on the market with Karen Ashe at \$85,000, Dan seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Discussion continued on possibilities of demolishing the house and using the land for something else; since the house is in the historic district, this action is not likely to be approved unless there is a real plan for the property that meets the district’s criteria.

When the water and septic results arrive, they will be circulated to council via e-mail. Also water softener contract is up; do we want to renew it? Continue to rent the equipment, but can we go month-to-month?

Moderator’s Report: Kathy said her to-do list included the Peterson and Dixon houses which had just been discussed, but she also had a concern about the telephone tree. When Elaine Williford died and there was only an email blast, she did not receive the email until after the

service had occurred so she would be in favor of utilizing the telephone tree for these types of situations in addition to email. Some discussion followed and it was agreed that should be put back into force.

Moderator-Elect: Susi said she and Kathy had discussed items that need to be handled around the church and resurrecting the Personnel and Pastoral Relations Committees are two projects she will be working on. Susi explained the intent of each committee and said she is working on possible candidates to fill the Personnel Committee first since that one is responsible for annual reviews of church personnel and reviews have not happened in the past four years.

Christian Ed: Lori is looking for ideas to keep young people interested and to draw more in; she is entertaining the possibility of a “campout” around Easter with a sleepover and church the next morning. Other thoughts are a tour at Fermilab on a Saturday in winter to explore the physics of the place as well as fall or spring for a prairie get together, or watching the movie “Freedom Riders”. She thought it would be a good experience to have the youth volunteer in a soup kitchen as well. Music Director Larry Dieffenbach had suggested she look for a manner to encourage continuity from the kids as well, perhaps an attendance chart with a prize at the end. For Adult Education she was thinking of using Living the Questions, Saving Jesus. Carol asked if Evangelism could dovetail onto some of these ideas and work with Lori on them; it is highly encouraged for ministries to crossover like that.

Congregational Life: Jane reported that invitations recently went or are about to go out inviting church members to a party at the Lesswing home on October 5 at 6 p.m. Need to check if this is on the church calendar. Pulled pork for sandwiches will be provided, it is BYOB and bring a dish to pass with items being split alphabetically among the congregation.

It was suggested that they look into group tickets to Fox Valley Repertoire at Pheasant Run in November to see *Making God Laugh*. Tickets are \$25 per person.

According to the bylaws, this ministry’s focus is taking care of the congregation and they want to be mindful of homebound members as well.

Evangelism: Carol is not certain of what falls into this ministry’s responsibilities, but she has been checking with neighboring churches to find out what works for them so far as increasing/retaining church membership. She provided the list of Fox Valley churches that have been contacted and their input. At this point, she will gather a list of 2012 visitors from the church secretary which was compiled from folks filling out visitor cards and Ann will provide info from visitors who have written checks for donations, but not necessarily filled out a visitor card and she will contact them in some way. There is the possibility of working with Rich Doerr to put an usher meeting together and train the ushers to be greeters as well. Carol would like to put articles in the local papers about church activities to keep us publicized. It was suggested that the church website be put on our outside sign. Carol asked if we could go back to using pew pads and putting an article in *By the Way* to explain their purpose. Kathleen Kaska volunteered to assist with graphics. It was decided to hold off on this for a while. Jane suggested a brochure with something like “Getting Married at Little Home Church”, general information and some pictures from past weddings that could just be placed around at different events.

Carol, Anne Bouchard, Susi, Kathy, and Pastor Ron had reviewed the membership list and cleaned it up; members who were absent or not heard from in more than two years were dropped and once the list was finished we still had 246 members.

Facilities: Kathy read the email from Anne listing accomplishments of the month. Well and septic were tested at Dixon House, report should be in Thursday or Friday. Septic inspector wants to meet to discuss the situation; Anne out of town; office person was going to request a written explanation from him. Anne had asked for his recommendation/estimate for future repairs.

The Peterson House upstairs toilet had several problems that were repaired. A problem on the west side of the roof was repaired; the roof is only five years old-why are we paying for repairs-and the contractor said he saw several more problem areas. Dan will look into the situation as he is familiar with the original job. Someone was hired to clean around the foundation. Brush between the Peterson house and the church parking lot was removed. Anne is also looking into painting on the west side of the Peterson house.

Two toilets were repaired in the Parish Hall. Two bulletin boards were re-worked so they are easier to use. She is still working on replacement of lights in secretary's office, motion sensor lights in courtyard, outside pastor's office, and hallway between kitchen and bathroom, as well as working on replacement chairs project. Anne is in communication with repair firm for two electric pianos. Railing will be installed on steps between kitchen and choir closet area thanks to Judy Hopkins.

Anne and Rik Alex are putting together a five-year plan for the church property, ranking the projects in terms of urgency. Significant items for the Guild House include rotted wood on the southeast corner and second floor, two broken windows, second floor emergency exit door, lack of roof ventilation, exterior painting, gutter repair/replacement and some overgrown shrubs need to go. The Parish Hall roof also lacks ventilation, and exterior painting is needed in several spots. The sanctuary exterior is pretty good, all things considered, with a few spots needing painting and one or two shutters to repair.

Outreach: Anne Haben reported CROPWALK is October 20 and Valeri is in charge. A goal has not been set yet as they are attempting to get last year's numbers from the Fox Valley organizing committee. They will be contacting Wayne School in October to determine if the Giving Tree project will continue with them this year.

Stewardship: Ann McLaughlin informed us the Blood Drive is November 18. Neighbors in Need UCC collection is the first Sunday in October (October 6, 2013); there will be an article in By the Way regarding this. She is prepping for Every Member Canvas in November.

Worship & Spiritual Growth: Sandy says there is no report as there was no meeting last month. She asked if Communion happened and is it hers to see to. Susi shared the Kathi Abell usually makes the bread and sets up for communion each month. Usually the two ushers and two others help with serving. Sandy said she would be having a meeting this month so she would

have a report for the next meeting. Also World Communion is October 6 and Hanging of the Greens is coming soon. She will coordinate with Pastor Ron and Larry for that.

ONA Update: Kathy advised the ONA letters requesting a vote have gone out. Responses from 49 members are needed for a quorum. This was a good way to handle the voting situation. Votes will be counted at the October 8 meeting.

Members at Large: None were in attendance and no report was submitted.

Kathy asked if there were any suggestions for the “We Noticed...” Column in By the Way. Only thing mentioned was a question regarding the lighting in the Parish Hall; seems several lights are out and the Wayne Art League will want them on so those will require work before the League’s next event.

Old Business: Nothing.

New Business: Once tables and chairs are set-up for the Rummage Sale on September 22 how do we accommodate seniors, etc. for Sunday coffee hour? We’ll be looking into that.

Dan moved meeting adjourn, Lori seconded and Ron ended the meeting with a prayer at 9:18 p.m.

The next meeting is October 8 at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Thorne