

**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA**  
**MINUTES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL**  
**August 20, 2023**

**Members Present:** Becky Breeden, Jon Driskill, Mike Driskill, Steve Hess, Rachel Rushworth-Hollander, Angela Kronau, Sharon Sweeney, Pastor Susan Thisell, Jack Wilder, Michele Wilson

**Members Absent:** Debbie Hampstead

**Visitors Present:** Connie Cole, Beth Ford, Carolyn Lawhorn, Don Lawhorn, Kate Spears, Illy Wood

Mike Driskill welcomed everyone at 11:00 am and invited folks to enjoy the lunch prepared by Angela Kronau and Michele Wilson. Angela offered a blessing.

Ministry and support team leaders were invited to this Council meeting to discuss possible solutions to a volunteer shortage we are witnessing in our church (like other churches our size). Following is a recap of the information shared by the committees and teams:

CARE – Illy Wood, Leader / Sharon Sweeney, Council Liaison

*We believe that caring for one another during the milestones of life is integral in forming and sustaining this faith community. We welcome newcomers into this community as if they have been here all their lives. Here is a brief overview of the ministries under our CARE umbrella:*

- *Pastoral Care – facilitated by pastor*
- *Grief Support*
- *Eucharistic Ministry – bringing Communion to those in special circumstances*
- *OWLs (Older Wiser Lutherans) – monthly luncheon and program; facilitating transportation, scholarships, resources, for elder members and neighbors*
- *Homebound Ministries – visits, mailings, flowers, cards*
- *Shepherds Groups – contact persons for regular personal contact*

Shepherds are provided to members to check in with members and assist during times of struggle. Each shepherd has at least 12 people that they support. Needs:

- Folks should be told to use Mary Sophia Hawks (our Parish Nurse) as a resource.
- The Invite team will email Illy Wood the names of the new members so they can be coupled with a Shepherd.

WORSHIP - Illy Wood, Interim Leader / Jon Driskill, Council Liaison

*Our worship team provides meaningful, life changing services every week of the year. Messiah is a church in the world, not of the world, responding to current events and attempting to be responsive to the needs of our world. We are very proud that our spaces, staff, congregation, and worship order are inclusive to visitors and all together help us to bring newcomers, both previously churched and unchurched, into worship to praise and hear God's word. The Worship team ensures we have a worship option via Facebook Live. Messages by the pastor, visiting pastors and special guests guide our steps and broadens our knowledge. Spirit-filled music inspires us. Communion is offered every Sunday.*

The Worship team has been reorganized and will meet only six weeks prior to each liturgical season (2 meetings for Pentecost), instead of monthly. Needs:

- Attend the service on Sept 17 - outdoor worship service with brunch
- New permanent leader
- Respond to email requests re: Worship Leaders
- Volunteers for special jobs:
  - Bulletins
  - Puppets for Children's Message

DISCIPLE – Angela Kronau, Leader / Michele Wilson, Council Liaison

*We want to live life in Christ. So, we figure following Christ and learning more about how he lived, what he did and what he had to say might be a good idea. So, we believe discipleship and the faith formation of all generations is central to our purpose as a congregation and we hold in very high regard the development of faithful children, youth, adults, and families.*

Needs:

- Someone to volunteer to be the committee lead beginning in 2024.
- Sunday School Teachers for children

Support the newly coordinated Youth Group initiative. How?

- Invite friends
- Share on social media

Encourage folks to stay for Adult Learning Hour (a time of fellowship & learning).

INVITE – Kate Spears, Leader / Michele Wilson, Council Liaison

*We all extend hospitality; the Invite team is just the coordinating team of our collective calling. We seek to help you as the face of Messiah in welcoming the stranger. When someone experiences Messiah for the first time – whether at worship, or through a neighborhood or community activity held at the church – we live into the calling of hospitality when the person is received as a guest, no longer a stranger.*

Needs:

- Volunteers to be a part of our team (we meet 1x a month).
- Volunteer to be a part of Village Vibe and walk the village with us.
- Continue to fund our budget so we can continue to show our welcome to all through:
  - Mailings, welcome gifts, new member receptions
- We want to develop a time and talent questionnaire in conjunction with Stewardship.
- We will be scheduling a 'New Sponsor' training to ensure that new members feel included.
- We will be hosting a new member reunion in January 2024 for folks who have joined since 2020.

#### SERVE – Connie Cole, Leader / Jack Wilder, Council Liaison

*The Serve committee is an outreach ministry of the church and functions as a clearinghouse for other outreach committees at Messiah. The purpose of this committee is to coordinate and evaluate outreach programs that the church currently supports and consider new directions for outreach.*

This ministry team meets 4x a year. Each team member takes charge of coordinating with local organizations so we can assist them. Our church is great at donating things and money, but we need folks to volunteer their time for initiatives.

#### BADENHOP FUND – Steve Hess, Treasurer / Becky Breeden, Council Liaison

The Charter is being executed fully. The fund can assist members with medical expenses.

- Question: Can we support other eldercare groups in our community?
- Needs: Council would like to see a list of all the organizations this fund has helped.

#### CONNECT – Michele Wilson, Leader / Debbie Hampstead, Council Liaison

*The Connect team is the official communications team for all of Messiah's work. It serves as an umbrella for communications, events, print materials, and giveaways.*

Needs:

- Continue to fund:
  - Website
  - Registration fees for community outreach opportunities
- Invite members who are savvy with social media to join our Team
- Encourage all ministry teams to complete the Event Planning Form (found on the website) for assistance with set-up and event promotion.

#### FINANCE – Steve Hess, Treasurer

- Property Budget top concern / easement funds are used up. We must fund from general fund now.

- \$18,000 per year to fill the gap, in addition to maintenance contracts and repairs.
- Project work to do:
  - Painting on exterior \$22K - rusted components
  - Mold issue in basement - cleaned and waterproofed
- Income generation from building use:
  - Policy needs to be reviewed and price need to slightly increase (refresh).
- Property needs more volunteers (volunteers vs. hiring vendors).

#### PERSONNEL - Michele Wilson, Leader & Council Liaison

- Needs:
  - A new leader starting in 2024 to replace Michele Wilson.
  - At least 2 new people to join the team.
  - Folks who have personnel experience or who have served in this role before.

#### PROPERTY – Jon Driskill, Leader / Angela Kronau, Council Liaison

*We take pride in our worship spaces! From long-term planning for our building to beautifying the grounds with flowers, we benefit from our members' enthusiasm for our shared spaces.*

Needs:

- Volunteers to paint exterior (a savings of \$22K).
- Someone to eradicate mold (clean & waterproof).
- Volunteers to help weed the ditch and around the church.
- Need people to landscape, clean and organize inside & outside.

#### BROTHERS AT MESSIAH – Don Lawhorn, Leader / Jon Driskill, Council Liaison

*Brothers at Messiah (BAM) is a men's group composed of members and friends that meet monthly for fellowship and service projects for people in our community.*

- Monthly dinner meeting with average attendance 11 to 16.
- Focus has been fellowship and mutual support.

#### DIVERSITY & JUSTICE – Beth Ford, Leader / Jack Wilder, Council Liaison

- Needs:
  - More people to attend the meetings by talking it up!
  - Review or the original email list to see who has dropped away.
  - Write a statement of purpose?

FELLOWSHIP – Carolyn Lawhorn & Judy Mennel, Co-Leaders / Rachel Rushworth-Hollander, Council Liaison

*Messiah is a place where people of all ages gather to remind ourselves of God's presence in our lives. Through the gifts that each person uses to lift up each other and the community around us, we bring hope to one another through God.*

Needs:

STEWARDSHIP – Michele Wilson, Leader / Becky Breeden, Council Liaison

*Being a partner in movements that change the lives of individuals and enrich our community is so satisfying. Our gifts of time and treasure do remarkable things when they are transformed into ministry and mission. This is an invitation to share the love and power of God with others, and let our mission drive our ministry.*

Needs:

- We need 2 more people to serve on our team – especially if they have fundraising and/or recruitment experience.
- Encourage the congregation to attend the Council meeting where the budget is discussed so they can have a deeper understanding of this piece of our church's operation.
- Share the monthly financial statements with more folks. Steve asks every month if new names need to be added. Encourage team leads to mention this at monthly/quarterly meetings.
- Review the Building Use Agreement and slightly increase the fee. The use fee would still be below the market average.
- Fundraising - Ask each Ministry Team/Committee to host a monthly luncheon after worship and charge a small price per person. Designate the money collected to the new Building & Maintenance Emergency Fund or another internal ministry team.
- Increasing membership was discussed – members are givers. We discussed the idea of hosting an 'Invite and Friend' Sunday. Instead, Michele will ask Larry Moeller if he would be willing to lead a workshop (1 hour) to help us learn how to invite our friends, colleagues and family members to come to church with us.

When a new member joins, Stewardship will share their completed time and talent survey with every chosen ministry team.

POLICY – Mike Driskill, Leader / Pastor Susan Thisell, Council Liaison

- Mike Driskill, Pastor and Steve Plonk working on the Constitution to update it to the ELCA model constitution.
- Church Policies to be reviewed: Building Use
- Need folks to review the policies

## WELCA – Illy Wood standing in for Mary Ellen Whitson

Upcoming events:

- Holiday market – Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>

Needs:

- More women to attend meetings

Suggested Solutions:

- Once Michele has submitted these notes, Rachel will create a visual piece for folks to sign up to complete tasks and/or join ministry teams.
- Make personal asks.
- Stewardship Team to send out a Time and Talent survey to ALL members as a part of the fall drive. Information collected will be shared with ministry leaders and council liaisons.

### **COUNCIL MEETING**

1. **Call to Order**: Mike Driskill called the meeting to order at 12:33 pm and Pastor Susan Thisell opened with prayer.
2. **Approval of Minutes**: A motion was made by Michele Wilson and seconded by Angela Kronau to approve the minutes of July 2023. Motion carried.
3. **Correspondence**: Correspondence was included in the Council packet for our information, no action needed.
4. **Committee Reports**: Provided in the meeting packet. The following Team reports required Council action:
  - a. **Serve**:
    - i. Request that the 2023 Advent Offering go to JusticeKnox. Mike moved, Michele seconded. Pastor Susan asked us to consider if a smaller group, like Bridge Refugee Services or Interfaith Health Clinic, receive the funds. After discussion, it was decided to vote on the motion. Motion passed.
    - ii. Request that God's Work, Our Hands date be set for Saturday, March 23, 2024 and that Bridge Refugee Services be the recipient of our volunteer hours. Becky Breeden made a motion and it was seconded by Rachel Rushworth-Hollander. There was no discussion and the motion carried.

b. **Property:**

- i. An anonymous member has offered to pay the cost for several dead or dying trees on the property. Angela Kronau made the motion that this request be approved. Michele Wilson seconded. After discussion and words of great appreciation for the anonymous donor, the motion passed.

5. **Ongoing Item Updates:**

- c. **Messiah Online Donations - Rachel will update the QR cards forms in the sanctuary.**
- d. **Wedding Request - Pastor Susan has shared the fee schedule and information with the requestor. It is still very much a fluid situation. We need more information before making the decision.**

6. **Synod Assembly:** Michele encouraged every council member to have their pronouns printed on our nametags.

7. **Possible Boy Scout Troop Sponsorship:** Jon Driskill shared that we've been asked to sponsor a local Boy Scout Troop that Logan Waller has been a part of for many years. The request was made by Shannon Waller. Their needs include a space to meet, parking place for trailer, and inside storage space. A church member who is affiliated with the troop would be here during meetings. Costs to the church will be insurance, security for trailer (concrete block). A motion to approve a further conversation with the troop leadership to potentially build this relationship was made by Jon Driskill and Angela Kronau seconded. The motion carried. **Mike Driskill will share the news with Shannon and a meeting with the troop leadership will be set.**

8. **Council Nominating Committee Team Update:** Members of the team are Mike Driskill, Debbie Hampstead, Rachel Rushworth-Hollander and Sharon Sweeney. **Rachel will coordinate their first meeting.** The timeline for the ballot will be November 2023. Rachel will give a 'temple talk' on Sunday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> about serving on Council.

9. **70th Anniversary Planning:** December 3, 2023 will be the kick-off event. Larry Moeller has agreed to serve as a leader/coordinator.

10. **Pastor's Report:** Pastor's report didn't get added to the Council packet, so Pastor Susan passed it out to those in attendance. She provided an update on her mother's (Mary Picking) condition. It has been a very challenging time and she appreciates the prayers and support shown.

**11. Property Money Saving Opportunity:** Jon Driskill share that he had a money saving opportunity presented to him. He can acquire replacement light bulbs that will serve our church well. They are \$75 per case for 30 bulbs. Total cost for 300 bulbs is \$750 with free shipping from Texas. There are enough funds in the new 'Building and Maintenance Fund' to make this purchase. Michele Wilson made a motion to use the funds for this purchase. Rachel Rushworth-Hollander seconded. After discussion, the motion carried. Buying the bulbs is the first step. Jon may be able to suggest grants or low interest loans that could help us in the future.

Rachel Rushworth-Hollander made the suggestion for Stewardship to consider putting together a fundraiser, like a Silent Auction, for folks to pay for specific needs of the church.

**12. Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned, with prayer led by Pastor, at 1:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michele Wilson  
Council Member

KnoxNewsSentinel  
Apple  
UTFoundation Online gifts