

August 2011 Council Minutes

Council President Bonnie Ehrke opened the meeting at 6:30. Present: Bonnie, Financial Secretary Elizabeth Kaashagen, Treasurer Holly Loomis, Jaime Lewellin, Pastor Jim, Karen Hayes, and Peggy Luther. Absent: Kristen Lien, Kurt Klemp, and Steve Wagner.

OPENING PRAYER & DEVOTION: Pastor Jim read an excerpt from “The Lutheran” magazine that profiled the ELCA Churchwide Assembly being held this month in Orlando, Florida (not to be confused with recent women’s Triennial Convention held in Spokane last month). This year’s theme is “Freed in Christ to Serve”; the focus is genetics, faith, and responsibilities. Pastor Jim also gave an extremely interesting devotion about Mary, the mother of Jesus, being an extraordinary example to follow, and further explained the difference between Mary’s “pondering” in Luke 2, and how that is totally different (and shouldn’t be confused) with “thinking”. Fascinating stuff!!

LINDSAY STOLEN’S RECENT ORDINATION into the ministry: Peggy shared some photos of Lindsay’s graduation from Luther Seminary in late May and ordination in late July. Lindsay is a “blogger” and some of her July 12, 2011 blog devoted to “**Ordinational Emotions**” was read by (really proud) godmother Peggy without first getting permission from goddaughter Lindsay. (Sorry, Linds, but it was a good read and, as Recording Secretary, I’m calling the shots to include an excerpt here without asking you first.)

“[Ordinational? A word? Likely not until now.]

“In attending ordinations of friends and beginning to plan my own, I often find myself emotional. Sundays ago, the gospel text was from Matthew 11 – the text that is read (during ordination) as a red stole is placed on the ordinand’s shoulders. [„Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.“ Matthew 11:28-30.] I found myself getting excited, anxious, and ready for this next step and this milestone in my journey into ministry.

“... Forgive my constant admiration and idolization of internship, but I grow so excited to think of them (coworkers from Grace Lutheran where Lindsay was an intern for 12 months) ... driving 8 hours (one way) to celebrate with me ...

“... In the planning of this ordination service, I also see congregation members of my home congregation being incredibly supportive and congratulatory. I could not tell you the last time that East Koshkonong was home to an ordination; this is new territory. They have gathered behind me in so many ways as I grew up in the pews – as a high school flute player with the Senior Choir, as a student at (Luther) College (in Decorah, Iowa), as a girl who lost her father, and as a pastoral candidate in seminary. I grow so excited to share my ordination with them. [Though I will say that this also comes with embarrassment – I have been absent it seems for so long that my name-to-face recognition is low. Very low. Must study the church directory.]

“... it will be an emotional day and an exciting day of praising God and celebrating the work Christ does in the world, in and through each person.”

The church council and staff sincerely hope that we here at East Koshkonong have had as positive an influence on interns Nathan Strong and Miranda Hinrichs as Grace Lutheran Church in Dawson, Minnesota, had on Lindsay Stolen!!

CONSENT AGENDA: Holly distributed and explained a chart she prepared for August's invoices. She also explained to the council how it would be beneficial to obtain a debit card specifically for postage needs. The short story is that a debit card would eliminate the constant burden of arriving to the post office to mail bulk items, which tends to be a usual and customary hassle. The council was in agreement. Secondly, Cambridge State Bank is asking us to update the authorized signers for various accounts at CSB. Third-ly, there is a safe deposit box at the bank and CSB has recommended that the church designate two people to be authorized signers. Discussion. Action: the council requested that Treasurer Holly Loomis be one of those two people to have access to the box, and further, that she inventory the contents of that box. A second individual will be designated after review of the contents.

Other financial reports: Elizabeth gave an overview of the reports and gladly mentioned that Income in July exceeded Expenses in July. This is due in great part to Pastor Jim taking a voluntary cut in pay while still maintaining a rather full schedule of pastoral services. (More on this in the next Quarterly Statement of Giving that will be mailed out.) Also, there was no hefty fuel bill to be paid in July. Discussion about Pastor Housing Allowance and how the numbers are not truly reflective of the current arrangement. After lots of talk, it was decided that we will just remain aware of this recordkeeping quirk and fix it at the proper time. Discussion re: wedding fees and funeral donations; it may be time to update fee schedule(s). Will revisit after appropriate background info has been gathered. Motion made by Karen, seconded by Bonnie, to accept all financial reports. Motion carried.

The Secretary's Report (Council Minutes from July 16, 2011) were approved and placed on file.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Youth Education: Calendar of events and activities for **Sunday School 2011-12** has been scheduled. A fourth S.S. class has been added for grades 4/5. **Lutherdale VBS** earlier this month was an overwhelming success for 30 participants. (To be objective for her report to council, Jaime tried to come up with at least one "needs improvement" aspect and couldn't find one!!) This one-day event was comparable to a week-long VBS but at a portion of the cost. Parents are already asking about registering for VBS in 2012! Special thanks to Pastor Jim for making a surprise visit! Youth Education volunteers impressed with the level of donations.

Interim Pastor's Report: Pastor Jim reported on "**occasional services**" (e.g., weddings, funerals). He reiterated that he'd be in contact with parents of **confirmation students** about expectations to attend worship services, acolyting on a set rotation schedule, and formal instruction sessions. He continues to **visit** the homebound and hospitalized and stressed the fact that he is available for **pastoral care** as needed.

Motion made by Peggy to accept all committee reports. Seconded by Jaime. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

Call Process Update Pastor Jim gave the council an overview of the mechanics of how the call process works. Names of potential candidates have been received; the Call Committee will meet with Rev. Sara Yotter on August 17, 2011.

David Danielson Memorial Last month's homework was to come to the August council meeting with suggestions on how we might best use 10% (approx. \$1,100) of David's benevolence for an ELCA global mission. Keeping in mind the kind of man David was, council members decided to send a "barnyard" + other "good gifts" to an overseas mission. (Note to the reader: **this was by far the best part J J of the council meeting!**) More info on the global barnyard, etc., can be found elsewhere in the September monthly newsletter. Please look for it! Then the council took a field trip to some Sunday School classrooms and the choir/theater room to look at obvious mold problems. Jaime will ask the property committee to check into the full scope of the mold problem. Motion made by Bonnie to set aside a maximum of \$2,000 of David's memorial to be used towards the improvement needed for Sunday School/choir rooms. Seconded by Karen. Motion carried.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Peggy Luther, Recording Secretary