

**Word of Peace Executive Team
Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2017**

In Attendance:

Pastor Rick Skare, *Senior Pastor*
Linda Thomas, *Director of Administration*
Jim Peterson, *President*
Michelle Andersen, *Vice-President*
Lori Rankila, *Secretary*
Mike Van De Riet, *Member-At-Large*

Devotion and Opening Prayer: Jim Peterson

Approval of February 2017 Executive Team Minutes: Motion to approve the February Executive Team Meeting Minutes made by Pastor Rick and seconded by Michelle Andersen. Discussion – none. Vote – motion carried.

Agenda Items:

Financial Review	All/Linda Thomas	
YTD through January , 2017: Regular Offerings to date \$101,790 Regular offerings are ahead of budgeted offerings by \$9,682 Total Church Operations Income to date \$131,079 Total Church Operation Income ahead of budgeted income by \$18,162 Total Church Expenses to date \$103,574 Total Church Expenses are below budgeted expenses by \$19,905 Total Income against expenses is \$27,505; Budgeted Income against expenses is (\$10,563) Loans – We have \$3,000 loan from the Dedicated fund End of May mortgages are at \$1.605M		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The February financials were not available at this time due the conversion of the accounting software.• \$36,000 was anonymously received to cover last year’s shortfall of \$37,000. There is no concern at this time about the remaining funds coming in to cover the full amount.• Linda passed out the final budget with the salary increases; the budget shows a loss of \$13,623. She will reach out those who said they would assist in facilitating the staff increases.• Any credit card purchases over \$100 must have prior approval from the Administrator before purchasing. Pastor Rick and Linda will ask all staff to make sure any credit card purchases are in the budget before purchasing.• The refinancing is complete. At this time, the excess money will be put into a savings account. More discussion to follow.		

Building Committee	Mitch Stolba	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch shared his concerns about the church finances and how building renovations may impact the finances at this time. 		
Church School/Confirmation Fees	All/Pastor Rick	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CYF staff proposed the following fee increases as opposed to the one large increase for confirmation: Church School \$45 to \$50 – Increase \$5 Confirmation \$50 to 60 – Increase \$10 9th Grade Confirmation \$25 to \$35 – Increase \$10 No Increase for VBS Motion to approve the above fee increases was made by Michelle Andersen and Seconded by Mike Van De Riet. Although most agree that we should not have any fees for these programs, unfortunately the current financial situation does not allow it at this time. There is a \$5,000 matching gift to help cover the cost of the programs. The CYF team is developing a plan to match the gift and will submit their ideas to the Executive Team for final approval. 		
Staff Updates		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastor Rick to take a study leave this summer. He will finalize the plans in April. He is sensitive to the timing of the leave and the workload left for the remaining staff. Michael Sahlen and Kristen Skare also have study leaves coming up and will be working on their plans for a study leave. Kristen Skare has been assigned to the Minneapolis Area Synod and Tyler Strom is about to be assigned to the Minneapolis Area Synod (in conversation with Bishop Ann Svennungsen). So both Kristin and Tyler are now (or soon for Tyler) eligible to be an official part of the Word of Peace Call Process. We can now continue with this process, which we initiated at our February meeting with the blessings of the Minneapolis Area Synod. Marcus Eads has resigned as the Director of Youth Ministry as of the March 31, 2017. Thank you Marcus for your 7 years of service to our church. It will be announced in church on March 26/27 and an open house will be held on Wednesday night during the Lenten Services. Lisa Buck has resigned as the Children, Youth and Family Administrator as of April 30.2017. The staff is in the process of planning her farewell party. Pastor Rick and Kari Osmek, Director of CYF Ministry will meet to discuss future staffing needs based on the resignation of the Marcus and Lisa. With the resignation of Marcus Eads, partnering with the Elk River Lutheran Church and WOPLC to share staff will not happen. Pastor Rick did extend an invitation for them to join our summer programs. Pastor Keith and the Stewardship team are working on ways to increase stewardship in our church. As one team member said, “We have financial trouble because people don’t volunteer enough. How can we get people to volunteer to eliminate budget concerns?” 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last month, Pastor Keith submitted a proposal for his continuing education. These classes were over his allotted budget. Pastor Keith was aware of the budget and had planned to pay for any expenses over budget out of his pocket. • See Pastor Rick's and Pastor Keith's Monthly Report for more Staff Updates and details! 		
Strategic Planning Team Update		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPT members in attendance: Rob Rowe, Teri Frain and Beth Chapman • They submitted their Vision for the church that will be presented at the April 4th Leadership Summit. • Pastor Rick and Tim will meet with Wendy Neu to discuss and finalize how to facilitate the 5 strategic initiatives and how each team can relate to them. 		
Miscellaneous	All	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Sahlen voiced his concern about not having paid musicians for the 8:30 and 9:45 services. The 11:00 service has had paid musicians in place prior to Sol(e)d Out. The paid service was done to have consistent music at the 11:00 service. He would like the other two time slots be paid to have consistent music at each service. • Rockin' Rogers Days will have two big names performing on stage. Pat Hurley, Norm Volkens and others are brainstorming ideas on how to capitalize on the events. 		

Pastor Rick's Report:

EXECUTIVE TEAM REPORT PASTOR RICK SKARE 2/22/17 – 3/14/17

1. I continue to do the **Regular Duties** expected of me on a daily and weekly basis including: preaching, teaching, worship planning and leading, presiding at baptisms, weddings, and funerals, visiting, counseling, communicating, administrating the areas of ministry I oversee, praying, and studying.
2. Unfortunately, we are currently experiencing many **deaths, memorial services, and crises** in the congregation. This included Kristin and I being available at St. Michael Middle School West on March 13th for prayer and support for the students and staff upon the unexpected death of an 8th grade student.
3. I had a few **vacation days** in the past month including February 23rd to participate in the nearly snowless Birkebeiner in Hayward, Wisconsin and March 8-11 to visit Kristin's brother in Oakland, California. Both breaks provided a much needed time of rest and recreation.
4. I was a part of the **Sunday Night Men's Group serving pancakes** at the Gathering of Women on Feb. 28. It was a great time of fellowship and serving for this group.
5. New to **Ash Wednesday Worship** this year was adding a noon service. It was well received with 77 in attendance. Also new to Ash Wednesday this year was the special service/pancake brunch for preschool families which was also well received.
6. Great news! Kristin Skare has been **assigned to the Minneapolis Area Synod** and Tyler Strom is about to be assigned to the Minneapolis Area Synod (in conversation with Bishop Ann Svennungsen). So both Kristin and Tyler are now (or soon for Tyler) eligible to be an official part of the Word of Peace Call Process. We can now continue with this process, which we initiated at our February meeting, with the blessings of the Minneapolis Area Synod.
7. With the call process for Kristin and Tyler in place, I am now making final plans for my **Study Leave** this summer (I did not want to finalize my plans until I knew we had pastoral coverage for this summer and even now I am prepared to adjust my plans if need be). I have been making some initial plans, so I have not committed to any weddings or events this summer and Pastor Keith and Tyler are preparing for my absence. Right now I am planning to be on Study Leave June 12 – Sept. 4, but I may adjust it some to be gone a couple of weeks in May. I am focusing my study leave on the topics of leadership and preaching. I am looking to attend two conferences/workshops on these topics, read some books on these subjects (which I am already accumulating), and meet with other senior pastors of large congregations to discuss these topics in a more practical way. Of course, I also plan to catch up on some projects at home (that I just don't get to because of the constant demands of ministry) and to enjoy time with my family for rest and recreation. I will provide a more detailed plan for my study leave at the April Executive Team meeting.

8. We are saddened to receive the **resignations** of Marcus Eads and Lisa Buck. Both have served Word of Peace in the Children, Youth, and Family ministry for several years. We will celebrate their ministry and have some time as a congregation to thank them and wish them farewell. Kari Osmek, the CYF staff, the leadership of our congregation, and myself are developing plans for the future structure of the CYF ministry.

Pastor Keith's Report:

Executive Team - Monthly Report

Keith Long

Pastor of Congregational Life & Growth

2/22/2017 – 3/9/2017

Word and Sacrament

- Sermon preparation & preaching
- Ash Wednesday CYF service
- Baptisms & Holy Communion
- Wellstead/Diamondcrest/Engel Haus service with Holy Communion
- Worship Planning and bulletin review meetings
- Pastoral Visitation
- Funeral planning (None)
- Funerals (None)
- Pre-Marriage Counseling Sessions (None)
- Weddings (None)

Teaching

- Baptism Class
- Confirmation planning & leading Large Group
- Sunday Morning Adult Ed planning (Prophets, Adult Ed field trip to Buddhist/Hindu temple)
- Sunday Morning Adult Ed class ("World Religions," and "Old Testament Prophets")
- PeaceKast podcasts

Administration

- Weekly All-Staff Meetings
- Pastors/Ministers weekly meetings
- Life & Growth team meeting (Meeting Cancelled)
- Stewardship Team meeting (March)
 - We discussed our Strategy and Goals for 2017 (see page 2), which (I hope) will put us in better position to reach our proposed budget and lay the groundwork for transforming our congregation into a culture of generosity.
- Executive Team & Strategic Planning Team (Feb)
- Ministry Area Representatives Meeting
- Writing of newsletter articles, study plans, responding to emails, creating videos, and the strategic vision and goals for Stewardship, etc

- New Member Orientation

Other

- Minneapolis Synod Peer Group Leadership Board meetings (2)

*Attached to this report is The Stewardship Team's Strategic Vision and Goals for 2017.

Pastor Keith Long, Mike Sip, Mark Walstrom, Greg Heinecke, Kristie Balek

Church Vision

To be a community where everyone knows Christ's Love and shares Christ's Love with all people.

Church Mission

Christ works through us as we:

- Welcome all people to grow in faith, love and devotion,
- Share Christ through word and deed,
- Care for others and the world God made, and
- Work for justice and peace.

Proposed Stewardship Team Mission

- We honor Jesus Christ through our commitment to build a culture of generosity in, with and through the Word of Peace church community.

Proposed Stewardship Team Vision

- To transform lives in the name of Jesus Christ by becoming a culture of generosity at Word of Peace Lutheran Church.

Strategy for 2017-18

- 1) Establish a **"Generosity Framework"** for how to effectively communicate with our existing giving culture.
- 2) **Educate/Communicate** the congregation about *how* and *why* to give and *what* their giving is accomplishing.
- 3) **Encourage and thank** those who have pledged and contribute to the giving culture.
- 4) **Equip the congregation** through creative, fun, fresh and informational content (monthly) to share in worship, church school and/or online.

1) Generosity Framework

We will communicate differently with givers based on how they are currently giving to the mission and vision of Word of Peace:

- a. **Off-the-Top and Proportional Givers**

Description: These givers have already discovered the joy of generosity and will likely continue to give generously. They give away either a percentage of their income or “off the top” rather than the leftovers.

Suggested Strategy: Pastor Keith will meet with them on a regular basis to thank them and let them know their gifts are used to further God’s work through the church. Both the pastors and the stewardship team will write hand-written thank you notes.

b. Flat-amount contributors

Description: These givers contribute a flat amount of their income or a one-time gift, either occasionally or just once. These givers give “when they feel like it” and have not made regular giving a priority in their lives. They may view giving to church similar to paying their annual dues or income tax.

Suggested Strategy: This group might respond and be motivated through intensified efforts on education. They may find tactics such as the comparing of their current giving to the church with how they spend money towards other expenditures to be especially informative. For example, we could ask this type of giver: how does giving compare to your cable bill or garbage bill? The goal here is to help this group to think critically about what it means to give and to move them closer towards giving regularly.

c. Unknown Contributors and Zero Contributors

Description: This group represents our not-yet givers, or those whom may give only with cash (which is impossible to track.) Possible explanations: The Not-yet giver is either new to faith or grew up in a culture where financial giving was not modeled. Perhaps they are giving to too many other places (kids sports, shopping, leisure, etc) or have simply chosen not to give or have little interest to personally support the congregation financially.

Suggested Strategy: We will continue to educate them through what is accomplished through our giving and by cultivating in them a spirit of gratitude and discipleship that they may be moved to offer a portion of the blessings they receive. This group typically represents a third to half of the membership.

2. Stewardship Education & Communication

We will be informed about the current giving data of the congregation so that our education and communication can maintain transparency and accuracy. We will also make sure our communication is positive and informative and that it equally targets both a wide/general audience as well as a narrow/specific audience.

- a. Propose making changes on our weekly financial information provided in the bulletin. Experts suggest replacing the giving information that takes the annual budget divided by 52 weeks with providing the congregation’s historical monthly giving percentages. They also suggest pairing this current data to what our congregation has done over past 5 years. For example, January may be 5% and December may be 15-20%. So instead of

sending a message that says we're always behind, we can give a more accurate picture of the natural ebb and flow of our giving patterns.

- b. Work with the church office to determine the timing of the giving statements and make sure these statements have a positive tone. Pastors and the stewardship team will be intentional about including a thank you note in statements to let people know how their funds were spent and what the ministry needs are for the next few months. Primary emphasis will be placed on where we're going and what is still needed to get us there.
- c. Continue to educate, encourage and fine-tune our approach regarding electronic giving, automatic withdrawal, PushPay, etc and to work with leadership on how these tools can be best utilized and leveraged.
- d. Establish regular communication and collaboration with the leadership of the Children, Youth and Family department in order to create more of a partnership in our stewardship messaging and education as an entire congregation (Worship + Church School.)

3. Encouragement and Thank You's

We will spend a considerable amount of our time and energy giving thanks for those who consistently and faithfully give. While the majority of our congregational membership does not give regularly, there are many who do and need our grateful attention so that they maintain and increase their generosity.

- a. Pastor Keith will be intentional about getting to know our pledgers and givers and make efforts to thank them frequently either in writing or face to face.
- b. Keith/Rick will also be familiar and intentional with the top givers of the congregation and making sure their generosity and commitment to the congregation is appreciated through making personal connections that communicate that their dreams/hopes are understood and realized.

4. Equipping the Congregation

We will continue to work with the staff to create fun, fresh and informational content/videos to share in worship, church school and online. Examples: Fearless Generosity Coach Updates, video testimonials, giving updates and thank you's.

- a. How to Give to Word of Peace – Video sharing the ways to give now that you've pledged (Completed - Feb)
- b. Why to Give – Our Stewardship team members (and other givers) will be recording brief testimonials about why giving is a priority and joy. (Airdate: April 23 or April 30)
- c. What our Giving is accomplishing – A message of information and gratitude for where giving has gone and how giving has been contributing to transforming lives for Jesus Christ. (May)
- d. Coach Keith Updates – sharing information about where we're at as a team and where we need to be. Encourage and challenge will be the goal here.
- e. Targeted Messages to the three different types of givers – create mailings or messaging that speaks specifically to the type of giver we are addressing. These could be notes the

team writes collectively to include with the giving statements. Pastor Keith to assist in keeping this information confidential for distribution.

Annual Pledge Drive Challenge – Keeping tabs on our Fearless Generosity pledge drive as well as looking ahead to what we'll do as our follow-up this fall.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 11, 2017 at 6:30pm

Closing – Lord's Prayer

Respectfully submitted,
Lori Rankila
Secretary