

St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Lancaster, Pennsylvania
2023 Annual Congregation Meeting Minutes
Sunday, November 12, 2023 – 10:30 am

OPENING PRAYER was offered by Pastor Craig Ross.

CALL TO ORDER of the 2023 Annual Meeting by Council President Greg Hand at 10:36 am.

AGENDA REVIEW by Greg Hand.

APPOINTMENT OF TELLERS AND PARLIAMENTARIAN by Greg Hand

Greg reported a quorum has been reached. Bob Hollinger, John Kerchner, and Weston Groff, will serve as tellers. Leslie McCarthy will serve as parliamentarian for today's meeting.

APPROVAL OF NOVEMBER 13, 2022 ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING MINUTES by Greg Hand

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 13, 2023 Annual Meeting was made by Jeff Pretz and seconded by Steve Gegg. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

THANK YOU

Greg thanked the finance committee, the human resources committee, and the church council members for all of their hard work on the budget and making some challenging decisions. Greg shared that we have received some donations to pay off the variable rate loan as well.

CHURCH COUNCIL ELECTIONS by Greg Hand

The election of Class of 2026 members was held. The following members were presented for nominations to a Council term beginning in January 2024 and concluding in December 2026, which included Molly Olmstead, Paul Berkebile, Gary Troxell, and Betsy Linn. There were two vacant positions that Betsy and Gary filled for the year. They have indicated their willingness to serve for the next year. Molly, Gary, Betsy, and Paul have all been actively involved in the church. No nominations were made from floor.

ELECTION OF CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL OFFICERS FOR 2024 by Greg Hand

Presented for Council Officers for 2024 are: Greg Hand (President), Joel Janisewski (Vice President), Sherry Moul (Treasurer) and Lis Wolf (Secretary). Joel will be in his first one-year term. Greg, Sherry, and Lis will be on their second one-year term. Hearing no nominations from the floor Greg moved nominations be closed. Written ballots for all elections were

distributed and collected. Voting was done by written ballot and the tabulations were presented at the end of the meeting and at the end of these minutes.

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT by Mark Aho, Property Committee Chair

Mark Aho presented his property committee report by thanking the committee with special thanks to George Groff (plumbing expert), Bob Preston (lighting & audiovisual) and Rich Larrick (jack of all trades). Theme for this year was getting things back to operational efficiency. Replaced four heat pumps, changed light fixtures to LED, emergency roof repairs, and replaced some heating elements in sanctuary and family life center/café. A generous donation was made by a congregational member to refresh plantings in the memorial garden. In addition, a large amount of routine maintenance was done in various parts of the church. Pending projects and concerns include annual inspection and repairs of roofs, electric and natural gas contract negotiations, HVAC unit replacements (heat pumps from 1997 and large family life center unit); and skilled volunteers. Need volunteers for daily maintenance. If interested, please see Mark Aho. Special thank you was given to Mark Aho for all his energy, thoroughness, and proactivity for maintaining our property.

CEMETERY COMMITTEE REPORT by Lois Benton, Chairman of Cemetery Committee

St. Peter's cemetery is on Valley Road and has been in existence since 1800. There are currently 93 veterans buried in the cemetery beginning with veterans from the Civil War. There are three options for members of the congregation to consider for burial. The cemetery and cremation garden on Valley Road. Another choice is the memorial and meditation garden on Delp Road. Lois also provided brochures that will be available after the meeting on the table outside the narthex. George Groff has been involved with the cemetery volunteer for seventy years and has such great knowledge of the history of the cemetery and has regularly kept the cemetery mowed and in great shape. We appreciate all of his hard work and dedication to the cemetery. We are looking for someone to step in and take his place with George assisting with training.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE REPORT by Steve Gegg, Endowment Committee Chair

Steve Gegg presented information on the endowment fund. The mission is to invest funds in a prudent manner. Have professional assistance with managing funds from Fulton Bank. Steve mentioned committee members who are involved with the endowment committee. Looking for one or two more volunteers for the committee. Steve talked about the current state of market and investment funds. There have been ups and downs for each of the months. Despite the ups and downs, the endowment fund was up \$52,600 for 2023. Endowment fund returned 7.46%. Over a volatile three years the Endowment Fund has returned 4.83%. The reserve fund generated 6.03%. Distributions were to Busoka Church, Family Life Center, technology improvements, laminator for preschool, and Manheim Township Homes for Hope. The remaining approximately \$8760 to be gifted by end of year to community organizations.

FINANCIAL REPORTS by Paul Schultz, Parish Administrator

This is Paul's third year working with the finance and property committee. George Groff continues to dig graves and needs to be able to resign from this role. We need someone to become involved with cemetery caretaking, digging graves, etc. George Groff is willing to train. George was thanked for his many years of service. There is some remuneration for opening and closing groves. If anyone is interested, please see Paul Schultz.

Positive things include the mission giving to the mission fund and debt retirement. There were two generous donations in October 2023 that paid off the variable rate mortgage. There also was an anonymous donor who gave us a donation to the meditation and memorial garden. Paul discussed the liquid assets (cash) which includes \$265,200. Half of the cash is tied up in restricted areas. There are two invested funds including the General Reserve Fund and Endowment fund which is roughly a million dollars. Liabilities include \$110,199 payable to endowment that came from a loan for mortgage refinancing. Variable rate mortgage is gone. The fixed rate mortgage is at 3.85% with a balance of \$844,911. Weekly offering is \$127,558, which is below budget. Simply giving has been bought by VANCO. VANCO is very similar to Tithe.ly and now allows the member to make changes themselves instead of processing changes through the church office. Paul reviewed YTD income statement. 2023 Financial facts include benevolence behind by \$12,762 including \$7500 to Synod. Getting ready to pay benevolence. Unexpected HVAC replacements occurred; however, the property committee was still within their budget despite this. Received refund on electrical taxes we had been charged by PP&L.

APPROVAL OF 2024 CHURCH BUDGET by Paul Berkebile, Finance Committee Chair

Thanks to both Paul Schultz, Sherry Moul and the Finance committee for all of their hard work on this year's finances and the 2024 budget. The 2024 proposed budget will have a net of \$0 with total revenue of \$1,187,430 and total expenses of \$1,187,430. The goal was to have a balanced budget. One driver of the budget includes reasonable growth of revenue from 2023 (5% growth over 2023). Paul did a summary of where the expected revenue for 2024 budget is coming from. On services we paused we hope to be able to move forward again with them if the revenue improves. Paul presented a summary of the proposed changes to the 2024 budget expenses and showed the overall expenses. Paul paused and asked for any questions from the congregation. A question was asked about the children's ministry and the revenue and expense. Expense does not reflect the change in salary and expense for children's ministry as that is under the human resources budget. Several congregation members expressed concern that there needed to be more expansion in the children's ministry as that is our future. It was again stressed that there is no elimination of the children's ministry programs. There is only the pause of the children's ministry director position. Another member felt we needed to

reach out to understand why children are not coming back to church. There are a lot of competing priorities on Sunday that keep children away from church. Greg Hand provided further explanation on how the changes and pauses were decided upon and what those changes were. We need to be flexible, assess where we are as a congregation, and make any changes as we go along through the year depending upon revenue going forward.

Questions were asked whether we have analyzed our loss of giving units and why members have left. Both the finance committee, human resource committee, and church council have looked at the reasons why individuals are leaving and changes in giving units as part of budget analysis. The question was asked whether these individuals been approached and asked to return to the church. Pastor Ross stated that a large number of individuals have been contacted particularly in the New Day service area. Loss in New Day was felt to be due to COVID and the loss of Pastor Sarah, which impacted that service as well. Pastor spoke to some loss due to specific issues related to social ministry and other issues. This was an attempt to get feedback. Some individuals were called and did not choose to respond. Pastor also felt the pandemic gave individuals an opportunity to choose different options for church. Stewardship has also spent a great deal of time on this and has done some analysis at a more macro level and not at an individual level. Concern was expressed over pausing the New Day service. A member of the finance committee stated this is our opportunity to revisit how we do things and for us to all step up. Each of the committees were asked to what changes could be made and they provided input into those changes. A question was asked about what the future holds and Greg Hand expressed that we can't really predict where we will need to go in the future and whether the changes are temporary or permanent. A question was also asked if there was consideration given to combining the 8:30 am and 10:30 am services; however, there was no formal discussion in this area at this point in time.

A motion was made to approve the 2024 church budget by Terry McGuigan. The motion was seconded by Steve Gegg. Approval was by voice vote with a majority stating approval with some nays noted.

APPROVAL of 2024 PRESCHOOL BUDGET by Paul Berkebile, Finance Committee Chair

A motion was made to approve the 2024 Preschool budget by Jeff Pretz and seconded by Jill Emmert. No further discussion was held. Approval was by a unanimous voice vote.

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE by Betsy Linn, Stewardship Committee Chair

Our church activities are back and continue to move forward with many planned activities. Volunteers are the ones who make this happen for the many programs that have restarted. Betsy Linn asked everyone to consider assisting with our many ministries as well as to consider what your financial pledge will be for 2024 and she shared different ways to contribute. Betsy asked the congregation to consider moving from debt reduction to the general fund. The focus

in 2024 will be focusing on time and talent. Betsy Linn also contacted many people about why they left the church. There were many different reasons of why they left. We need an evangelism committee to do this, and we need more people to assist with this.

RECEPTION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEE LIST

by Greg Hand, Council President

Committee reports and the Standing Committee List were distributed prior to the meeting and were available in print form at the meeting for review. We are in the process of updating the continuing resolution document that describes the various committees and their activities.

Paul Berkebille made a motion to approve the reports and the standing committee list. Sherry Moul seconded the motion. A unanimous voice vote approved the motion.

CONSTITUTION UPDATE and APPROVAL of CHANGES by Leslie McCarthy

Leslie reminded everyone that the changes being presented today are required changes by Synod. Leslie reviewed the required changes including some questions that were brought up at the town hall meeting and in emails.

Leslie McCarthy made a motion to approve the changes. The motion was to amend the St. Peter's Constitution and Bylaws to incorporate the 2022 amendments to the ELCA model constitution for congregations. The motion was seconded by Greg Hand. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote.

VOTING RESULTS presented by John Kerchner

The Council nominees and Council Officers were approved with congregational votes respectively. **Greg Hand acknowledged those who completed their church council term including Bob Hollinger, and Adam Gegg.**

SISTER DOTTIE REPORT

Betsy Linn thanked Cindy Geesey on behalf of the church congregation and thanked her for all her hard work with the children's ministry.

PASTOR ROSS REPORT

Pastor Ross shared his thoughts with the congregation regarding law and gospel and the tension of this. We need to be able to entertain ideas and thoughts we may or may not be willing to hear always. Sometimes we as a congregation forget that at times. Not only are we at times broken but we need to forgive and keep us within our community. Pastor Ross is here to help us embrace our church congregation mission as well as our Lutheran mission and to assist with understanding this tension.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There needs to be recognition of New Day Eric Teichmann and the New Day band.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made to adjourn by Greg Hand and seconded by Jennifer Schlener. President Greg Hand adjourned the meeting at 12:40 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Glassford

Recording Secretary

Approved:

Greg Hand, Council President

Lis Wolf, Secretary