MINUTES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
on Wednesday Sep 18th 2024 at 7:00 pm

Vision Statement: *Peace Lutheran Church is a welcoming, worshipping and witnessing community in Jesus Christ through whom healing, wellness, love and peace are offered unconditionally to all.*

Mission Statement: *Celebrating and Sharing God's Love for All.*

ATTENDANCE:
In-person (Hern Room): None – the meeting was held over Zoom

Via Zoom: Rosie Lantzsch (Co-chair), Sirkka Taylor (Co-chair), Fiona Haapalehto (Secretary), Rainer Knabenschuh, David Wishart, Pastor Ronnie Smith, Sunny Wishart (Treasurer), Kavita Kanavalli,

Regrets: Analisa Chand, Shakura Persaud and Cameron Ylimaki.
Congregational Members: Lena and Joel Sievers
Guests: Don Fry – Affirming Worship Durham

Email motions held between Council meetings, if any, are documented at the conclusion of the meeting minutes.

1. **Call to Order: Rosie** called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.
2. **Opening:** No devotion was held. **Shakura** will do it for the next meeting.
3. **Approval of the Agenda:**
   Moved by: Sirkka, seconded by: Kavita
   THAT the agenda for day, September 18th, 2024, as amended, be approved.
   Discussion: None. **CARRIED**

4. **Approval of the Previous Minutes:**
   Moved by: Rainer, seconded by: Sirkka
   THAT the Minutes of the Church Council Meeting held on July 18th, 2024, be approved, as amended. Discussion: Fix typographical error to correct spelling of Bill Gregor's name.
   CARRIED.

5. **Treasurer's Report**
   JULY
   - W&A Tech $3,959.52 however the cheque hasn't cleared the account yet so it has not been posted, since we are expecting this cost to be offset by the grant, hopefully in August the grant will come in and the cheque will clear, then net out.
   - The summer intern has wrapped up and we will be receiving the grant for that to offset the expense.
   - Cheque was prepared for the annual insurance premium; this will make the expenses look larger than average.
   - YTD deficits are at 212% of annual budget. There were expenses carried forward from 2023 contributing to this, along with the insurance cheque going out and gross intern costs.
   - Finally wrapped up with Copetti, final invoice for 2024 was $1,709 and paid with the Visa.

- There were some offsetting entries done as we had accrued this bill along with Copetti had accrued a $1200 charge for the annual filings, the final bill came in less than that which is why you see overpayment in the Accounting Fees.
- from Toni our bookkeeper: "It's because I had an invoice posted in Jan that we never paid so I reversed it. The YTD would be zero for that invoice. The balance YTD is now -$46.27 because Copetti accrued $1200 for the year end but the bill came in less ($1,153.73) so we have a credit in the expense of -$46.27. "
- Quickbooks has also been transferred over to Peace, the monthly subscription of $54 + tax / month will now come off our credit card.

Moved by: Kavita seconded by Rainer,
THAT the July Financial Statements be approved. Discussion: None. **CARRIED**

AUGUST

- There was some talk of how we would handle a 'gift in kind', I have a communication from Mandi, our new Synod Treasurer should anyone require further guidance on this matter.
- W&A Tech has a balance of $3,959.52, we're waiting for grant reimbursement.
  - o This expense, along with the summer intern costs, which are also waiting grant reimbursement, is making the monthly deficit look more dire than actual.
- A note from Steven the Financial Secretary "There was a $1500 donation towards a funeral that was recently held. As per Rosemarie, I have allocated $1100 to Rental Income and $400 to Congregational Life"
- I will drop off the post-dated cheques for C&R paving for second signature and to be mailed off.

Moved by: Fiona seconded by Sirkka,
THAT the August Financial Statements be approved. Discussion: None. **CARRIED.**

6. **New Business:**
   a. **Lena & Joel Proposal – Volunteer Parish Worker position.**
   On August 3rd, Lena Sievers contacted Pastor Ronnie and Fiona, in her capacity as Chair of the Mutual Ministry Committee about a proposal for her to volunteer with the church in the capacity of a Parish Worker. This is work she has formal training in and now that two of their three children are in college, she has the time. Further, she reported that the family immigration status has changed and they are awaiting permanent residence status. In the interim she is unable to work for pay and has left her paid employment as a translator. The final rationale was that having a qualified and experienced parish worker would further support the congregation when Pastor Ronnie is working from home in Waterloo.

   Lena met with the Pastor and the Co-chairs, Fiona also had a conversation with Joel about the proposal. In addition, Fiona sent the proposal, along with Lena's CV & formal credentials to Rev. Doug Reble at the Synod Office, and asked for any advice he had for us in considering the proposal.

   His main advice was to use the Synod's Non-Rostered Employment Contract as a basis for a formal contract with Lena, if we decide to go ahead with the arrangement. He also suggested we check references to confirm that Lena was still in good standing with the American educational institutions that issued her certificates – Concordia College and Washington University. Lena was consulted and one of those institutions is now closed.

Fiona also consulted the other members of the MMC who had no additional input.

The proposal was forwarded to the Council members for their consideration in advance of the September Council meeting.

Lena and Joel attended the Council meeting and provided an opportunity for Council members to ask questions. Pastor Ronnie asked Joel if he had any further information to help the Council. Joel mentioned that their immigration lawyer had advised that Religious Workers are exempt from the requirements that employers prove that no Canadian could do the job.

Lena and Joel left the meeting before the motion was presented.

Moved by: Fiona seconded by Sirkka
Motion: That Council create a position of Volunteer Parish Worker, and that the details of the duties and responsibilities be formalized by Fiona, Lena, Rosie and Pastor Ronnie. Further, that an Employment Agreement be developed for Lena's signature based on the Non-Rostered Employment Agreement supplied by the Synod.

Discussion: With all the other work the Sievers do for Peace, we don't want to over-burden Lena. Fiona suggested we discuss with Lena a cap of 20hrs a week for this work. She could include the work done developing and recording the Children's Message in this schedule.

Fiona to send out the Non-Rostered Employment Agreement to Rosie and Pastor.
CARRIED

b. Damion Nurse – Sex Addicts Anonymous

Pastor has received a request from Damion Nurse to establish a chapter of SAA in Durham with meetings at PLC. They already run a successful group in Toronto, but have realized there is a demand for this type of organization in Durham. They anticipate approx. 5-10 people per meeting until they get established.

Moved by: David, seconded by Kavita
Motion: To authorize Pastor Ronnie to negotiate a weekly rental on Tuesdays to establish a Durham chapter of the Sex Addicts Anonymous 12-step group.

Discussion: We should be in the business of allowing space for these groups.
CARRIED

7. Old Business:

a. Affirming Worship Durham

- See update in Pastor's Report. Cameron is liaising with the organization.
- Don Fry attended the meeting and presented some information prior to the consideration of New Business.
  - Don is a straight ally to the 2SLGBTQ+ community and works through Westminster United Church.
  - Has worked with the community for 11 yrs and is still learning how to be an ally.
  - He and Pastor Ronnie have discussed that inclusion @ Peace is part of our ministry

- Explained the 2SLGBTQ concept and that this community is facing significant challenges in society.
  - Ultra-right groups are persecuting them, not just in the US
  - In Canada -Prior to 1969 same sex relationships were a capital crime
  - Same sex marriage was only legalized in 2005
  - Bill C4 banning conversion therapy was enacted as recently as 2021
- Affirming Churches are not trying to pray away the gay, they are not "gay" churches, their goal is to offer a safe place to worship, non-judgmental acceptance and full services for membership (marriage, funerals, etc.), support & advocacy
  - The sheer size of the opportunity to serve (4.5% or 33,000 ppl) in Durham
  - Many were shunned by their religious institutions – so they have a high distrust of organized religion, families are being forced to choose between their faith and their child.
  - Unconscious/conscious bias in employment & housing
  - Mental health is an issue – depression, suicide attempts.
- AWD is offering an opportunity to connect with ally groups in Durham– march in Pride parade, multifaith services before pride parade, AIDS Durham as a way to be an ally and accepting of this community at Peace.

- Pastor Ronnie would like us to get involved.

- Don Fry has more information he would like to share with us so we invited him to complete his presentation at our October meeting.

b. Kindred Works Feasibility Study – next step

- Kindred has been authorized to complete the feasibility study for Peace. Jennifer said that Synod is processing the grant for feasibility study- Pastor Ronnie will follow up with Jennifer and we will have more forms to complete.

c. Discussion on Pastor's Move to Waterloo

- No new news/issues. Seems to be going well. He is making himself available as needed.

d. Community Conversation – Jennifer Hoover

- Still outstanding. Seems we shouldn't embark on this until we know what the feasibility study shows.

e. Mission Grants

- Tech team upgrade – paperwork has been submitted and we are waiting for the cheque.

f. Technology Update – David

- David wants to develop a report/stats on website usage to make decisions on changes needed. He is very busy at work but will develop this when he has time.
- Fiona asked if we should do the government grant again next year as we have more goals. David feels that we should use all the free money we can get to help us achieve our goals.

g. 2024 Insurance Renewal

- Rosie reported that she and Sirkka had completed this with Bill.

h. Replacement for Bill Gregor (Insurance Renewals and preparation of the Annual Budget)

- It was suggested that these two roles be split and handled by two different members.
- For the Annual Budget, Rosie has a candidate in mind and is following up.
- We should continue talking this up to find if there is anyone willing to take on the annual Insurance Renewal task.

i. **Tracking monthly rental receipts**
   - Pastor Ronnie is working with Steven monthly.

j. **Church Fundraising proposal – Gala**
   - Defer to next meeting. We can talk it up to see if there is anyone willing to take this on.

k. **Youth Fundraising**
   - Defer to next meeting

l. **New Rental Request – Shiloh Redemption, 905 Dillingham Rd, Pickering**
   - Has started. This can come off the agenda.

8. **Correspondence**
   a. **None.**

9. **Reports:**

- **Olive Branch (verbal report -Rosie)**
  - None.

- **Property (reported submitted by email-Tapio) (Liaison Rainer)**

  Old Items:
  Parking lot – plans to repave, repair and/or line painting of the parking lot continue to be on hold. ***No change in status.***

  Pit Drain – Obtaining an estimate for the replacement 1" drain pipe with a 3" one is still pending. ***No change in status.***

  New Items:
  Handicap toilet tank – On August 16th, Rainer repaired a constant running water problem with the Handicap toilet tank which was reported the same day by Shirley.

  Snow Clearing – Cost and terms for the snow clearing C&R Paving agreement from November 15th, 2024 to April 15th, 2025 is unchanged at $4,150 plus HST. On September 3rd, Tapio signed the agreement and forwarded to Sunny for payment.

  Fall Clean-up Day - will *be on Saturday October 19th, 9am to-noon with a rain-date of November 2nd.*

  Additional info: Ronnie said he appreciates how Rainer has been so active. Phil Plath told Fiona that he would like to trim the dead tree on the date of the Fall Clean Up and needs help.

- **Worship & Arts: (Rosie/Fiona/Pastor)**
  - Meeting Notes from the meeting held September 11, 2024 were distributed ahead of the meeting.
  - Rosie mentioned that the report didn't include information on where the cash Thanksgiving donations should be directed.
  - Rosie will put something in the newsletter about Omari's initiative.
  - Fiona will send Rosie Omari's email address so she can get more details about his project.
  - The committee reviewed the lay services held over the summer.
  - Season of Creation materials will be used in September
  - Discussions were held to plan Thanksgiving and All Saints Sunday services

- Jemina made a number of requests to amend the services. These were discussed and Pastor Ronnie will make any needed changes.
- Carol suggested we invite the new Bishop to Peace, after her ordination. Pastor Ronnie did that when he met with her Sep 16
- Carol also expressed appreciation that Vlad & Elenore are putting up the hymn numbers weekly.

- **Mutual Ministry: (verbal report -Fiona)**
  - The 2025 Compensation Schedule has been released by the National Synod.

- **Congregational Life: (report -Sirkka)**
  - July 28th: Sunday sundae was a success
  - August 10th: John Seetram sister's Funeral (formerly from Christ the King).
  - August 25th: Watermelon party was attended by 28 people
  - September 18th: Senior's lunch was canceled due to illness. Everyone on the sign up sheet was contacted and advised that the luncheon was canceled.
  - October 5th: Oktoberfest, there are 31 registered. There is 1 couple who did not pay by the deadline. So sadly, Gloria will not accept late payment. They may be upset but she has to stand her ground.
  - October 16th: Senior's lunch
  - November ?: International Potluck lunch
  - We have dispensed with putting locks on the tablecloth cupboard

- **Outreach (New Report) – Shari Nelson**
  - Shari Nelson submitted her first Outreach report outlining the status of the projects she is working on. It contained a background on the initial stages of her involvement.
  - DARS - I have made an effort to make sure that invitations for meals and especially celebratory meals are extended to our congregation as well as to DARS. When we look at the number of seniors we have in our congregation and the effect of inflation on food costs, we have no idea who might be food insecure, but too proud to admit it. We also have no idea who might not have family around and be lonely. We need to open our minds to a variety of possibilities and our arms to all people. We might be entertaining angels unawares.
  - Refugee Sponsorship with Mansoura - We have taken on the co-sponsorship of an Afghani mother and son through CLWR, Pastor Ronnie and I filled out the co-sponsorship forms and sent them off the CLWR in March. The brother has now heard that he is in process on the next stage. The mother has not heard anything and is at extreme risk of being caught and immediately deported back to Afghanistan, which is no place for a woman. Mansora has gone to her MPP for assistance. It may also be helpful to get our federal MP involved as well. I understand they are quite adept at working through the IRCC. In the meantime, we all keep praying.
  - At the conclusion, Shari introduced a number of people from DARS dinners to the Council.

- **Pastor's Report**
  - Rosie thanked Pastor for arranging for Pastor Rasma to cover Pastoral duties during his absence.

- PASTORAL CARE
  Visitations, meetings, phone calls, texts, emails, Thursday evening dinners, etc.
  I have two funerals coming up this month, one from Peace, one from Epiphany.
- CHURCH SERVICES
  Away for two weeks in July for surgery.
  Away for four weeks in the summer for vacation.
  Regular communion services resumed on Sunday, September 1st
  Utilizing some ecumenical liturgical resources for the Season of Creation (Sept. 1st – August 5th)
  Weekly sermon preparation, including reading, writing, collegial discussions, hymn selection, produce/coordinate services, order of service, full and concise versions. Excel sheet for use by the Tech Team, help coordinate volunteers/worship assistants, live stream uploads and distribution, tech support, Music Team rehearsal each Sunday morning, hymn selections, etc.
- AREA DEAN – GTA EAST, EASTERN SYNOD
  As part of my duties as Area Dean I am coordinating and leading the installation service for Pamela Kormano and Faith Lutheran Church, Oshawa on Sunday, September 29th at 2pm
- COMMUNICATIONS:
  - Email, phone calls, zoom calls, texts, social media posts, visitations, newsletter/gratitude corner submission, review of Synodical and National church communications, PLC APP management, website management, etc.
- OFFICE:
  - Duties include financial records management/assistance, answer phones, checking mail, and distributing newsletters to congregation members, management of rental arrangements for parking and building, etc.
- INDIGENOUS CANADA STUDY/ELCIC CIRCLE FOR RECONCILIATION:
  I continue to facilitate the Indigenous Canada Study once per month through The Eastern Synod's Circle For Reconciliation.
- MISSION GRANT APPLICATION
  Invoice has been submitted to the Synod. We are waiting for a cheque.

10. **Closing Prayer: Pastor Ronnie** did the closing prayer.
11. **Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:58p.m.**

Next Regular Council Meeting **– Wednesday, October 16th, 7:00 pm via hybrid Zoom & in person model.**

Online Votes held between Council Meetings:

None.