MINUTES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
on Wednesday Dec 18th, 2024 at 6:00 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 (Sanctuary): Rosie Lantzsch (Co-chair), Sirkka Taylor (Co-chair), Fiona Haapalehto (Secretary), Rainer Knabenschuh, Shakura Persaud, David Wishart and Pastor Ronnie Smith.

Via Zoom: Sunny Wishart (Treasurer), Analisa Chand, Kavita Kanavalli, Cameron Ylimaki,

Regrets: none.

Congregational Members: Bill Gregor, Tapio Haapalehto, Jeremy West, Steven Kanavalli, Vlad Petras, Matthew Ramdhanie (Zoom).
Guests: Carly Forester, Katja Brittain, Kindred Works

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 6:03 pm.
2. **Opening: Fiona did an opening prayer Sirkka will do the devotional for the next meeting.**

Rosie announced that we would proceed with the presentation from Kindred Works prior to starting the items on the Agenda.

3. **Approval of the Agenda:**
Moved by: David, seconded by: Sirkka
THAT the agenda for Wednesday, December 18th, 2024, as amended, be approved.
Discussion: Added 2025 Budget. CARRIED

4. **Approval of the Previous Minutes:**
Moved by: Rainer, seconded by: Cameron
THAT the Minutes of the Church Council Meeting held on November 20th, 2024, be approved. Discussion: None. **CARRIED.**

5. **Treasurer's Report/Approval of Financial Statements**
   - Laptop purchase/expense of $677 has been itemized under W&A Tech for transparency, these funds have been donated back to the church by Phil Walke.
     - Total hardware donated by Phil was $1,956, he submitted an expense report for the items and has donated the funds back.
   - GIC renewed Dec.5th $19,630 at 2.5% in a cashable GIC.
   - Little Church fund has been debited and been moved to Olive Branch. This line will be removed for 2025. It came to be as a tracking error.
   - Summer intern expense was the gift card expense claim.

- For simplicity with regards to the creation of the annual budget and monthly financial reporting, we have decided to continue our financial reports to council in 'gross' format, meaning it will reflect the HST rebate as income and the expenses including HST tax. This is in hopes of making it easier to create and track the budget. The proper record keeping will continue to run behind the scenes in the accounting software.
- Sunny requested the appointment of two persons to perform the internal audit in January. Council discussed a couple of people who will be asked.
- Sunny also suggested we notify the congregation of the last day for donations to be included in the 2024 tax year. Ronnie and Sunny will draft up an email for the congregation.

Moved by: Fiona, seconded by: Sirkka
THAT the November Financial Statements, be approved. Discussion: Sunny will follow up with Toni to clarify how she plans to record expenses with HST in 2025. **CARRIED**

6. New Business:

a. 2025 Budget

Matthew Ramdhanie is training to take over our Annual Budget preparation from Bill Gregor. A zoom meeting was held with the Council on December 4 to review Matthew's draft 2025 budget. He sought clarification from Bill, Fiona and Property, and others, who updated their submissions.

We reviewed the figures that changed and clarified the figures in the Financial expense category.

Fiona emailed the format for the 2024 budget to Matthew and he will re-format the 2025 figures for distribution to the Council and for approval. He will send the revised document asap.

Matthew, Bill & Vlad left at the end of the discussion of the budget.

b. Peace Youth Outreach Program - Analisa

- Analisa met with Pastor, Susan, Nicole and Shannon who jointly developed a proposal to serve a hot lunch on Saturdays, for launch on Saturday January 25. The target demographic is homeless youth 16-24 in Durham. They hope to serve 25 people each Saturday.
- They would like Council approval and for volunteers.
- The youth of Peace would be encouraged to volunteer for these days.
- Kavita asked if we could get external funding? Ronnie said we have applied for a Mission Grant and we have learned there are multiple sources of funding,
- We could invite other community groups to participate and help fund these.
- Analisa asked to add a line item to the budget with funds for this initiative. It was suggested this should be a Special Purpose Fund to ensure any donations are exclusively used for this purpose. There are current funds in the 2025 budget for Youth and for Outreach which can be used to start.

Moved by: Sirkka, seconded by: Shakura.
THAT Analisa, Susan and Shannon be authorized to set up the Peace Youth Outreach program and that a new Special Purpose Fund be established with $0.00 budget amount for donations to the Youth Outreach initiative. Discussion: as above CARRIED

The Peace Youth Outreach program will be added to the monthly Council agenda as a committee report.

7. Old Business:

a. Kindred Feasibility Study – next step – December 18

This presentation was held before the Council meeting but recorded as part of the minutes as it appeared on the Agenda. Carly Forester conducted the presentation.

- They evaluated our location based on nearby parks and the official plan of Pickering, which both support the proposal, although their recommendation would be to build closer to Liverpool Rd to stay away from the ravine.
- Lot area is 5000 m^2
- Rental market comparison shows market rates for recent build on Whites Rd.& on Bayly. This gives us the market rates on which we can base our financial analysis.
- The proposal is to build a vertical community in either12, 15, 18 storey building … 133 to 184 units, with the ground floor designed for worship and community space.
- Ecological building techniques were proposed – "mass-timbre built form".
- Next Steps are to assess what the financial part of this looks like and what space will be available for our worship and congregational life space, and reviewing an existing contract would look like. Kindred Works needs more info from us to answer more specific questions so they will send a list of questions. They will also look more at partnering with the City using space of the East Shore Community Centre property as part of the overall build.
- We were asked to keep the project confidential at least until we next speak.

Tapio, Jeremy and certain Zoom participants left the meeting after discussion of this item.

b. Summer Jobs – 2025

- David has submitted a request for a 16-week contract.
- It was suggested that we should reach out to our MP to support our application.
- David would like to start the contract one month earlier than last year.

c. Proposal for Voluntary Parish Worker -Lena - Update

- Fiona reported that we are still waiting to hear back from the Government of Canada.
- The submission cost $230 which Joel has offered to pay. Fiona has submitted an expense claim to Sunny.

d. DARS Warming Centre - update

- Rosie reported meetings were held with DARS reps, Fiona, Rosie, Sirkka, Jeremy and Pastor.
- The lease agreement was updated and has gone for their signature.
- They also agreed to pay $75 for each warming centre event last season and $100 for each event this season. The 2023-2024 season will be paid in two instalments, one in December and one in January. Payments for the 2024-2025 season will be invoiced monthly. The lease payment for Thursday dinners & storage is due in two instalments in January and June 2025.

e. **Affirming Worship Durham**
   - Ronnie informed Don Fry that Peace would like to be added to the list of congregations on the Affirming Worship list of Worship places welcoming to the LGBTQ2S+ community.

f. **Community Conversation - After Kindred Feasibility Study**
   - defer

g. **Fundraising Proposal – Gala**
   - No further action – remove from agenda.

h. **Youth Fund Raising Proposal**
   - No further action – remove from agenda.

8. **Correspondence**
   a. The Synod sent a statement summarizing our 2024 YTD giving. We are on track to donate our budgeted amount for 2024.

9. **Reports:**

- **Olive Branch (verbal report -Rosie)**
  - Rosie reported we have donated over $5600 for OBFC in 2024. She appreciates the generosity of the congregation.
  - The OBFC Committee met with Debra in person last month.
  - More information to come about their 2025 visit.

- **Technology Update (report submitted by email -David)**
  - Our website users have increased by 30%.
  - Our status has improved in terms of Google searches in Pickering.
  - David is still seeking someone in the congregation to providing daily support for the website. No one has volunteered.

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

  Old Items:
  - Encampment & Vandalism – There continues to be an individual periodically sleeping on the hill side at the west end of the property along with a tent visible in the ravine.
  - Unfortunately, vandalism also continues on the property. On Sunday, Dec. 15th, we found one of our trees at the west end of the upper parking lot very badly damaged with 2-3 inches of bark cut away from all around its trunk. We don't expect the tree to survive this vandalism and we are not able to see the culprit on the security video.
  - We do not have an action plan and continue to welcome any council suggestions and/directives.
  - FH & Sunday School Storage Rooms – Sirkka and Lena have plans to reorganize the Fellowship Hall and Sunday School storage rooms. Rainer is building 4 shelf units for the FH storage room and 1 unit for the Sunday School storage at a total cost between $400 to $600.

- 2025 Budget – On Dec. 15th, a finalized version of the 2025 property budget was submitted to the PLC Budget Team. One notable change is that the cost of toilet paper, paper towel, compost bin liners and garbage bag purchased will move from the Congregational Life budget to the Property Maintenance and Supplies budget line.

New items:

- Uncooperative Vehicle Owner Unauthorized Parker – On Dec. 9th, Jeremy reported an unauthorized black Dodge plate # CWYW 145 ON parking in front of the building on several occasions. He routinely parks perpendicular to the front ramp and on the No Parking pavement marking, which is our Fire Route. That day, Jeremy tried to speak to the driver but was totally ignored.

  We contacted Pickering bylaw enforcement. They advised us to call the police when a driver in the vehicle is being uncooperative. They also advised us to place a notice on any unauthorized car parked on our lot "advising the owner they are parked without permission and are subject to official enforcement including ticketing and towing if it continues." They recommended "We can work with you to train and authorize some volunteers from the church to issue official tickets. It's a fairly simple process and there would be no charge for the licenses due to your status as NFP." The property team will be discussing whether to proceed with having the Pastor and other PLC members licensed to issue tickets.

  We will also consider an offer by Daniel Kvrgic who has a license to issue parking tickets. He tickets cars at the Pickering Mall. He would come after his shift to ticket on our property. This would only be a partial solution as he wouldn't be dealing with unauthorized parkers during the day time hours.

- Annual Fire Alarm System Inspection – Herbert Williams will be performing the annual fire alarm system inspection on Dec. 23rd. Tapio and Rainer will be on site to support this activity which requires both the Durham Fire Department and Telus to be informed both before and after inspection is completed.

- Maintenance Paper & Plastic Bag Storage – Starting January 1st, Tapio will take on the responsibility of bulk ordering urinal pucks, hand soap, sanitizer, toilet paper, paper towel, compost and garbage bags. They will be stored in the Sacristy with about 2-3 weeks of these supplies placed in the usual places. He will inform the cleaner of the location and ask them to restock in the usual basement location to the 2-3 week level. He will place a clipboard for the cleaner to note any supplies with low stock that need re-ordering and any maintenance issues that may need our action.

- **Worship & Arts: (Rosie/Fiona/Pastor)**
  - Next meeting January 22, 2025

- **Mutual Ministry: (e-mail report -Fiona)**
  - Fiona submitted the full 2025 Compensation Budget for Pastor Ronnie.

  Moved by: Fiona, seconded by: Rainer
  THAT the 2025 Compensation Budget for Pastor in the amount of $114,400, be approved. Discussion: None **CARRIED**

- Gloria Zorn has stepped down from the Mutual Ministry Committee. We will be seeking someone to take her place.
- Kavita indicated she will join MMC.

- **Congregational Life: (report -Sirkka)**
  - I am very sad to announce that Gloria has advised us that she will be stepping down from the Congregational Life Committee. She has been the driving force and the face of our committee for so many years. This is part of what she sent me, "I am stepping down from Congregational Life…I even hate saying that out loud. Prayed on it for a very long time and felt it was time for someone else to step in." We are so thankful for everything she has done over the years.
  - We are happy to announce that Omari Williams has joined the tech team.
  - October 23rd: Seniors Lunch was attended by 31 people. Jas did an amazing job leading us in chair yoga. Everyone had a great time. We are so blessed to have such talented people in our congregation
  - November 17th: International Potluck lunch, there was such a wonderful variety of good food.
  - November 27th: Seniors lunch was our Christmas Luncheon and was attended by 28 people. Sirkka spoke about the importance of keeping your mind and body active. Then everyone had an opportunity to assemble a small craft.
  - December 15th: Bake Sale.There were so many delicious treats and some amazing crafts. There was such a great selection. We raised $461.10 which will go to the Pastor's discretionary fund.
  - January 22nd: Seniors Lunch
  - March 4th: Shrove Pancake
  - April 20th: Easter Breakfast

- **Outreach – Shari Nelson submitted her report by text to Fiona**
  - The DARS Warming Centre has resumed
  - DARS Thursday dinners are continuing and the Christmas celebration will be held Dec 19th.
  - We continue to pray for our refugee claimants who may be affected by the new direction of the federal government, and American influences on immigration.
  - Council is asked to keep them in your prayers.

- **Pastor's Report**
  FUNERALS

  - Performed 2 funeral services, which includes consultation/visits with family members, coordination with funeral homes, planning/leading services and graveside ceremony, and follow up pastoral care.

  SERVICE NOTES

  - Christmas Eve service will be held Tuesday, December 24th at 7pm.
  - Carols & Lessons will be offered Christmas Day at 10:30am.

- I will be away Sunday, December 29th. Analisa will lead the service and Arnold will be preaching.

INDIGENOUS CANADA STUDY –

CIRCLE FOR RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE (CRJ)

- Completed the facilitation of the12 month, 12 module course in partnership with the Eastern Synod's Circle For Reconciliation and Justice (CRJ).
- The CRJ has put forward a petition of support for justice for the Grassy Narrows First Nation as outlined in the Eastern Synod Weekly Newsletter. I have signed it on behalf of Peace.
- In the new year the CRJ is facilitating another group study created by the Yellowhead Institute call "Land Back" I'll share more when dates are finalized.

ROSTERED LEADERS RETREAT/BISHOP'S RETREAT

- I have registered for the 2025 retreat at a cost of $300. It will run Sunday, February 23rd to Tuesday, February 25th.
- I have also booked Bishop Carla to visit with us for Reformation Sunday next October, 26th.

CHURCH SERVICES:

- Weekly sermon preparation, reading, writing, collegial discussions.
- 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, etc.
- Music Team rehearsal each Sunday, hymn selections.

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.

10. Other Business

- Analisa lead us in a prayer for Taylor, who is back in hospital.

11. **Closing Prayer:** Fiona did the closing prayer.
12. **Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:18p.m.**

Next Regular Council Meeting **– Wednesday, January 15th, 7:00 pm via hybrid Zoom & in person model.**

Online Votes held between Council Meetings:

None.