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## January 16, 2024 | Nazareth Council Minutes

**Present:** Kristie Lehman, Julie Creeden, Wayne Jacobson, Chris Hansen, Craig Blanchard, Kristina McBurney, Ron Martin, Nathan Greiner, Mike Brost, Tim Boettger, Kaylene Hoskins

**Opening Devotion:** Psalm 25:5

**Meeting called to order:** 6:20 p.m.

### **Recommendation to approve Council minutes:**

Wayne motioned and Julie seconded the approval of the December minutes. Motion carried.

**Congregational Input:** n/a

### **Council President's Report:**

Annual meeting, Sunday, January 28, 2024 at 12:30 pm

The council reviewed the 2023 Annual Report and meeting agenda.

### **Interim Pastor's Report:**

Ministry update-discussing confirmation and junior high ministry

CHAOS volunteer recruitment

10 sign-ups for new member class.

Welcome Desk volunteer recruitment

### **Financial Update:**

Craig motioned to approve the December 2023 financial report. Motion carried.

Craig motioned to approve the renewal of the \$250,000 Line of Credit at Banklowa. Motion carried.

Ann Carlson reviewed the 2024 proposed budget.

### **Committee Updates & Reports:**

Blessed Beginnings-Next meeting tbd.

Building & Grounds-Next meeting tbd.

Endowment-Next meeting will be Tuesday, January 30th.

Personnel-Needs new committee members. Next meeting tbd.

Local Missions- Next meeting will be Monday, January 22nd.

U.S. & World Missions- Next meeting will be before the end of the month.

Stewardship-Needs new committee members. Next meeting tbd.

Seminary Committee-Is going to pause their meetings until Naz's affiliation with the ELCA is determined and there are new seminary applicants.

### **Old Business/New Business**

Julie moved and Wayne seconded to approve Kristen Swenson for the Personnel committee.

Chris connected with New Aldaya and Dan Deery to work on an updated parking lot contract.

Upcoming Marriage Retreat: February 10th, 2024.

Core team discussion with Sue Roberts regarding a video proposal

### **Meeting adjourned:**

Nate moved and Craig seconded to adjourn the meeting. Meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

## February 20, 2024 | Nazareth Council Minutes

**Present:** Julie Creeden, Wayne Jacobson, Chris Hansen, Craig Blanchard, Kristina McBurney, Ron Martin, Nathan Greiner, Cindy Wilson, Beth Harris, Mike Brost, Kaylene Hoskins, Tim Boettger

**Via Conference Call:** Mike Francis, Kristie Lehman

**BB Committee:** Barb Witzel, John Lehman, Phil Plourde, Ashley Yuska, Robin Voster, Peg Merfeld, Stephanie Johnson, Alyssa Rakotoarivelo, Danielle Terrell

**Meeting called to order:** 6:17 p.m.

### **BB Discussion:**

John Lehman shared some background and financial information about Blessed Beginnings from the past three years. In 2023 BB lost \$94,000 and BB currently has \$92,000 in cash. If BB does not begin operating in the black they will be out of funds by the end of 2024. BB needs to add students, especially older kids to sustain the program. Phil shared BB is seeing a demand for the school age program, especially for summer. Phil shared they've recently had 25 staff applicants and they are actively working to get the rooms staffed. Phil shared his appreciation for the recent support of the church council and asked for the continuation of that support. Stephanie shared her passion for faith-based child care and brought several ideas to bolster support for BB staff and parents. Asked for council and BB committee to provide support and discuss next steps and advocated for a parent committee to form as a sub group to the BB committee. BB is currently running at a less than %50 capacity and was running at approximately %74 capacity pre-COVID. Barb Witzel emphasized the importance of being faith based and asked how we know if BB is a faith-based ministry. She agreed with more parent participation and shared some history of BB and the BB committee. Barb shared her concern regarding toxicity in the program and the need for the BB committee to understand their purpose.

Julie Creeden motioned, seconded by Kristina, to form a subcommittee under the BB committee with Stephanie Johnson as a leader. Motion carried.

### **Recommendation to approve Council minutes:**

Nate moved and Ron seconded to approve the Jan 16, 2024. Motion carried.

**Congregational Input:** n/a

### **Council President's Report:**

#### **New Business:**

Julie motioned to approve the list of new committee members pending their sign off on the confession of faith and speaking the truth in love document. Kristina seconded. Motion carried. Kaylene will share the volunteer list with committee members and ask them to provide their Committee Chair and meeting schedule. Julie will write a short paragraph explaining why the council is asking for committee members to sign off on the confession of faith and speaking the truth in love document.

The council discussed communication strategies for April affiliation vote

**Interim Pastor's Report:**

Mike shared that he continues to see movement and progress being made in Naz becoming a healthy church with a cohesive team and clarity around mission and ministry. Tim shared some words of encouragement with the council and affirmed the honest conversations happening within the council.

**Financial Update:**

Craig gave an overview of the January financial report.

**Committee Updates & Reports:**

Blessed Beginnings  
Building & Grounds  
Endowment  
Personnel  
Local Missions  
U.S. & World Missions  
Stewardship  
Seminary Committee

**Old Business/New Business**

- Chris shared some words of appreciation for and Mike Francis Craig Blanchard for their service on council. Wayne expressed his appreciation to Chris Hansen for serving as Council President.
- Council discussed Naz's current practice or policy for security at Naz.
- Craig motioned and Nate seconded to move to executive session. Motion carried. Wayne moved and Kristie seconded to move out of executive session. Motion carried.
- Kristie brought up that Jordan would like to update the address directory and has asked for some direction in how to update it.
- New Council members will be recognized on Sunday, Mar 17, 2024.

**Meeting adjourned:** 10:20 p.m.

Craig motioned to adjourn, seconded by Kristie. Motion carried.

## February 24, 2024 | Nazareth Council Annual Retreat Minutes

**Present:** Wayne Jacobson, Kristie Lehman, Chris Hansen, Nate Greiner, Kristina McBurney, Julie Creeden, Craig Blanchard, Ron Martin, Mike Brost, Cindy Wilson, Beth Harris

### **Call to Order at 8:30 a.m. | Wayne Jacobson**

Wayne welcomed everyone and thanked us for attending. He shared scripture from Proverbs 19:21 and Proverbs 16:9. The Council was also directed to Proverbs 15:22 and Matthew 7:7-11.

### **Devotion & Prayer | Mike Brost & Craig Blanchard**

Pastor Brost shared scripture from Luke 12:35-40. Craig opened in prayer.

### **Team Building | Mike Brost**

### **Election of Officers | Wayne Jacobson**

- Nominate Julie Creeden as secretary: Moved by Wayne, seconded by Nate, vote passed
- Nominate Cindy Wilson as treasurer: Moved by Craig, Seconded by Kristie, vote passed
- Nominate Kristina McBurney as vice president: Moved by Julie, seconded by Nate, vote passed

### **Committee Assignments | Wayne Jacobson**

It is the desire of the Council that our standing committees will meet regularly at the times they have established throughout the year and promptly report back to the Council. This will be done through the sharing of minutes and reports back from each committee's Council representative following each committee meeting. Kristina suggested implementing a possible "minute template" so that minutes are consistent across committees. Please see the following link: [NELC Committee Meeting Minutes Template](#). The following standing committees and their Council Representatives are established per the NELC by-laws:

a. **Finance:** Cindy

b. **Local Mission:** Ron

c. **U.S. & World Mission:** Kristie

d. **Blessed Beginnings:** Julie

e. **Stewardship:** Julie

f. **Building & Grounds:** Nate

g. **Personnel:** Chris

h. **Worship & Music:** Wayne

i. **Endowment:** Chris

1. Considering the institutional memory that has been lost in some committees, Pastor Brost shared an idea to form an endowment, finance, stewardship subcommittee for a short-term to help all three committees see how the money should actually flow and the purpose of each committee. No decision was made on this suggestion at this time. Julie reminded everyone that both John Larsen and Paul Creeden have offered to come to the next endowment committee meeting in order to help fill in some of the institutional memory for that committee.

The following committee is required per NELC by-laws; however, it has not existed for several years. It is the desire of the Council to re-establish this committee to be in compliance with the NELC by-laws, however moving forward, depending on current staffing, the outcome of the affiliation vote, and processes that have changed over the years, pending a future by-law amendment, it may eventually function differently.

j. **Education:** Beth

### **Blessed Beginnings follow-up | Julie Creeden**

Due to further conversations and clarification from the original request, the Council followed-up on an action item taken at our last Council meeting. Wayne will share this decision with Phil, and then Phil will reach out to Terri.

### **Action items**

Under current circumstances in the Blessed Beginnings School Age Building, we will make an exception in the Holding policy (waive requirement of notification 4 weeks in advance) for Terri Packard found in the BB School Age Handbook and charge her the 25% holding fee to be paid during the BB normal billing cycle per the standing policy.

Moved by Julie, Seconded by Craig

Amended:

Moved by Ron, seconded by Chris, vote passed

### **Congregational Council Updates | Wayne Jacobson**

1. Beginning this Sunday, February 25th, an update on Blessed beginnings will be given to the congregation at both services by Wayne and Phil, BB Assistant Director. Wayne and Phil will provide some background and current challenges, in addition to sharing the positive solutions that emerged from the recent Council meeting attended by the BB Committee and guest parents. Wayne will also share the current short-term need for volunteers at BB: van drivers and adults in classrooms for extra support. Phil's contact info will be on the screens with instructions for people interested in volunteering to contact Phil directly. Phil will take care of all required background checks so that volunteering can proceed as quickly as possible.
  - a) This update will also be posted verbatim on the naz.org website and in the Naz News for those unable to attend Sunday's service.
2. Once a month, Council members will take turns offering a brief update at both services leading up to the April 17th vote. Their updates will also be published verbatim in that week's Naz News, as well as posted on the Nazareth website and possibly social media.
3. A convenient spot directly outside of the Larsen Chapel will be utilized by available Council members between services for two purposes: Any congregation member who would like to pray with the Council will be able to do so, and any member who would like to ask a question of the Council may do so.
4. Kristie will prepare a sign-up sheet for Council members to assure adequate coverage each Sunday between now and April 17th with the exception possibly of Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday.

### **ELCA/NALC vote: Wednesday, April 17th, 6:30 pm | Wayne Jacobson**

The WHY? What does Nazareth stand for? What do we say we believe in our Confession of Faith?

1. Create a communication team of congregation members to carry the message to the congregation. Our congregation has heard from the Council. Hearing clear and concise perspectives from other congregation members might be very effective. Wayne will reach out to members who are gifted communicators and may have interest in sharing why they believe the NALC is much more closely aligned with Nazareth's beliefs than the ELCA. Those who agree to serve on this team will be invited to the Council's next working meeting to determine next steps: Saturday, March 2 from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. The first hour will be for the Council only, with the second hour including the members of this new communication team.

2. Other possible ideas that will be discussed at this next March 2 meeting:
  - a. Communication team members visit NELC committees and small groups to share this message.
  - b. Include the Four Core Values of the NALC – which align perfectly with the values of NELC.
  - c. Implement Sunday morning “3-minute Talks” by communication team members to share reasons to leave ELCA and join NALC at each service on March 3, 10, 17, and April 7.
  - d. Ask Kim Albertson and Meg Husted to help share this message with our young families in a method they think will be the most effective.

Communicate the Strategy – other ideas for ways this information can be disseminated:

1. Create content that answers why the NALC is better aligned with Nazareth than the ELCA in a small bulletin format for dissemination on Sunday mornings. “*Why leave the ELCA?*” on one side, and “*Why join the NALC?*” on the other side. Include the answers to “*Why now?*” across the bottom of the bulletin.
2. Other ideas:
  - a. Sunday services
  - b. Small groups
  - c. Social media
  - d. Naz News
  - e. Direct phone calls
  - f. Emails
  - g. Direct mail – letter from the Council

ELCA requirement – written notification to the NE Iowa Synod Bishop:

Chris will take care of notifying Bishop Jones in writing at least 30 days prior to our upcoming vote on April 17th.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.**

Next meeting: Saturday, March 2nd, 2024, 8:30-11:30 am, Room 301

## March 2, 2024 | Nazareth Council Minutes

**Present:** President Wayne Jacobson, Cindy Wilson, Beth Harris, Kristie Lehman, Chris Hansen, Nate Greiner, Kristina McBurney, Julie Creeden, Ron Martin, Wayne Jacobson, Tim Boettger

**Communications Team:** Dave Deaver, Craig Johnson, Meg Husted, Amy Lockard, Craig (Swen) Swenson, Kristin Swenson

**Conference call:** Mike Brost

**Call to Order at 8:36 a.m. | Wayne Jacobson**

Wayne welcomed everyone and thanked us for attending. The Council opened with the Lord's Prayer.

**NELC Sign-off Statement review | Wayne Jacobson and Ron Martin**

Discussion occurred on narrowing the specifics of the NELC sign-off statement. Possible edits may include:

1. Biblical references in paragraph one from our Confession of Faith found in Article II of our NELC bylaws
  - i. *Confession of Faith: This congregation accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God and submits to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life. – Remove paragraphs two, three, and four.*
2. Article I in our NELC bylaws - Purpose: *The object and purpose of this congregation shall be to proclaim and propagate the Christian faith through the Means of Grace and to cooperate in the work and service of the Lutheran Church.*
3. All three creeds.
4. Instead of the Speaking the Truth in Love document, which was a reactionary response to the ELCA Social Statement on Human Sexuality, proactively list the Core beliefs of NELC, which can be found on the naz.org website.

In order to keep this NELC Sign-off Statement very simple and clear, discussion also occurred around the wording of what it means to sign-off. That language may also be edited for clarity.

At this time, the Council decided to pause on this requirement, taking time for these clarifications and edits. Once this is done, careful communication will be key to provide clarity and purpose for this sign-off statement for anyone in a leadership role at NELC. The Council will address this topic again at the next regular meeting.

**Council updates for the congregation | Wayne Jacobson**

Wayne reported that members were happy to have the opportunity to come meet with approximately five available Council members between services this past Sunday, February 25th. This practice will continue between services in the area directly outside of the Larsen Chapel between now and the vote on April 17th. Pastor Brost suggested to the Council members to wear their identification lanyards during this time.

The next brief update during both services will take place on Sunday, March 24th. This update will cover a brief summary of discussion items from the most recent Council meeting on Tuesday, March 19th in addition to the Four Core Values of the North American Lutheran Church (NALC): Christ-Centered, Mission-Driven, Congregationally-Focused, and Traditionally-Grounded. The Council member making this update is yet to be determined. This update will be written and approved by the Council no later than March 20th. The update will also be distributed verbatim in the Naz News and Naz.org website. The sermons preached after this update will also expand on these four core values.

### **Blessed Beginnings Update | *Mike Brost***

Mike shared that he and the Blessed Beginnings staff are currently having bonus meetings twice per month. Ashley (Interim Director) is also planning regular staff meetings that Mike is attending and indicated that future training is in the works. Mike is available at Blessed Beginnings every Tuesday morning to begin their day with prayer and connect with the staff. He also reported that Kaylene (church administrator) and her hiring committee have interviewed one person for the director's position and there are two more currently scheduled. Mike also reported that volunteers and recent hires are proving to be extremely helpful.

### **Formation of Prayer Team for Vote | *Wayne Jacobson***

In order to bathe this process in prayer and involve as many congregation members as possible, as well as to create energy and a positive message around the vote, the Council will be seeking members who will commit to praying specifically for our church throughout this process. Wayne shared Luke 11:1-13 and Philippians 4:4-7. Ron will make some calls to get volunteers for this team. An announcement will also be made by the pastor this Sunday. The Council would like for this team to commit not only to praying individually, but to also commit to corporate prayer in the Larsen Chapel. Current members of the NELC prayer chain are also encouraged to join this team. Ron will coordinate these corporate prayer times in order for any Council member to join them if they are available.

### **Approval of new committee members | *Julie Creeden***

Approve Joyce Barbatti and Laurie Larsen to serve on the Stewardship Committee.

Moved: Julie

Seconded: Kristina

Vote: Pass

### **ELCA/NALC vote: Meet with newly formed Communications Team | *Wayne Jacobson***

Wayne welcomed our guests and thanked them for attending and agreeing to serve on the Council's Communications Team. Introductions occurred: Kristin and Craig (Swen) Swenson, Amy Lockard, Meg Husted, Craig Johnson, and Dave Deaver.

This time together was opened with a short devotion by Wayne which focused on Romans 6:11 and 2 Corinthians 5:20. He encouraged us to always remember our primary message: I was once dead in my sins, but now I am alive in Christ. This is an incredible message that we ALL should be very excited to share with everyone who will listen!

The reason for the formation of this team is to seek help in conveying the Council's recommendations leading up to the April 17th vote. Discussion and brainstorming occurred regarding the most positive and effective ways to share the Council's message.

1. We must clearly communicate our reasons.
  - a) Why leave the ELCA?
  - b) Why join the NALC?
2. After discussion, the group decided on the creation of the following:
  - a) **A written flyer/brochure** will be the most helpful to our members. One side of the flyer will include the positive outcomes of joining the NALC – the other side will include FAQs from our members. We must attempt to cast a vision of what Nazareth can be when we realize full alignment of our beliefs with the NALC rather than distraction and very little alignment of our beliefs with the ELCA. What will be possible for our church when we have the freedom and time to live out the great commission? The thought of this is exciting!
  - b) **A short video** showcasing members from multiple generations from within our congregation.
  - c) **Slides** that will accompany further Council updates during each service for clarity. Content will be created as we proceed.
3. Strategies – what are potential strategies? Wayne shared the bulleted list from the retreat.
4. Timelines – Who does what and when? Our window of time is March 3 - 17
  - a) **Content must be created by 3/10.**
    - i) Amy, Kristin, and Julie will create the content for the flyer/brochure and short video. This content will be approved by the Council and Communications Team. Kristina will recruit people from multi-generations from our congregation for the video.
    - ii) After approval of content, Wayne will ask Sam to use our content to create the flyer/brochure.
    - iii) Wayne will call Sam Madson to update him on this process. Sam's expertise will lend itself to a very professional looking product – for both the flyer and slides. Wayne will also attend the next staff meeting to update the staff.
    - iv) Craig J and Swen will create the video. Both are very experienced in this area.
  - b) **Congregational mailing will be mailed by 3/15 including the following:**
    - i) NOTICE OF SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF NAZARETH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CEDAR FALLS, BLACK HAWK COUNTY, IOWA, ON April 17, 2024
    - ii) RESOLUTION OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL OF NAZARETH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
    - iii) 2024 Congregational letter to accompany ELCA disaffiliation resolution
    - iv) Flyer/Brochure created by Communications Team and Sam Madson
  - c) **Realistic process for strategy:**
    - i) Meg and Dave will complete along with a timeline for roll out.
5. Council and Communications team will meet together again on March 19th at the regularly scheduled March Council meeting. The two groups will gather first at 5:30 for pizza prior to the meeting.
6. Wayne is the point person for both the Council and the Communications Team.
7. The Council and Communications Team are advancing to this second vote with a sense of faith, peace, conviction, and an unwavering confidence that the Lord is with us. Pastor Brost closed us in prayer.

**Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. | Next meeting: Tuesday, March 19th, 2024**

## **March 3, 2024 | Nazareth Council Minutes**

**Present:** President Wayne Jacobson, Cindy Wilson, Beth Harris, Kristie Lehman, Nate Greiner, Julie Creeden, Ron Martin

**Via text:** Chris Hansen, Kristina McBurney

### **Call to Order at 10:30 a.m. | *Wayne Jacobson***

Discussion occurred on the exact wording of the resolutions that the Council recommends to bring forth to the congregation at the Special Meeting that is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17th, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. Discussion also occurred on the preparation of the docs that need to be delivered to the Bishop prior to March 16th.

### **Recommend to the congregation to vote to pass the Council's two resolutions:**

- 1) RESOLVED, that Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church intends to terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America following two legally called and conducted special meetings of the congregation; and
- 2) RESOLVED, that Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church intends to establish an affiliation with the North American Lutheran Church (NALC). Nate Julie Pass

Moved: Nate

Seconded: Julie

Vote: Pass

**Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.**

## March 5, 2024 | Nazareth Council Minutes

**Present:** President Wayne Jacobson Cindy Wilson, Beth Harris, Nate Greiner, Kristina McBurney, Julie Creeden, Ron Martin

**Absent:** Chris Hansen, Mike Brost, Tim Boettger

**Conference call:** Kristie Lehman

**Call to Order at 6:30 p.m. | Wayne Jacobson**

Wayne welcomed everyone and thanked us for attending. Wayne opened the Council's work with prayer.

**Revisit the Council Resolutions | Wayne Jacobson**

The Council reviewed the resolution and decided to make slight edits for clarity purposes.

### **Action items:**

- 1) Withdraw the motion regarding the Council's resolutions made on Sunday, March, 3rd, 2024.  
Resolution "b" will now read as follows:  
RESOLVED, that in the event the congregation votes to terminate its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church intends to establish an affiliation with the North American Lutheran Church (NALC).  
*Moved: Ron*  
*Seconded: Kristie*  
*Vote: Pass*
- 2) Amend Resolution "a" to read as follows:  
RESOLVED, that Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church intends to and shall begin the process of terminating its relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) following two legally called and conducted special meetings of the congregation.  
*Moved: Wayne*  
*Seconded: Julie*  
*Vote: Pass*
- 3) Approve the entire resolution as amended and edited.  
*Moved: Nate*  
*Seconded: Kristina*  
*Vote: Pass*

### **Content from the Communications Team subcommittee for informative flyer**

The Council reviewed and approved the content that was created for the informative flyer from the subcommittee made up of Kristin Swenson, Amy Lockard, and Julie Creeden, that will accompany the congregational letter leading up to the vote. The purpose of this flyer is to help the congregation understand why the Council has made its recommendations to disaffiliate from the ELCA and affiliate with the NALC. Julie will get this content to Sam Madson, NELC's Communications Director, so that he can prepare and print the flyer for distribution. The FAQs content that was created will be added to the end of the congregational letter in addition to be placed in the Naz News as soon as possible.

### **Approve the job description for the Jr. High Ministry position | Wayne Jacobson**

Kaylene requested the Council's approval for the Jr. High Ministry position job description. The Council approved pending three minor edits which Julie will share with Kaylene.

**Action item:**

Approve Jr. High Job Description pending three minor edits to be made by Kaylene prior to distribution.

*Moved: Cindy*

*Seconded: Beth*

*Vote: Pass*

**Meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m. | Next meeting: Tuesday, March 19th, 2024**