

Church Council Meeting

October 11, 2022

MINUTES

Present: George Nederhoff, Bob Saathoff, Craig Blanchard, Maureen Hanson, Lisa Arenholz, Mike Christiason, Troy Olson, Danielle Terrell, Brian King

Staff Present: Angie Rath, Julia Voss

Special Guests: Bishop Kevin Jones and Reverend Steve Brackett

Dinner/Fellowship: Council shared dinner together.

Opening Prayer: Troy Olson opened in prayer.

Presentation from Bishop Kevin and Reverend Steve from the Northeastern Iowa Synod:

The Bishop thanked the Council for having him and Rev. Steve attend the meeting; he also thanked the kitchen staff (Peg) for the wonderful meal that was provided.

Bishop Kevin talked about the End of Call for Pastor Brian and explained that “a good exit paves the way for a good entrance”. He opened up the room for questions/concerns from the Council. The council voiced the following:

- A season of uncertainty for our staff and congregation
- Hard to grasp that Pastor Brian is leaving; we have had the luxury of having him as our leader for 12+ years
- Excited for Pastor Brian; but also grieving his departure

Bishop Kevin thanked the Council for their honesty. He talked to the Council about some of the emotions people are feeling and how the Synod works with churches who have lost a Senior Pastor:

- We need to find the next Senior Pastor; not replace Pastor Brian
- We need to grieve his departure; and take our time for a spirit-led and supported effort to find the new Pastor
- There is value in the process; you feel that it is God’s call if you take time to discern
- The business and ministry of the church needs to continue; there will be an extra load on staff and council and lay people. Nazareth is very fortunate to have such a committed, capable staff
- We need to focus on moving ministry forward
- Communicate each week; be transparent to the congregation
- A Council member standing up maybe once or twice a month in front of the congregation to give oral update on Sunday – 1 to 2 minutes
- Remind congregation that we are not leaderless; the Church Council is leading
- Synod office is here to help
- An exit interview and paperwork will be filled out by the Council and Synod
- Make sure your transition team have music/worship; communion; and the list of duties that Pastor Brian performed covered
- Closings/Farewell are important; Reception planned for October 30

Bishop Kevin went on to say that the Synod office is looking and getting the word out for an Interim Pastor for Nazareth. They need to have the experience to step in at a church the size of Nazareth. Any potential names would go to the Council and/or Call Committee for them to choose whether or not to interview. Council/Call Committee determines what gifts we are looking for and Synod can help with any pastoral language.

The ELCA affiliation would need to be decided on before going through the final Call Process. The Call process takes a while to do it right. God is involved and at the forefront of the process. The Interim can help listen to the congregation; gifts and skills take time.

The one thing that Bishop Kevin reinforced with Council – WE ARE ONE IN CHRIST. The Synod staff is here to help if and when we need them. As we get possible names for an interim pastor, we can work closely with the Synod for any assistance we may need.

The Council thanked Bishop Kevin and Rev. Steve for attending and their open/honest conversation during this time of transition for Nazareth.

Bishop Kevin thanked Pastor Brian for his ministry and service at Nazareth; he expressed how grateful he was for his work with the church and outlying organizations such as LSI (Lutheran Services of Iowa). Bishop Kevin said that Pastor Brian will be missed very much and he and the Synod are praying for Nazareth. Bishop Kevin ended his presentation in prayer.

Call Meeting to Order: George Nederhoff called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

- A motion was made (Olson) and seconded (Christiason) to approve the minutes from the September 13, 2022 Council meeting. Motion carried. Approved.
 - A motion was made (Olson) and seconded (Blanchard) to approve all the Zoom minutes from the special Council meetings on September 20, 21, and 29; and October 4. Motion carried. Approved.
- All approved minutes will continue to be posted on our Nazareth website.

Recommendations:

- A motion was made (Olson) and seconded (Christiason) to approve the Seminary Committee Charter. Motion carried. Approved. Council thanked Maureen Hanson for all her hard work on this.
- A motion was made (Hanson) and seconded (Olson) to approve the grant for \$2340.00 to Love Inc. Motion carried. Approved.
- A motion was made (Hanson) and seconded (Blanchard) to budget for and request an External Audit for the 2022 NELC Financials in 2023. Motion carried. Approved.

Congregation Input: None

Financial Update: Craig Blanchard updated the Council on the August Financials. The General Fund balance is \$149,929.43. Nazareth is down approximately \$42,000 from July. We will pay close attention to September receipts. A motion was made (Olson) and seconded (Christiason) to place the August Financials on file. Motion carried. Approved. Angie Rath will work with Sam Madson about posting the approved monthly financial summary in the newsletter.

Craig Blanchard will give a Financial Update to the congregation on Sunday, October 23, 2022.

President Report: George opened up discussion on the topic of ELCA affiliation. He reiterated what Bishop Kevin had said in regard to the ELCA affiliation has be one of our first priorities. For the time being, we may have a few names for Supply Pastors to fill in. The Nazareth Teaching Team meets October 13 to discuss and finalize the teachings through Christmas. The preaching schedule will be shared with Council, staff and congregation as soon as that is finalized. Pastor Bob Ericson will do the Liturgy and Communion on the first Sunday of each month. Communion will only be served on the first Sunday of the month until further notice. Pastor Bob will also lead the Baptism classes on the second Sunday of the month.

Council discussed that communication from the Council will be shared each week in the newsletter along with slides when appropriate. These updates will be given to Sam Madson, Communications Director. Maureen Hanson will give the update to Sam by October 12 for the October 15 newsletter; Troy Olson will give the update to Sam on October 19 for the October 22 newsletter.

Our partnership with Orchard Hill is very important to Council and staff. Troy Olson and Angie Rath will meet with Orchard Hill leadership for clarity as we move forward with ELCA discussions.

Council discussed beginning the plans for Cottage Meetings to help educate the congregation on the ELCA.

Bob Saathoff, Vice President of Council, volunteered to be an advisor for Angie Rath upon Pastor Brian's resignation. Council thanked Bob for stepping up in this role

Council discussed the possibility of a council member or two attending upcoming Staff meetings on Mondays at 10 a.m. to give a brief update on the status of various topics and to answer any questions from staff and learn more about the responsibilities that staff have during this transition time. The Council will rotate attendance. Danielle Terrell and Troy Olson will attend the staff meeting on October 17 at 10 a.m. No council members are needed to attend on October 24 or October 31.

Discussion took place on Nazareth's contract with KWVL that ends in December of 2022. A recommendation was made (Olson) and seconded (Terrell) to not renew the contract at this time. Motion carried. Approved.

Maureen Hanson will work on an Excel document to share with Council on a timetable for everything that needs to be done during this transition time.

Pastor Brian and Angie Rath will meet before Pastor Brian's last day of October 31 to tie up any loose ends.

The Nazareth staff will meet on November 1 for a Strategic Planning session that will lay out the plans of what projects need to be done or postponed at this time. The planning will go through the end of January 2023.

Vice President Report: Bob Saathoff, along with Pastor Brian, Lisa Arenholz, and Maureen Hanson, shared the draft of the Letter of Dissent with Council. Discussion took place. A recommendation was made (Olson) and seconded (Christiason) to postpone the sending of the Letter of Dissent until a later date. Motion carried. Approved. (6 aye/3 nay)

By Laws Update: A separate Council meeting concerning the Nazareth By-Laws will take place on October 30 at 6 p.m. Council was asked to carefully review the changes that will be sent out and to be prepared to discuss in detail on October 30. Council thanked Maureen Hanson for her diligent work on the By-Laws Committee, along with other members: Brian King, John Larsen, Paul Creeden, Russ Curtis, and Mike Christiason.

Senior Pastor Report: Pastor Brian referred to his report in the packet. He presented his list of Pastoral duties to the Council and gave a summary of the ELCA affiliation with Nazareth, listing some of the benefits from being associated with such a large denomination.

Administrator Report: Angie Rath referred to her report in the packet.

Committee Reports: Minutes from Committees were in the packet for Council to review.

New Business: George Nederhoff passed around the letter to the congregation at Chisago Lake Lutheran Church which will be mailed to that Church. Council discussed the Exit Interview letter/form for review. This form will be filled out at the Council meeting on October 30.

Reminders:

- Next Special Council meeting regarding By Laws is October 30 at 6 p.m.
- The regular Council meeting will be Tuesday, November 8 at 5:45 p.m. with dinner. Troy Olson will speak on Apostle Thomas.

Special Presentation: Council presented Pastor Brian with a going away card and thanked him for his years of leadership and friendship. The Farewell Reception for Pastor Brian will be Sunday, October 30 between services at 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. in Bethel Hall; along with a special presentation by Council during both services.

Adjourn: A motion was made (Saathoff) and seconded (Terrell) to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 p.m.

Closing Prayer: Pastor Brian thanked the Church Council for everything over the years, and most recently for all the meetings, emails, and their love for Nazareth. He prayed that we will continue to love each other and put our relationship FIRST. He reminded Council that Satan would love nothing more than to destroy the Nazareth relationships. He reminded Council to keep the faith and pray – put GOD first.

**Minutes submitted by Julia Voss
Executive Secretary**