

Nazareth Church Council Minutes

Monday, August 21, 2023

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

Conference call: Mike Francis

Guest: Bishop Kevin Jones, Northeast Iowa Synod of the ELCA

Julie C opened our meeting time with prayer.

Meet with the Bishop: – 7:00 p.m.

Bishop Kevin Jones shared his thoughts on how the Council can best proceed knowing that we have a divided church in regards to the ELCA affiliation issue, with a 63.4% majority of the congregation desiring to disaffiliate with the ELCA. Discussion occurred, and the Bishop has agreed to help the Council appeal to the 36.6% minority of the members who voted to remain in the ELCA to consider coming together as a church because this kind of division simply will not work. He mentioned that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for Nazareth to find an ELCA pastor who is willing to come to Nazareth given the current state of division within the congregation with the majority of our members wanting to disaffiliate. The Council thanked the Bishop for his visit and his willingness to help Nazareth move forward.

Council Meeting called to order by Chris H – After the Bishop left at 8:30, the Council meeting began at 8:40 p.m.

Council Next Steps:

Council's commitment is to remain true to who Nazareth really is according to our guiding documents, which have been in place and approved by the entire congregation for many years: Our [Confession of Faith](#) which is found in Article II in our current Bylaws, and our [Speaking the Truth in Love](#) document. Because of this commitment, the Council feels that we must persevere in our desire to disaffiliate with the ELCA, and will take the following action:

Action Item: Wayne moved that we call another vote at a time to be determined in 2024 to bring forth the same resolutions used at the July 16th meeting to disaffiliate with the ELCA and to affiliate with the NALC. As a Council, we will send a letter to the congregation explaining the details and briefly setting the direction we are taking. This motion was seconded by Julie. Motion passed.

The letter will be crafted by the end of this week in order to be sent out to all members no later than next week. Chris will ask the Bishop to preview this letter prior to sending.

Until January of 2024, the Council will place its sole focus on our ministry and mission and being the church together until January. Wayne shared Galatians 6:9 – **“Let us not become weary in**

doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” Even during this time of calling for another vote, we must not neglect our mission to be disciples and share the Gospel with those who do not know Jesus, as well as help those who do know Jesus to grow in their faith. The Council feels it is important to focus on starting all of our fall kick-off ministries well, prior to focusing on preparation for another vote. Other than sending the letter mentioned above to the congregation, the Council will not spend any additional time away from ministry and regular church business until January of 2024, when preparation for the vote will begin.

The Council will **not** currently be seating a call committee in search of a new Senior Pastor, but may consider putting together a task force to accomplish some data gathering regarding Nazareth's history, however no decision has been made at this time.

Chris H appointed a sub-committee of the Council to work on defining exactly what is to be included in the document on which all staff and ministry volunteers will be required to sign-off, based on the recommendation of Kristin Swenson. Ron, Kristina, and Julie will work on pinpointing and summarizing this information and sharing it with Pastors Mike and Tim in order for them to clearly communicate the information with the staff.

Four Council seats will be open in January. Current appointed Council members, Kristina and Ron, can run again if they so choose. Craig and Mike F will be done with their terms. The Council will direct the nominating committee to bring forth four names to be on the slate of candidates for the Annual Congregational Meeting in January. Three of these named people will run for regular three-year terms, and one will run for a one-year term to finish an unexpired term of a former Council member who resigned.

Meeting adjourned:

Craig moved to adjourn – Kristina seconded. Meeting ended at 9:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Julie Creeden (filling in for Kristina)