

Calvary Church Council Minutes

Tuesday, January 16th, 2024

Koinionia Room

In Attendance: Shawn Swenson, MaryJo de Cathelineau, Bridget Pederson, Shane Baker, Caleb Hansen, Brian Henrickson, Amber Van Eps

Staff: Pastor Dwaine, Pastor Wayne, Erica Mathews, Teri Sokulski, Naomi Baker, Marie Fett

Absent: Janel Skindelien, Corey Nelson

Guests: John Dean, Bob Dickerson, Jan Ruby

Opening Prayer – Pastor Dwaine

Shared Meal Time

Guest Jan Ruby shared portions of his letter with the council and staff regarding some complaints he has as well as complaints he stated other members of the church have about Pastor Dwaine Sutherland. These complaints were shared initially with the President of the Congregation and the Co-Chair of the Call Committee. Mr. Ruby shared he was going to bring them up at the Coffee with the Council on 1/14/24 but chose not to and instead decided to bring his concerns to the church council meeting instead. Mr. Ruby proceeded to read portions of his letter to the group and then made additional comments including thanking the Call Committee for their work. Pastor Dwaine engaged in discussion with Mr. Ruby about the list of things he brought up in his letter, taking notes about things he could improve or work on.

Guest Bob Dickerson shared he wrote a letter about the issues he has with Pastor Dwaine Sutherland and shared that the letter was sent to Bishop Dee Pederson. Mr. Dickerson shared he has not received a response from the Bishop and that he called four different numbers to try to reach her. Other Council Members and Mr. Dickerson had discussion about the issues that were brought up and the process that was followed for the Call Committee. The Call Committee members shared that they followed the process as directed by the Bishop for the call process. It is required that a candidate's name be kept confidential throughout the process.

Council President stated he has shared both letters, Mr. Dickerson and Mr. Ruby's, with the Executive Committee and the Personnel Committee.

Pastor Dwaine shared that he recognizes the congregation is dealing with grief over the loss of their beloved Pastors and it is not the first time he has experienced coming into a congregation that is dealing with such grief. He also shared that he is going through change himself and is adjusting to that change. Pastor Dwaine stated we all need to come together, be a neighbor, be part of a community; that it takes all of us and it starts with grace.

Agenda items:

December Council Minutes – Shane Baker – council minutes were emailed out by Teri on 1/13/24, all reviewed, any errors or corrections. Amber noted a few spelling errors.

Motion to accept minutes – Caleb; 2nd – Brian; none opposed. Accepted.

Financial Committee Update – Shawn Swenson: it was shared that the year-end financial report was finished for the Annual Meeting; the report reflects a positive year-end balance; the budget reflects a 2.5 point Pastor model plus our current staffing structure; we will have the addition of the Carol Carlson Estate Gift.

- Pastor Dwaine asked that the 2024 Budget reflect the cost of an addition to fall programming with a potential cost of \$5-6k; more details to come.

Motion to accept reports – Brian H.; 2nd – Mary Jo; none opposed. Accepted financial reports.

Svea Agreement Update – Shawn Swenson: it was reported that an agreement was presented to Svea's Church Council and, at this time, it has been agreed to be a month-to-month agreement. Svea will need to give a 30 day notice if they want the agreement to be severed. President Shawn remarked that we enjoy this agreement and he believes it is mutually beneficial to both churches.

- Discussion was had about ways to create connections between Calvary and Svea. Examples could be – guest at council meetings, spending more time together, accompany Pastor Dwaine or Wayne, both church councils have dinner together, etc.
- Pastor Dwaine will be attending Svea's Annual Meeting.

AV Upgrade Status Update – Shawn Swenson – there will be an acoustical study of the sanctuary, potential to need to purchase sound deafening materials, possible enhancements needed, REACH will be doing this study, REACH is our vendor, costs could be around \$50k, goal is to do this tastefully.

Call Committee Update – Mary Jo – the committee is nearly finished with their MSP (Ministry Site Profile), they've been working on the draft and making corrections, updates, etc.

- Discussion was had about the idea of adding additional people to the Call Committee; Pastor Dwaine shared that our Call Committee was the smallest he has ever encountered – he is used to up to 12 members; Bridget mentioned possibly stepping aside to work on other projects within the church which would create a vacancy; some discussion had about having more youth and more seniors/elders.
- Mr. Dickerson commented that the process should include more communication and that it felt like total silence and the congregation doesn't like things kept from them.

Nominating Committee Update – Bridget Pederson – we have 3 openings to bring to the Annual Meeting. One person has committed so far which leaves 2 openings. Shawn shared Janel has submitted her resignation from council so we will have to fill that opening, too. People were asked to follow up with any one they had spoken with about the opportunity and get back to the group.

Staff Reports –

- Marie Fett – shared things are going pretty good.
- Naomi Baker – shared feeling very appreciated in her role at the church the last couple of months and has loved coming to work. She also shared an open invitation to any congregant who is upset about the liturgy to speak with her about their concerns.

- Erica Mathews – shared she has been working with Vinje as it relates to a pre-school Bible Camp opportunity which would include Calvary, Vinje, and Bethel. Updated on Day Camp / VBS, First Communion begins in 2 weeks, and GLLM Bible Camp Registration has started. It was mentioned if we use photos of kids, as publications, we need to check with her first because some of the children’s parents do not allow them to be in publications and she manages that list.
 - o Shawn shared that Erica has accepted the full-time position as Faith Formation Coordinator.
- Teri Sokulski – shared she is working on the Annual Report, just needs GLLM report, is working on an ELCA report, and the insurance audit.
- Pastor Wayne – shared that he is open to feedback – good or bad and is very thankful for being included and being asked for input. He shared that him and his wife are very happy at Calvary and she is enjoying being part of music. He recommends the Thursday Text Bible Study.
- Pastor Dwaine – shared they are deep into planning Ash Wednesday and Lent, he will be attending Svea’s Annual Meeting, the installation with Bishop Dee is Sunday 1/28/24 at 10 a.m., Pastor Wayne will be able to stay for the whole service and after for the meeting while Bishop Dee preaches at Svea. He will be having surgery to reconstruct his mouth and will be out Mon-Thurs, asked for prayers for this.

First Fruits Donation – Bridget and Shawn – we will need a formal motion and to bring the First Fruits breakdown to the Annual Meeting. Mary Jo stated we could leave it the same as last year given the time constraints. Mr. Dickerson mentioned the Link in New London and Hope for Our City as great places to receive a donation. Review of where the First Fruits is currently going was done.

Motion to accept First Fruits denominations to remain the same – Bridget, Second – Mary Jo; no opposed; passed.

Other Items –

- Bridget brought up the volunteer fair at annual meeting and it was decided that this is something to do in the future this year but would be too much to pull off at that meeting.
- Bridget brought up the need for a survey at some point. Discussion was had about survey participation being low in the past. No decision made.
- Bridget brought up the need for a complaint process for the congregation – steps to follow when someone wants to bring up an issue. This was tabled for another time due to time.

Meeting adjourned. Guests were thanked for attending. Staff was thanked for the meal.