

**St. Luke's Lutheran Church Congregational Meeting**  
**Sunday, November 17, 2024**

At the end of the 10 am service, President Lisa Rhyne called the meeting to order. A quorum of at least 30 members was present.

Lisa asked Pastor Keith Copeland to open the meeting with prayer. Pastor Keith prayed that God will give us wisdom, peace, and guidance as he leads us beyond what we can see. He reminded us that we do practice the Rule of Love based on 1 Corinthians 13 at St. Luke's and are called to act like children of God. We also agreed to live and work with each other from the position of God's love in our hearts.

The first order of business was to elect Council members for 2025. Lisa stated that Pete Schmidt, David Sweet, and Rebekah Woodward are completing their terms and rotating off Council. She thanked them for their service. Kristen Conner has agreed to be nominated for Council. Rebekah Woodward also agreed to serve another year if the synod will grant an exception for her to do so. Lisa asked if anyone else wished to nominate someone or place their own name in nomination. There being no response or further discussion, Patrick Lemons made a motion that we accept Kristen Conner for nomination and Rebekah Woodward with the provision that synod will grant an exception. Jan Brauer seconded the motion and it was approved.

Lisa invited Pastor Keith to share with us the pivotal conversation he had with Pastor Danielle DeNise regarding the Encouragement Center (EC). Pastor Danielle also joined Council's November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting via Zoom and shared that conversation with them.

We have a vision of what we want to happen, but have not figured out how to make it happen. Pastor Danielle related that the synod feels St. Luke's is a strong congregation, but as with so many other congregations, the membership has diminished and grown older. The building's needs continue and increase as the building ages until it becomes a burden on a smaller congregation. But the building is also a gift.

The key is connecting with the neighborhood, listening to the community, and building a plan that meets their needs. The building will be used as it was intended – for community space. How do we build the mission of the EC to meet the diverse needs of the surrounding neighborhood? Not-for-profits leasing space in the EC would serve the needs of the neighborhood.

We had been looking at calling a full-time pastor and a part-time EC Director. Pastor Danielle suggested a model used successfully in other churches across the country where a part-time Pastor is called who will also serve as a part-time EC Director. The church mission then becomes the EC's mission of reaching out to the community. This provides a relationship between the church and the EC that has the ability to build potential spiritual programming through the EC that can connect the neighborhood with the congregation. The EC would have its own board which will include church member(s), EC tenants, and other community leaders. The board will have authority to act so the church doesn't have to approve every decision regarding the EC.

Some smaller congregations become Synod Authorized Worshipping Communities (SAWC). An SAWC keeps the church name, tax ID, and congregational number. Instead of a constitution, SAWC's have guidelines; instead of a Council with a required number of members, they have Leadership Teams with no set number of members. The SAWC will still call a Pastor with the Synod's oversight and guidance. At any time, the congregation is able to return to being a church.

Pastor Danielle feels confident there are pastors who have the required gifts and the desire to fill this type of position. She has worked with St. Luke's over the past 8 years and can help us apply for grant requests for up to \$60,000 and obtaining a not-for-profit status for the EC. There may also be grants available to pay for other staff.

It's important to move the church's footprint to the sanctuary building. Progress is being made in that direction. Position descriptions will need to be written. A financial plan can include grants, an equity loan, and donations. A goal will be to identify a Call Committee and form a team to write the Ministry

Site Profile (MSP) by February. After Council approves the MSP, the search to call a Pastor can begin. Pastor Keith's role is to prepare us and get us to that point.

The next order of business was the 2025 Budget that had been distributed to the congregation. Money designated for Technology includes moving the offices to the sanctuary building. St. Luke's will pay rent for the space we use. After reviewing the budget, the congregation engaged in some questions and discussion. Lisa then called for a motion to approve the budget. Patrick Lemons made the motion and Ami Vucovich seconded it. The motion was voted on by the congregation and approved.

Pastor Keith closed the meeting with prayer and it was adjourned.