

Grace Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 13, 2012
6:00 pm



Elders Present: Carole Ryan, Christine McGraw, Joyce Eggleston, Jill Nugent, Rachel Zippwald, Ken Beaulieu, Jon Finch, Linda Woodbury, Pastor Chris Tweitmann
Staff Present: Betty Wardle
Congregation Present: Bob Eggink, Debbie Graves

I. Dinner/Devotions/Prayer Requests/Affirmations

- a. Pastor Chris led the council in a Devotion
- b. Prayer Requests/Affirmations
 1. Prayer for Rachel Zippwald's sister having lumpectomy
 2. Praise for Lee and Katie Humerian's wedding on Nov. 10
 3. Praise for Ethan Wardle's job
 4. Prayers for Lavonne Dempsey and family upon Bill's passing.
 5. Bob & Phyllis Raines and family upon Frances Raines passing.
 6. Mildred Anderson upon Jollene's passing.
 7. Praise and prayers for safe travel for Janie and Craig Andrich's trip to China to visit an international school.
 8. Prayers for the Bertels family.
 9. Prayers Phil & Christine Reinetz who are expecting a baby soon.
 10. Prayers that Jon Finch's heart monitor test has good results.
 11. Prayers for Adam, a 5th grader with cancer and David an autistic 5th grader.

II. Call to Order

- a. The meeting was called to order at 7:25 by Carole Ryan

III. Nominating Team Discussion

- A Nominating team process, documents and timeline were presented and discussed. (attached)

IV. Council Consent Agenda

- a. Minutes of the September 25th council meeting were presented.
- b. Report of baptisms, weddings, memorial services and Pastoral care for October/November were presented. (attached)
- c. Reaching Out Team requested that the Thanksgiving Eve offering be donated to the NALC Disaster Relief for Hurricane Sandy.
- d. Pastor Chris requested approval for the church office and campus to be closed between Christmas Day and New Year's Day – specifically Wed. Dec. 26 through Fri. Dec. 28.

Motion Presented to approve the Consent Agenda in its entirety.

Motion was Approved

V. Financial Report and Acceptance

- a. Rachel Zippwald did not receive all figures necessary to complete the October treasurer's report.
- b. As of September, giving for the year was ahead of budget.

Treasurer's Report was accepted.

VI. Pastor's Report

- a. 3DM Learning Community for this 6 month period went well.
- b. There were 3 memorial services at Grace last week.
- c. There will be only one service at 9:30 am on Nov. 25, Dec. 23 & Dec. 30.
- d. Currently Jan Stolzenburg, Elizabeth San Filippo, Pastor Dale and Pastor Chris are doing pastoral care.
- e. Pastor Chris is working on recruiting and training lay people for pastoral care.
- f. A leadership retreat for Elders and staff is tentatively planned for January or February.

VII. Council Action

a. Card Ministry

1. Kathy Dion-Wisser has inquired about starting a ministry to send cards to shut-ins. The council requested that she provide a written plan.

b. New Member Orientation Nov. 14th

1. Christine McGraw, Jill Nugent and Jon Finch volunteered to represent the council at the orientation.

c. Approve a working relationship with Dr. Heather M. Browne (the Healing Heart Ministries)

1. Dr. Brown is a licensed, insured Christian therapist and a parent at Grace School.
2. Pastor Chris recommended inviting her to use Grace as a secondary site for offering and providing professional Christian counseling.

Motion was presented to invite Dr. Heather M. Browne to use office space at Grace church to offer and provide professional Christian counseling. Motion was approved.

d. Schedule January Special Congregational Meeting

1. Purpose to elect Nominating Team and Officially call Pastor Chris as Senior Pastor, now that he is rostered with the NALC.
2. Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, January 13, after the second service.
3. A cottage meeting will be held Sunday January 6, between services.

e. Clarify Grace’s policy regarding political endorsements

1. Complaints have been received from members regarding solicitation for political office on the Grace church property, political flyers being left on cars in the parking lot and political mailers stating the a candidate is endorsed by Grace Lutheran Church.
2. Pastor Chris suggests that he, along with two Elders, meet with this individual and present a letter stating that there is to be no solicitation, no endorsements and no flyers left on cars. It will be made clear that violations will result in discipline and potentially removal from membership.

Motion presented for Pastor Chris and two Elders to meet with this member. Motion approved.

3. The following written statement was presented and recommended to be Grace policy during all elections:

“While we earnestly pray for our nation during this upcoming election season, Grace Lutheran Church and School does not endorse any particular candidate, political party or platform.

As members of the Body of Christ, we trust and rely on God imparting wisdom, discernment and integrity both to those who are privileged to have the freedom to vote and those who are seeking the incredible responsibility of representing others through a public office. May the Triune God continue to bless our nation and all the nations of the world with peace, unity and grace.

Motion presented for the above statement to be Grace policy during all elections. Motion approved.

VIII. Show and Tell (Who are some of the new faces at Grace?)

- a. Council members shared information that they have learned about individuals, couples and families in our church and school community.
- b. Council discussed ways of connecting these new faces to other members and groups in our community.
- c. The council was asked to talk and pray about ways to learn about the new and “dormant” people her and seek ways to connect them.
- d. In the past month, Elders have connected with Chris & Sherry Toland, Wanda Gainous, , Mary Jo Stoutenburgh, Inge Grau, Pat & Sharon Devaney, Zoe McCollum, Rebecca, Brittany Jolivette, Gene Clark
- e. Elders will be checking in with Neal and Sandra Romey

IX. Closing Prayer

- a. Jon Finch closed the meeting in prayer.

X. Adjournment

- a. Meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Christine McGraw
Council Secretary

Upcoming Events/Reminders:

- Ongoing:** -Adult Sunday School: "Fruit of the Spirit" 10 a.m. (Cornerstone)
-Disciple Bible Study: Monday evening 7 p.m. (Cornerstone)
- Nov. 14`** -New Member Orientation
- Nov. 18 & 25:** - Alternative Gift Market
- Nov. 19:** - Monthly Prayer Gathering, 6:30 pm
- Nov. 21:** -Thanksgiving Eve Services,
11am (with Thanksgiving meal following) and 7pm
- Nov. 25:** - **Sunday Morning ONE SERVICE at 9:30 am**
Hanging of the Greens (after service)
- Nov. 28:** - Advent Family Craft Night, 7pm
- Dec. 5:** - Grace School Concert in Sanctuary, 7 pm
- Dec.12:** - Advent Service 7 pm, Soup Supper 6 pm
- Dec.19:** - Carols & Stories, 7 pm
- Dec. 23:** - **Sunday Morning ONE SERVICE at 9:30 am**
- Dec. 24:** - Christmas Eve Services 11am, 4,7,9 pm
- Dec. 30:** - **Sunday Morning ONE SERVICE at 9:30 am**

APPROVED

TIMELINE FOR THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCESS

NOMINATING TEAM IS ELECTED:	Early to mid-January
NOMINATIONS SOLICITED:	January – 1 st two weeks in February (4-6 weeks)
NOMINEES VETTED & INTERVIEWED:	February – 1 st two weeks in April (10 weeks)
SLATE PRESENTED TO COUNCIL:	April (approved by May meeting at the latest)
SLATE PRESENTED TO CONGREGATION:	Middle of May through early June (4 weeks)

- 1. The Nominating Team will meet with Pastor Chris before the start of the process.**
 - Pastor Chris will review the process with the team as well as discuss the current makeup of the Council and perceived needs for leadership at Grace going forward.
- 2. Have the Nominating Team meet together with the Council both at the start and at the conclusion of the nominating process.**
 - A representative from the Nominating Team will attend each Council meeting in between the start and conclusion of the nominating process to provide a brief update and to keep the lines of communication open.
- 3. All nominees from the congregation must provide the following before meeting with the Nominating Team: a brief testimony related to their relationship to Christ and to Grace as a church and written affirmation of Grace's Faith Statement.**
 - When the final slate of nominees is presented to the Council for approval, these two documents are to be provided for each nominee.
 - The testimonies will be used to introduce the nominees to the congregation before the annual congregational meeting.
- 4. All nominees from the congregation must review and affirm by their signature:**
 - *Descriptions and Qualifications of An Elder*
 - *Council Member Job Description*
 - *General and Specific Expectations of Council Members*
 - *Grace Member Covenant and Grace Faith Statement*

Signed copies of all documents for each candidate must be presented to the Council when the final slate of nominees is submitted for approval.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEES

- *What is your perception of Grace's past, present and future? What is your sense of the vision and direction of the staff and the Council at this point?*
- *Define biblical leadership. Who is one historical leader outside the Bible and one contemporary leader who has shaped and modeled you; what are the characteristics of an elder?*
- *Identify two spiritual gifts that you sense are the most fruitful in your life and ministry. Conversely, identify two growth edges in your life and ministry—places where you rely on the grace of God and the gifts of others.*
- *How do you handle change? How do you navigate conflict within relationships? (Describe one example of how you have dealt with change in your own life and how you have managed conflict in your interpersonal relationships.)*
- *What sins are you struggling with and praying for deliverance from? (Share at least two)*
- *How many people have you shared the Gospel message with this week or month? (Briefly share one of the moments.)*

DESCRIPTION AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR AN ELDER

Being an elder is a high calling, a unique opportunity to offer servant leadership to the congregation, and an experience of spiritual growth.

An elder is called to exercise leadership on behalf of the congregation as well as the whole church. Elders oversee the governance, discipline and spiritual growth of the community. Specifically, elders are:

- **Decision makers and agents of reconciliation.**
Elders help to settle disputes in the church. (*Acts 15:1 – 2; Titus 1:5 - 9*)
- **Shepherds of the flock.**
Elders are to watch out for the spiritual life of the flock. (*1 Peter 5:1-4; Hebrews 13:17*)
They are accountable for the spiritual life of the church. They are not to lead for reward or status but out of humility, because of their desire to serve the Lord and His people.
- **Prayer warriors and teachers who lead by example.** (*Acts 6:24; James 5:14*)
Elders are to spend their time in prayer and teaching the word. Their lives are transparent and therefore the sin in their lives is to be minimal and confessed regularly. Their prayers are to be especially for the wounded, the hurting and the sick. One of the other necessities is regularly praying for and discerning the Lord's will to be done.

During a three-year term, elders will have the opportunity to work in more than one area of the church's life so that they may learn and grow in understanding through their service.

- *However, elders are not primarily called because of an aptitude for a specific area of ministry.*
- **Rather, those who nominated and elected to serve as elders in the church are to be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.**
- **Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world.**

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS FOR CHURCH COUNCIL (ELDERS)

Outward Focus – We value all attempts which assist the Church in looking beyond itself to the wider world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as well as enabling God’s people to discover their giftedness in ministry.

- We seek God’s leading in vision and direction.
- We are intentional in developing giftedness.
- Our call is to organize for those not here.

Spiritual Maturity – We value the process that enables God’s people, no matter what stage of life and faith to become like Jesus Christ.

- As leaders we practice good spiritual habits and disciplines.
- We communicate and stay accountable to each other in terms of our growing edges.
- We strive to put people and their development before tasks and programs.

Pursuit of Excellence - We value the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of Christian life. God’s glory demands it, our culture expects it.

- We practice the habit of good planning.
- We seek God and communicate with others in discerning our directions and in setting and communicating our goals.
- We review where we came from and where God seems to be taking us both personally and as an organized body.

Leadership – We value authentic leaders who encourage all people, individually and corporately, to discern and respond to the call of God in their lives.

- We seek to understand giftedness in ourselves and others recognizing that the body is best served when gifts are both developed and used well.
- We share the burden of leadership and stay corporately accountable to one another for the plans we make.
- We communicate success, failure, joys and pains to our staff colleges and ministry teams and refuse to isolate our hearts.
- We share leadership to both develop the gifts of others and model excellence with well-developed gifts.

SPECIFIC EXPECTATION OF CHURCH COUNCIL (ELDERS)

Prayer – Spiritual leadership begins and ends with prayer.

- Each member of the church council will be trained and available to pray with members of the congregation (including the school) and the community as needed.
- Each member of the church council will pray regularly and at designated prayer meetings for the church, the school, the community and the world.

Presence – Spiritual leadership is more than oversight; it is also about being present.

- Each member of the church council will be present for church council, pertinent ministry team and congregational meetings. Outside of personal emergency or unforeseen circumstance, each council member commits to being present and on time for at least 80% of the council and pertinent ministry team meetings.
- Each member of the church council will come to each meeting prepared for the order of the day and will be engaged in the ministry at hand. Meeting minutes, ministry team action items, budget documents and major church and school calendar events will be noted and reviewed as they are available and in advance of any needed discussion.
- The church council will be adequately represented at all major church and school ministry events. While all council members do not need to be present at a given event, ensuring a representative presence needs to be shared responsibility of all members of the council.

Participation – Spiritual leadership is more than just observation; it is about engagement.

- Each member of the church council will worship regularly at Grace.
- Each member of the church council will contribute regularly to the ministries of Grace via their time, talent and resources.
- Each member of the church council will be actively reading and studying the Bible, preferably in the context of a small group.
- Each member of the church council will be committed to sharing the Gospel in word and deed and to leading others to Jesus Christ as prompted by the Holy Spirit.
- Each member of the church council will witness to God's heart for the world, specifically the poor and marginalized, by regularly engaging in acts of service, advocacy, generosity and justice.

Possibility-Oriented – Spiritual leadership dares to believe in what could be and not simply what has always been.

- Each member of the church council will endeavor to settle for nothing less than for our church to be Holy Spirit filled, Holy Spirit led and Holy Spirit empowered.
- Each member of the church council will be afraid to fail to try something new or different rather than afraid to try and fail. It is better to fail while reaching for the impossible that God has planned for us rather than settling for less.
- Each member of the church council will wrestle with decision-making in the tension between past history and future potential. Past performance—successes or failures—are stepping stones not stop signs.
- Each member of the church council will perceive all decisions made not as destinations but rather as journeys—journeys along the ancient path of bold faith in what God has done, what God is doing and what God will do in the world.

GRACE MEMBER COVENANT

Our life together in ministry at Grace is a covenant bond and not a contractual obligation. The difference between a covenant relationship and a contract cannot be overstated. A covenant assumes shared values, basic trust. A contract has no assumption of shared values. Trust is not assumed with a contract—hence its specified terms are designed to protect one’s own interests.

This covenant has been created to clarify and ensure the shared vision and mutual commitment between all members of the Grace team. It is intended to articulate the reasonable expectations that we can have of each other. This covenant also serves to outline how we are to proceed with each other whenever conflicts occur and trust has been broken.

Having been called together by the grace of the Holy Spirit, through faith in Jesus Christ, to serve God the Father, we now give ourselves to each other in this covenant:

We covenant to Come Together

- We will make worshipping together on Sunday morning a priority in our lives. Our worship together will not be divided by style or preference—it will be united by our shared adoration and submission to Jesus Christ.
- We will affirm Scripture as the basis for our common life in Christ. How we read, study, interpret and allow the Scriptures to shape and form our lives will be guided by the ancient creeds and confessions of the Church.
- We will seek unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials and charity in all things. While we must agree on the essentials of the faith, we recognize in the history of the Church, the allowance for great diversity in non-essential matters of faith and practice.
- We will labor together to build up the Church by witnessing to the Gospel of grace in Jesus Christ. In order for our witness to be authentic and faithful, we recognize that what we believe about Jesus must be consistent with how we live for Jesus.

We covenant to Grow Together

- We will mutually encourage each other to pursue regular times of prayer and study. Biblical learning and fluency in prayer are practiced better together rather than on one’s own.
- We will carefully guard the value, dignity and reputation of each as we strengthen one another. Being in Christ with each other means that we engage in relationships characterized by authenticity, mutual respect and good will.
- We will confess our faults to each other—always endeavoring to speak and receive the truth in love. In Christ, we assume the best and not the worst of each other, extending forgiveness to each other when we fail to live into that expectation.

We covenant to Serve Together

- We will embrace God’s call to lead by first being led. Service that is motivated by guilt, shame, a need to be accepted or a desire to be in control is not healthy. We must first follow Jesus in order to lead others to Jesus.
- We will support the ministry of the Church according to our ability and resources. The principle of stewardship, the practice of generosity and the model of the tithe, inform our giving to the Lord.
- We will devote ourselves to those who are closest to God’s heart—those struggling with poverty, those who are in need, those who are lost and those who are suffering. The Church does not primarily exist for the benefit of its members—she exists for the sake of those who are missing.

We covenant to Stay Together

Conflict is inevitable in any organization—including the Church! When times of conflict arise, we further covenant to live with each other accordingly:

- We will not be afraid of or ignore disagreements within the Body of Christ. Conflict is a byproduct of change and therefore a necessary part of the transforming work that God is doing in us.
- We will engage conflict in a manner that is constructive rather than destructive. The guiding principle when we disagree is not winning instead of losing; it is seeking first to understand in order to be understood. We can and will disagree without being disagreeable.
- We will address all concerns and conflicts in a fair, firm, respectful and nurturing manner. A climate of honest and open discourse is only possible when questions, concerns and critiques are directed through appropriate channels of communication. Gossip, collusion, triangulation, anonymous and abusive communication will not be validated.
- We will open to all opinions but we will be guided by the will of the majority. The voice of the individual must always be respected but the best interests of the group as a whole must guide the decisions and direction of the community.
- We will endeavor to always forgive as we have been forgiven in Christ. When trust is broken, correction and discipline, will aim to be restorative—as a means of learning and growth rather than simply punitive. In Christ, reconciliation is always possible and therefore, is always the goal.

I, the undersigned, agree to follow the expectations set forth in this covenant. In good faith and trust, I affirm my commitment to mutual collaboration.

Team Member Name and Signature

Date

Senior Pastor (Signature)

Date

GRACE FAITH STATEMENT

What we believe at Grace Lutheran Church and School is not defined in a vacuum. Our convictions emerge out of a shared history and understanding as the Church of Jesus Christ throughout the world. It has been the practice of the Church from time to time to write down our faith, to record our creed--what we believe the message of the Gospel is. Each creed of the Church confesses a particular set of beliefs that is perceived as central and essential to the message and mission of Jesus Christ.

As part of the global Church of Jesus Christ, we stand in unity with those churches that affirm the faith as it is expressed in the Apostle's and Nicene Creeds. As part of the Lutheran church, we also share the confessional expressions of the Book of Concord. As the community of Grace, we declare the following convictions:

- The Bible as the Word of God, as inspired by God but entrusted to the writing and style of human authors, and fully trustworthy as our ultimate guide to our faith and practice.
- Jesus, fully divine as the Son of God, and fully human as the Son of Man, as the only full and complete revelation of God and therefore the only Savior of the world and the Lord of all creation.
- The life and death of Jesus on the cross, as the initiative and act of God:
 - to heal our brokenness,
 - to forgive our sin
 - and to reconcile us both to God and each other.

We believe that our humanity is broken in that we are predisposed to worshipping ourselves. We believe that sin is the acting out of our brokenness wherein we make God less than God is and others less than they are.

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead:
 - as the proof of who we profess Jesus to be,
 - as the redemption of the problem of evil,
 - as the historical act that defeats the power of death,
 - and as the assurance of God's promise of eternal life.
- Salvation as God's gift grasped through faith by grace. We contribute nothing to our salvation. Even faith is first a gift of God to which we are called to respond. Before we believe in God, God believes in us in and through Jesus Christ.
- New life in the Holy Spirit, who brings us into spiritual rebirth, into the community of believers in and followers of Christ--the Church and who empowers us live and die as Jesus did, reaching out to the poor, sick, marginalized, alienated and oppressed.
- The imminent return of Jesus Christ, to consummate the work and witness of his life, death and resurrection, to complete the recreation of all things and thereby fulfill the reign of God.
- The call to witness this Gospel in faith and practice, in word and deed, to share this story so that others may receive and embody the forgiveness, healing, freedom and purpose borne of God's salvation.

Additionally, while there are many dimensions to the practical outworking of our faith in Christ, we wrestle with the following cultural and ethical issues accordingly:

- We teach that the possibility for a full and healthy sexual relationship exists only within the confines of the covenant of marriage one man and one woman. We believe sexual brokenness is but one of many manifestations of the tragic nature of our humanity. We do not affirm a hierarchy of brokenness and affirm God's forgiveness of all sins in Christ.
- We teach the sanctity, dignity and defense of all human life, no matter what stage of personhood, gender, sexual orientation, religious faith, economic class or ethnicity. We believe that we have a responsibility to be good and proactive stewards of the peace, wellbeing, shelter, nurture and care of all persons. We acknowledge and share God's heart for the orphan, the widow, the prisoner, the refugee and the marginalized.
- We teach that our stewardship role encompasses all creation as well as all human life. We believe that we have a responsibility to respect, to cultivate, to recycle and to ensure the continuance of the natural resources and environments entrusted to our care.

APPROVED