2024 Annual Meeting Minutes - North Buffalo Lutheran Church - Sunday Jan 26th, 2025

The Annual Meeting was called to order by President Mark Fillbrandt at 10:40am and a quorum was met. Larry Anderson moved to accept the meeting agenda as presented, seconded by Loren Ingebretson. **Motion Carried.**

Church Secretary Brian Kleespies read the minutes from the 2023 Annual Church Meeting. Paul Fossum voted to approve the minutes, seconded by Nancy Valenzuela. **Motion Carried.**

Pastor's Report:
Pastor Mark thanked Larry Anderson for taking on the Council President position for the upcoming year, and thanked Mark Fillrandt for his work as past President. Todd Fuller has agreed to be Vice President. Sarah Reitmeier will be added to the Youth committee. Pastor Mark thanked Gary for his musical talents throughout the year. He said he appreciated Alex's work on the Treasurer position, including his work on the move to the updated accounting software. He also thanked Brendemuhls for their work with the church this year. Finally, he thanked WELCA for their work and service for all types of events this year.

President's Report:
President Mark Fillbrandt thanked the congregation for their ongoing support. He also said Pastor Mark has been a large piece in this along with all the committees and servants of the Church. He said the council works very well together and they look at our key items thoroughly. He mentioned the challenges with the GeoThermal system, but that we came through very well.

Financial Review:
Larry Anderson and Loren Ingrebretsen reviewed the financial records. Larry stated that after review, the church financial documentation was in good order and we are in fine shape. He said thank you to Alex for his work in keeping us in good order.

Financial Statements: Alex Swanson went through the financial statements and end of year report for 2024.

Alex mentioned housing and salary for Pastor Mark, and that they get changed a bit (amounts) for tax purposes. Overall, he said there were a few benevolences that were not budgeted for, but that we had dollars available for.

He mentioned upgrades we did throughout this past year, including sound system upgrades, and new pancake griddles. He said we received a match for the griddles. He said we also paid off the furnace bills, and ended up right around $3500.00 net for those items. (*See included financial report for additional details).

Alex also mentioned adding a few new lines to accounting for miscellaneous expenses such as the PO Box, bank charges and user fees.

Total expenses as of 12/31/2024 were $156,902.02. He also mentioned the bank is off about $2000.00, but there were some late dollars coming in that were backdated to the appropriate year.

$155,977.33 was the final cash on hand as of 12/31/2024.
$15937.24 was the increase in cash year over year as of the end of 2024.

Alex reviewed Profit/Loss reporting and CD Income. CD income was $3583.52. He mentioned the CD terms were at 7 months, with competitive rates after comparing those at area banks.

Alex mentioned a check that was earmarked for CUFTH, that had not yet been dispersed, which he has now completed.

Alex went through a breakdown of giving, types of gift totals, and stated we have 89 giving units, including 3 non-members. He also mentioned around $4500.00 in cash offerings.

A motion was made to accept the financial report by Loren Ingebritson, and was seconded by Joanne Sipe. **Motion Carried.**

Old Business:
None

New Business:

Committee Reports: Committee reports were listed within the annual report for the congregation. Anyone with questions should contact any member of the committees for further information.

Constitutional Updates - Alex stated the bylaws were originally adopted in 1997, and have been updated just a few times since, and they felt it was time to review them again. He said a committee was formed about 2 years ago, and they have been going through the updates over this time and have come up with these recommendations.

Alex said for the most part he separated the bylaw update recommendations into two types:

a. One for typos and errors in wording
b. The second set of items were more impactful to the constitution and how we operate.

Suggestions and Discussion on Bylaws:
Alex shared the suggestion that we change the quorum required for congregation meetings from 25 to 20, based on current congregation attendance numbers.

Alex also shared the suggestion to remove the paper ballot requirements as this has not been a common practice.

Alex stated they proposed lowering the size of the Council, because it is getting difficult to find people to fill the positions.

One suggestion was combining the Secretary and Treasurer positions to one. This would result in a combined position having one vote. Currently, the Treasurer does not have voting rights but the Secretary does.

Another suggestion was combining Worship, Life & Fellowship, and Outreach committee. The committee discussed having five or three people on a combined committee.

Gary Sauter mentioned that it may be too much for one person to do the Treasurer and Secretary positions, and asked if we really wanted that.

Alex mentioned that they propose we add Robert's Rules into the bylaws for our proceedings.

Alex also said they proposed adding official wording for a Historian position, so they could add one within the Council without having a congregational vote.

Another item they presented was the Executive committee not being able to meet and act as the full council.

He said they also propose adding wording that the Executive Committee will convene and put together the initial budget for presentation to the council each year.

He proposed changing the audit committee requirements so that only people that do not have signing rights can be on the audit committee.

Loren suggested we keep the wording “paper ballot” versus using “written” for clarity.

President Mark Fillbrandt and Paul Fossum came up and presented an updated overall amendment after discussion as follows:

The current WOLF committees (Worship, Life & Fellowship & Outreach) will be able to determine themselves (this current year) who will stay to get down from 9 to 3 members.

We will compromise and add wording that the Secretary/Treasurer can be either combined or a single position, and that neither will have voting rights.

Updated wording for “paper” ballot versus using the word “written”.

All other updates as stated.

Kelly Ring makes a motion to accept the bylaw changes after updates, Sherri Fossum seconded it . **Motion Carried.**

Financial Budget Proposal - 2025:
Alex reviewed the upcoming change to QuickBooks. He said the Church has a new tax exempt certificate with the State of MN. We can utilize this to avoid paying taxes for expenses. He said we also have updated signature cards.

Alex presented the budget with a 3% salary increase for Organist, Treasurer, and Custodian.

He also mentioned the increased budget for facilities insurance from $6000.00 to $10000.00 based on drastically rising property and liability premiums.

He said that after council discussion, we put in a budget amount for snow removal at $2000.00. This leaves a 2025 budget at a $6000.00 increase overall from 2024.

Todd Maloney had a question about planning with dollars for facilities issues such as the Geo-Thermal. Alex mentioned the Orval Hurner fund is partially for this purpose. Alex also mentioned that we have been pulling dollars to move to CDs, to both increase income but also for potential issues down the line. President Mark Fillbrandt stated we have been using dollars in the CDs to help with issues that come up as that was the purpose.

Lorraine DeJong asked if we were considering carpet cleaning, and Pastor Mark mentioned this will be completed by the Sorenson family and that it will be a gift.

A Motion made by Karen Harmonson to approve the 2025 Church budget, and seconded by Tracy Ellenbaum-Kleespies. **Motion Carried.**

Committee Member Updates:
Pastor Mark asked for Nominating committee (3) and Auditing committee (2) volunteers. Larry Anderson, Mark Fillbrandt, and Tracy Ellenbaum-Kleespies volunteered for Nominating and Paul Fossum and Loren Ingebretson volunteered for Auditing.

Paul Fossum made a motion to do an all encompassing ballot for these additions and to approve them. Loren Ingebretson seconded. **Motion Carried.**

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Larry Anderson, and seconded by Tracy Ellebaum-Kleespies. **Motion Carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at **11:23am.** Pastor Mark led us in prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Brian Kleespies, Church Council Secretary