

Excelsior United Methodist Church  
Meeting Minutes  
Sunday, January 28, 2024

Attending: Glenna Whitmill, Jill and Kurt Jewell, Connie Kurtz, Betty Cabalka, Joyce & Tom Henderson, Kaitlin and Nate Holm, Tyler and Brooke Cronk, Julie & Mike Newell, Lynn and Joyceln Hughes, Tony Brancale, Jan and Randy Warren, Denise Foote, Sandy & Jim Stromberg, Wendy Judd, Nancy Hart, Bruce Barringer, Marlys Gapstur Sand, Warren Stanchfield, Judy Myers, Bill and Kay Erickson, Susan & Paul Dragsten, Charlie & Lisa Buck, Karen & Pete Peterson, Jean Mueller, Alan Stricker, Gabe Wiebenger, Peter Cleaveland, Jackie & Steve Colby, Philip Pulitzer, Bill & Kristie Lester, Brooke Heerwald Steiner, Carrie Tietz

**Topic 1: End of Year Financials for 2023**

Tyler Cronk and Kaitlin Holm reviewed the results of the 2023 Stewardship Campaign and year end numbers for 2023. They discussed our deficit budget and that the leadership team will be pursuing income generating ideas and also cutting expenses. (See Attached PPT slides)

**Topic 2: SoHi Playground Update**

Bill Lester shared that the SoHi 501c3 has raised \$280K for the playground. (Goal was \$340K). With the amount raised, we'll be able to install the playground with an engineered wood chip surface. Playground equipment has been ordered and if the weather is good, we hope to break ground around May 2024.

Bill still is pursuing additional funds to reach the goal so we can install with a "pour in place" surface. Deadline is early March to make the final surface order.

Discussed the church's 20 year lease with the city and our ongoing responsibility with maintenance and insurance. Also discussed that we currently have security cameras that point toward the playground area to help with safety. May want to install additional lighting under the main entrance.

Bill asked if anyone has contacts in the community (businesses, individuals or grants) to help raise the final funds, to let him know.

**Topic 3: Brooke Sabbatical Application**

Brooke and the church will be applying for a non-denominational grant to pay for a 6 month clergy sabbatical. Only 180 of these grants are handed out each year across the country. Grant is for up to \$60K and will pay for Brookes activities and church expenses while she is away (substitute pastors). The theme for her sabbatical would be "Storytelling" and would include her doing education on how storytelling can help in healing and bridge divides. Church would have special speakers and elders from the church talk about EUMC's story. She will apply around March 13 and find out in August 2024 is she is awarded the grant. If she wins, she would be gone from after Easter 2025 – Sept 2025.

If she is not awarded the grant this year, she'll try again in 2025. If she is not awarded it then, she will take a sabbatical on her own in 2026.

**Topic 4: Split in United Methodist Church.**

Brooke shared that about 15 smaller churches in MN have left to the more conservative Global Methodist Church. This will not have a large financial impact on the MN annual conference. Additional legislation will be discussed in this year's general conference in August 2024 with regard to the worldwide church.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Jewell