Shepherd of The Sierra Lutheran Church

Congregational Meeting

December 3, 2023

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Blatchford at 10:30 AM.

Quorum: 59 voting members signed in.

**Opening Prayer**: Pastor Hilton

**Call Committee:** Matt S, Chairman of the Call Committee, advised the congregation that the committee is working diligently on this matter. There is a shortage of pastors throughout the country.

**Approval of Meeting Agenda**: M/S/C to approve the proposed agenda.

**Announcement of New Members:** Maureen J, Ray J, Cheryl H.

**Reading of Minutes:** The minutes were distributed after the June 18, 2023 meeting and were recently included in an email to all congregants regarding this meeting. Therefore, the minutes were not read at this time.

**Approval of Minutes:** M/S/C to approve the minutes.

**Vote for Council Positions:** There were no new nominations, therefore there was a **M/S/C** to approve the ballot positions by acclimation as follows:

President: Jim Blatchford (one year term)

Vice President: Lennie L (one year term)

Council Secretary: Debbie H. (two year term)

Treasurer Cheryl H (two year term)

Financial Secretary: Kristin T. (two year term)

Fellowship: Doris Blatchford (two year term)

Trustee: Rex R (two year term)

Education and Stewardship remain vacant.

**Pastor’s Report:** See Report. Pastor Hilton has been fulfilling his duties as the vacancy pastor since January 2023, including but not limited to, leading worship, visiting the sick and shut-ins, baptisms, funerals and weddings. Pastor Hilton continues coordinating pulpit supply, leading services and building the bridge for our next called pastor, conducting a weekly Bible Study, holding a Confirmation Class, and preparing for the Advent services.

**Treasurer’s** **Report**: The 2024 proposed budget was previously sent by email to all congregants. This budget is higher than the 2023 budget due to budgeting for a new pastor. If a full time pastor is hired in the near future there may be a need to utilize reserve funds. After discussion and a further explanation on a few line items, **M/S/C** to approve the 2024 Budget as presented.

**Financial Secretary Report:** Kristin T thanked the count committee. Tithing envelopes for 2024 will be distributed soon. She asked that anyone who does not want to receive the envelopes (or if a member does not have tithing envelopes) to let her know. She advised members to contact her if they would be interested in signing up for automated payments (app and link for Planning Center available on the church website). She has her computer with her and can assist with the procedures. This is a secure and consistent way to donate.

**Elder’s Report:** Jack C reported that the Elders have worked with Pastor Hilton in extending the Vacancy Pastor contract. The Elders were instrumental in coordinating the purchase of hymnals. The Elders are currently in need of volunteers to join their team.

**Trustee’s Report:** Rex R reported that the annual cleanup went well with trimming bushes and cutting down sagebrush. The wood in the sanctuary has been oiled, insurance policies renewed (at a savings), thermostats replaced, and lines replaced after a lightning strike. Rex thanked Jim M for his assistance. Still working on indoor cleaning. The sheds have been primed and will be painted in the spring. Diane D resigned as Facilities Manager and Jane L has assumed this position. Jane is coordinating the calendar for the use of the building and has been instrumental in making sure all persons/entities have proper liability insurance.

**Fellowship Report:** See Report. Chair Doris Blatchford reported that the Fellowship team had a very busy and fruitful year, thanked Carolee for all her work in the past and thanked Matt S and his family for all their work on the monthly fellowship breakfasts. Highlights include: the SOSOS, St. Patrick’s Day potluck, Easter potluck, July 4th parking lot party, church picnic, Oktoberfest, chili cookoff, Thanksgiving potluck.

**Evangelism Report:** Chair Cathie C thanked the Evangelism team and the congregation for their generous donations for Northern Nevada Dream Center, Life Choices, FISH, and Family Resource Center (Gardnerville). Over 600 decks of Braille playing cards have been distributed and over 135 pairs of reading classes were donated to the Lions Club. Currently have teamed up with the Missions and Outreach Class to SLHS to help congregants in need, working on the Angel Tree and working with the Veteran’s Center to furnish houses for homeless veterans.

No Stewardship, Christian Education or Circuit Forum Representation Reports.

**Old Business:** The topic of televisions in the sanctuary discussed. President Blatchford advised the congregation that this subject was discussed at the November Council Meeting while discussing proposed ways to utilize the recently donated discretionary funds (see New Business below). In addition to television screens blocking the great view of the mountains, it would take a volunteer a couple of hours weekly to update hymns, etc. on the screen. There are not enough volunteers now.

**New Business:**

John E, a SLHS School Board Member, reported that SLHS is in the process of obtaining the necessary permits to expand the school. The school is growing and may have to turn students away. SLHS is meeting with SOS Council members to make arrangements to use SOS for school classes starting with the 2024-2025 school year. The culinary class from SLHS is currently using our facility.

A suggestion was made to have SLHS lead a Sunday church service (once a quarter or on the 5th Sunday).

Jim Blatchford reported that there has been an anonymous donation made to the church which is to be used for specific needs or projects. The Council is open to suggestions.

A suggestion has been made to change the bi-annual Voters’ Meetings from June and December. This will be discussed at a future Council meeting.

Jim Blatchford reported that the SOS Constitution has not been updated with the District and this will be looked into next year.

Rex R reported that the Bella Voce concert held at SOS on December 2nd was a success. Jim Blatchford reported that the concert was streamed and is available on the church YouTube channel.

**Closing Prayer**: Jim Blatchford

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Hochsprung