

GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH – Grace Advisory Board (GAB)

Meeting Minutes – August 6, 2023

Board Members Present: Pastor Brooks, Chris Wethman, Dede Crosmer, Geoff Heintzelman, Judy Barnes, Donna Gesell

Absent: Joe Milko

Others: Barb Tippin, Scott Gesell, Joe Wethman, Bev Hudgins

1. **Meeting** opened at 12:40pm

2. **Prayer/Devotion** by Chris Wethman on Psalm 121

3. **Approval of minutes from June 25, 2023**

No additions/corrections to previous meeting minutes.

Motion made (Pastor Brooks) and **seconded** (Dede Crosmer) to approve the minutes.

Discussion – none

Minutes approved.

4. **Approval of Statistical Report**

Motion made (Donna Gesell) and **seconded** (Geoff Heintzelman) to approve the statistical report.

Discussion – Letters were sent to seven individuals/families (*see statistical report*) on 7/14/23 as per by-laws 1.4.2.1.2. Pastor Brooks to reach out to Jordan to confirm Chris Beckman's transfer.

Statistical report approved.

5. **Information Items**

a. Pastor Brooks

- i. Pastor will elaborate on what he learned at the convention at the "State of the Church" between services on 8/13 and 8/20. Key issues being the district rededicated itself to oversight and keeping a Lutheran witness. Pastor will include discussing member engagement, the needs of the boards, and the good things happening in the fall (Duke Lutherans and an update on the Music Director position (5 interested candidates at this time, deadline to apply is 8/15).
- ii. Pastor will be scheduling weekly 30-minute zoom calls on Sundays starting 9/10 for GAB to discuss how we (GAB) can be good leaders. These will continue through Thanksgiving, and he will re-evaluate at that time.
- iii. Pastor will be away on 9/17 (continuing education) and away the week of Thanksgiving. Pastor Voges will preach on 11/26 & 12/3. Pastor Brooks will work with him on the theme for Advent (Four Marks of the Church).

b. Staff – Barb Tippin

Please remember to inform Barb when the boards have meetings or changes dates of meeting for the calendar. Send any announcements to Barb by Tuesday of each week for the E-news.

c. President – Chris Wethman

i. MALIM Grant

A \$10,000 grant has been awarded and should be arriving soon. Discussion on the district's oversight on this grant.

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- ii. Sound System Update – Chris Wethman
James at Custom, Light and Sound has been contacted and working on a quote for the sound system and possibly the lighting.
Donna Gesell has a committee that is looking at renovations to the altar (carpet, candles, and new countertop for altar).
- iii. Special Funds Trustees as per Constitution:
“Special Fund trustees shall be appointed for the management and use of all Special Funds to ensure faithfulness to the goals and associated restriction(s) of the Special Funds. The number of trustees shall be four (4), one of whom shall be appointed from the membership of the Grace Advisory Board. The remaining three (3) are to be members of the Voters’ Assembly nominated by the President and approved by the Grace Advisory Board. They will serve for staggered terms of three (3) years.”
Discussion – previous special funds trustees were Dave Pittman, Dave Schultz and Ken Kempel. A new group will need to be formed with staggered years so not all will rotate off at the same time. The Mitchell Fund Trustees (Geoff Heintzleman, Scott Gesell & Gary Stuhlmiller) will continue in this role and not be used for the Special Funds Trustees.
- d. Congregational Representative – Judy Barnes, no report
- e. Discipleship Board – Bev Hudgins is doing a bible study “Story Word” which will be announced in the newsletter. Pastor Brooks will be combining the Discipleship Board and the Servant Board for the time being for monthly meetings.
- f. Servant Board
 - i. The Servant Board will be meeting Wednesday at 7pm to focus on the working PALS groups that were formed.
 - ii. Wittenberg Room:
 - 1. Furniture hopefully to be installed 8/16.
 - 2. Dedication will be between services on 8/27, followed by a second dedication in the evening with St. Paul’s, Pastor Amanda and Duke Lutherans and an open house with a cookout.
 - iii. Recommended for Approval: Wittenberg Room Guidelines
Motion made (Dede Crosmer) and **seconded** (Pastor Brooks) to approve the guidelines.
Discussion – reminder that this room will be available to Duke Lutherans and Grace members should not be scheduling standing meetings in this space, although they are free to have impromptu gatherings in the room.
Wittenberg Room Guidelines approved.

6. Treasurer – Financial Review

Questions – none

Accepted as presented

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7. Resource Board

a. Recommended for Approval:

- i. Policy to Ensure Safety in ministry with Children and Youth (*see attached*)
Motion made (Pastor Brooks) and **seconded** (Judy Barnes) to approve the policy
Discussion – huge thank you to Kathy Peterson & Sue Heintzelman for their work on this.
Policy approved.
 - ii. Financial Review Plan (*see attached*)
Questions – none
Accepted as presented
 - iii. Grace House (*see Grace House Issues from July 30, 2023 meeting*)
 1. The Resource Board recommends replacing the gutters and adding gutter guards when the roof is replaced with money to come from the Go & Make Campaign.
Motion made (Dede Crosmer) and **seconded** (Pastor Brooks) to include the gutters and gutter guards with the already approved replacement of the roof.
Discussion – total cost should be approximately \$20,675.
Motion approved.
 2. The Resource Board recommends moving forward with the high priority items listed as each would maintain or improve the structural integrity of the house.
Motion made (Geoff Heintzelman) and **seconded** (Dede Crosmer) to move forward with high priority items.
Discussion – this does not need to go to the congregation as this will come from the Go & Make Campaign.
Motion approved.
- b. Status of cones out front (from June meeting – Item 6.e.iii.m)
- i. Joe Milko has contacted the City of Durham regarding this, but has not heard back.

8. Wrap Up – none

9. Important Dates

- a. Next GAB – September 10th
 - i. Chris is looking at potentially scheduling recurring GAB meetings on the 2nd Sunday of each month.
- b. August 27 – Wittenberg Room Dedication

10. Adjourn with Prayer

Motion made (Judy Barnes) and **seconded** (Donna Gesell) to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 1:50pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Dede Crosmer, Secretary

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Grace Lutheran Church - Durham, NC

Dated: August 6, 2023

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF THE WITTENBERG ROOM/SPACE FOR THE DUKE LUTHERANS

Vision: To support, encourage, and help the Duke Lutherans grow in their faith as they walk the Way GRACE (Grow with Jesus, Rejoice in the Lord, Answer with Hope, Care for Our Neighbor, and Embrace Community) and develop a flourishing relationship with the congregation of Grace Lutheran Church.

Mission: To create a gathering place and present opportunities for fellowship and relationship building between Duke Lutherans and members of partner congregations through the following:

1. Providing a "home" for the Duke Lutherans - a place where they can worship and gather for fellowship and meetings.
2. Enhancing interactions between the congregations of Grace and St Paul with the Duke Lutherans by having more members of partner congregations participate in formal and informal events.
3. Serving as an additional space where members of Grace can connect with each other and the Duke Lutherans for conversation, unscheduled fellowship, and informal/impromptu meetings.

Regarding facility usage: Duke students have the right of first refusal in the use of this space. In practice, this means that the space should not be reserved for usual functions of Grace Lutheran Church (ie, board meetings, Bible studies, etc), as it is meant for informal and impromptu fellowship.

Responsibilities

1. The room is expected to remain neat and tidy. While it will be cleaned as part of Grace's routine maintenance, both the congregation and Duke Lutherans are expected to keep the room presentable so that both and each other can use it appropriately.
2. Duke Lutherans are welcome to use the facilities, including the kitchen, as needed. Chairs and tables should be returned to their initial position. Kitchen should be clean and able to be used by the next scheduled group.
3. Both the Duke Lutherans and the congregation are welcome to the snacks, drinks, coffee, etc that are present. How to share the responsibility of replenishing and supplying snacks, drinks, etc can be agreed upon between each group's leaders; however, it is our hope that both groups will take it upon themselves to ensure that it is appropriately stocked.
4. The room will be available for use by students from 6AM until midnight. It is not to be used overnight.
5. Please limit the number of guests/friends (ie, students who are not members of Duke Lutherans) to 3 (if being used for a study group, for example).
6. Ensure facility is locked and secured when leaving and address all items on the closing checklist posted near the door.
7. The code to the lockbox will only be shared with students who attend weekly worship services (on Sunday night) of the Duke Lutherans.

The student leaders are also developing their own student covenant, which should also be posted and followed by the students.

Policy To Ensure Safety In Ministry With Children and Youth

Attached is the new child protection policy written by Sue Heintzelman and Kathy Pittman and approved by the Resource Board. We ask that this policy be adopted as of today. It has also been suggested that this is so well done that we should offer it to the Synod at large for use in other churches.

Financial Review Plan

Prepared by Becky Thomas

Here is my summary of our plan/actions regarding the Financial Review. You can forward this email to the advisory board so they are aware of the plan.

Summary

- While looking over the financial statements for the 2022 calendar year it was noted that there were accounts that had not been reconciled (due to transfers related to Miss Mollie's accounts and various software issues). These accounts were reconciled and correct balances were used to start the January 1, 2023 year in the new software.
- Donna has been maintaining these new accounts and reconciling monthly for 2023. Donna is preparing monthly financials statements compared to budget (including both the balance sheet and income statement).
- Donna and Becky have looked over the Financial Review procedures from the LCMS and noted some controls that could be improved (ie. number of counters was difficult during COVID) and some of these items are currently being improved.
- Becky and Donna decided that a partial financial review for the nine months ended September 30, 2023 will be done in October. At that time a report will be made for the Advisory Board.

If anyone has any questions or concerns that need to be addressed before October please let me know.

Becky

POLICY TO ENSURE SAFETY IN MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

General Purpose Statement

Grace Lutheran Church seeks to provide a safe and secure environment for the children who participate in our programs and activities. By implementing the below practices, our goal is to protect the children of Grace Lutheran Church from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting our staff and volunteers (workers) from false accusations.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the terms “child” or “children” include all persons under the age of eighteen (18) years. The term “worker” includes both paid and volunteer persons who work with children.

Selection of Workers

All persons who desire to work with the children participating in our programs and activities will be screened. This screening includes the following:

a) **Six Month Rule**

No volunteer will be considered for any position involving contact with minors until she/he has been involved with Grace Lutheran Church for a minimum of six (6) months. This time of interaction between our leadership and the applicant allows for better evaluation and suitability of the applicant for working with children.

b) **Written Application**

All persons seeking to work with children must complete and sign a written application in a form to be supplied by us. The application will request basic information from the applicant and will inquire into previous experience with children, previous church affiliation, reference and employment information, as well as disclosure of any previous criminal convictions. The application form will be maintained in confidence on file at Grace Lutheran Church.

c) **Personal Interview**

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview may be scheduled with the applicant to discuss his/her suitability for the position.

d) **Reference Checks**

Before an applicant is permitted to work with children, at least two of the applicants' references will be checked. These references should be of an institutional nature as opposed to personal or family references, preferably from organizations where the applicant has worked with children in the past. Documentation of the reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file at Grace Lutheran Church.

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e) **Criminal Background Check**

A national criminal background check is required for all employees (regardless of position) and for the following categories of volunteers:

- Those who will be involved in our school/preschool/daycare center;
- Those who will be involved in overnight activities with children;
- Those counseling children;
- Those involved in one-on-one mentorship of children; and
- Those having occasional one-on-one contact with children (such as, church/temple sponsored athletic team coaches and vehicle drivers).

Before a background check is run, prospective workers will be asked to sign an authorization form allowing the church/synagogue/meeting to run the check. If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, s/he will be unable to work with children.

What constitutes a disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children will be determined by Child Protection Policy Administrator and the Grace Resource Board on a case-by-case basis in light of all the surrounding circumstances. Generally, convictions for an offense involving children and/or for offenses involving violence, dishonesty, illegal substances, indecency and any conduct contrary to our mission will preclude someone from being permitted to work with children. Failure to disclose a criminal conviction on the application form will also be a disqualifying event.

The background check authorization form and results will be maintained in confidence on file at Grace Lutheran Church.

Two Adult Rule

It is our goal that a minimum of two unrelated adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs and activities. Some youth classes may have only one adult teacher in attendance during the class session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three students with the adult teacher. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

Responding to Allegations of Child Abuse

For purposes of this policy, "child abuse" is any action (or lack of action) that endangers or harms a child's physical, psychological or emotional health and development. Child abuse occurs in different ways and includes the following:

- **Physical abuse** – any physical injury to a child that is not accidental, such as beating, shaking, burns, and biting.
- **Emotional abuse** – emotional injury when the child is not nurtured or provided with love and security, such as an environment of constant criticism, belittling and persistent teasing.
- **Sexual abuse** – any sexual activity between a child and an adult or between a child and another child at least four years older than the victim, including activities such as inappropriate contact, exhibitionism, intercourse, incest, and pornography.
- **Neglect** – depriving a child of his or her essential needs, such as adequate food, water, shelter, and medical care.

Childcare workers may have the opportunity to become aware of abuse or neglect of the children under our care. In the event that an individual involved in the care of children at Grace Lutheran Church becomes aware of suspected abuse or neglect of a child under his/her care, this should be reported immediately to the pastor or Grace Advisory Board President for further action including reporting to authorities as may be mandated by state law.

In the event that an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred at Grace Lutheran Church or during our sponsored programs or activities, the following procedure shall be followed:

1. The parent or guardian of the child will be notified.
2. The worker alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or misconduct will immediately be placed on leave from working with children pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation.
3. Civil authorities will be notified, and Grace Lutheran Church will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists. Grace Lutheran Church will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by civil authorities.
4. Our insurance company will be notified, and we will complete an incident report. Any documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.
5. The pastor or Grace Advisory Board President will be our spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect, unless he or she is alleged to be involved. We will seek the advice of legal counsel before responding to media inquiries or releasing information to the congregation. All other representatives of the church should refrain from speaking to the media.
6. A pastoral visit will be arranged for those who desire it.
7. Any person who is not found innocent of the alleged abuse or misconduct will be removed from their position working with children or youth.

Open Door Policy

Classroom doors should remain open unless there is a window in the door or a side window beside it. Doors should never be locked while persons are inside the room.

Teenage Workers

We recognize that there may be times when it is necessary or desirable for babysitters (paid or volunteer) who are themselves under age 18 to assist in caring for children during programs or activities. The following guidelines apply to teenage workers:

- Must be at least age 14
- Must be screened as specified above.
- Must be under the supervision of an adult and must never be left alone with children.

Check-in/Check-out Procedure

For children below third grade, a security check-in/check-out procedure will be followed. The child will be signed in by a parent or guardian, who will receive a “child check” for the child similar to a claim check. The parent or guardian must present the “child check” in order to sign out the child from our care. In the event that a parent or guardian is unable to present the “child check,” <INSERT TITLE OF CHILD CARE LEADER> will be contacted. <TITLE> will be responsible for releasing the child to the care of a parent or guardian after discussing the surrounding circumstances with the parent or guardian.

Sick Child Policy

It is our desire to provide a healthy and safe environment for all of the children at Grace Lutheran Church. Parents are encouraged to be considerate of other children when deciding whether to place a child under our care. In general, children with the following symptoms should NOT be dropped off:

- Fever, diarrhea, or vomiting within the last 48 hours
- Green or yellow runny nose
- Eye or skin infections
- Other symptoms of communicable or infectious disease

Children who are observed by our workers to be ill will be separated from other children and the parent or guardian will be contacted to request that the child be picked up for the day.

Medications Policy

It is the policy of Grace Lutheran Church not to administer either prescription or non-prescription medications to the children under our care. Medications should be administered by a parent at home. Parents are reminded of our sick child policy.

Exceptions to the medications policy may be granted to parents of children with potentially life-threatening conditions (such as asthma or severe allergic reactions). Parents of such children should address their situation with <INSERT TITLE OF CHILD CARE LEADER> to develop a plan of action.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of Grace Lutheran Church not to administer corporal punishment, even if parents have suggested or given permission for it. There should be no spanking, grabbing, hitting, or other physical discipline of children. Workers should consult with Pastor or Grace Advisory Board President if assistance is needed with disciplinary issues.

Restroom Guidelines

Children five years of age and younger should use a classroom bathroom if one is available. If a classroom bathroom is not available, workers should escort a group of children to the hallway bathroom. They should always go in a group, never taking a child to the bathroom alone. The workers should check the bathroom first to make sure that it is empty, and then allow the children inside. The workers should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom. If a child is taking longer than seems necessary, the worker should open the bathroom door and call the child's name. If a child requires assistance, the workers should prop open the bathroom door, and leave the stall door open as they assist the child.

For children over the age of five, at least one adult male should take boys to the restroom and at least one adult female should take girls. The worker should check the bathroom first to make sure that the bathroom is empty, and then allow the children inside. The worker should then remain outside the bathroom door and escort the children back to the classroom.

For the protection of all, workers should *never* be alone with a child in a bathroom with the door closed and never be in a closed bathroom stall with a child. Parents are strongly encouraged to have their children visit the bathroom prior to each class.

Accidental Injuries to Children

In the event that a child or youth is injured while under our care, the following steps should be followed:

1. For minor injuries, scrapes, and bruises, workers will provide First Aid (Band-Aids, etc.) as appropriate and will notify the child's parent or guardian of the injury at the time the child is picked up from our care.
2. For injuries requiring medical treatment beyond simple First Aid, the parent and/or guardian will immediately be summoned in addition to the worker's supervisor. If warranted by circumstances, an ambulance will be called.
3. Once the child has received appropriate medical attention, an incident report will be completed in the case of injuries requiring treatment by a medical professional.

Training

Grace Lutheran Church will provide training on this child protection policy to all new childcare workers and will strive to provide opportunities for additional training classes or events on an annual basis. All workers are strongly encouraged to attend these training events.

Grace House Issues From July 30, 2023 Meeting

It is recommended by the Resource Board that in keeping with the thought of repairing and supporting the structural integrity of the house, we should go ahead and replace the gutters with gutter guards at the same time as the roof replacement. We are asking the board to vote to move ahead with this today.

After meeting a second time with the contractor and asking for more price breakdown, we (John Redick, Scott Gesell, Dede Crosmer and Donna Gesell) sat down to go over the original suggestion of things to be done to set a priority. We still did not get a breakdown of the price. He quoted 68,500 for the repair of the structural issues in the basement. The Resource Board met on Sunday July 30th to go over these issues and agree on the priorities. Some of the things can be done by volunteers as is suggested below. The Resource Board is asking that the Advisory Board give us the authority to move forward on at least the high priority items which would maintain the structural integrity of the house without coming back to the Advisory Board for a vote on each and every item. We are gathering additional vender information for all of these items.

High Priority:

1. Repair major structural issues in the basement to include rebuilding the basement stairs (John Redick and Mike Hunike will do), add support peers, replace or support girders where previous termite damage.
2. Replace roof with new lifetime shingles. Replace gutters with larger seamless gutters and gutter guards. (John feels that the price we have been given for both of these is possibly less than most companies would charge for the roof alone. The roof has been voted on by the advisory board already.)
3. Repair the plumbing issue in the drain in the yard and add the cleanout that is no longer visible. The drain is damaged 6 feet down. (This has been voted on by the advisory board already and will be completed after the roof.)
4. Repair electric power to kitchen lights.
5. Inspect water heaters and replace them if needed.
6. Test ourselves for lead paint.
7. Replace furnace for downstairs. Have all ductwork cleaned and all drip pans and lines inspected.
8. Repair outside electric drop. (Have quote for \$1,200)

Mid Priority:

1. Sealing crawl space and adding proper moisture barrier and possible dehumidifier.
2. Inspect plumbing.

Low Priority:

1. Paint if we find lead.
2. Remove and replace screening and screen door on rear porch. (John Redick and his brother-in-law Butch Worley have offered to do the labor.)
3. Replace ramp and fence railing. (John has offered to help. We would do this as a project with volunteers.)
4. Confirm all windows are active and means of egress and fire escape egress are per NC code. (John and Butch can do this.)
5. Install new hardware on exterior doors. (We can do this ourselves.)