

1903 COUNCIL MEETING NOTES

7 January (p. 60) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which the treasurer presented his quarterly report. After the council accepted the report, the chair declared the business for 1902 concluded and the council began the business of 1903. The election of the officers followed. The chair announced that the board of trustees had met the previous evening and modified the terms of sale for the church property. They suggested that \$275,000 would be a “nice sum”: \$100,000 in cash and the remaining \$175,000 to be loaned interest free for 6–12 months. The council decided to hold the quarterly congregational meeting on January 19. Confession and the Lord’s Supper were to take place in February [no specific date].

19 January (pp. 61–72) – Quarterly CONGREGATIONAL meeting at which the secretary and treasurer read their annual reports. At the meeting, 260 pew seats were rented, yielding \$1,836.50. Pr. Koepchen proposed several men for membership, all of whom were accepted. They were asked to sign the constitution at the next meeting. Koepchen’s annual report for 1902 followed.

The report begins with a homiletical section proclaiming the strength of the church grounded in the pure preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. The Word brings terror to sinners and comfort to those who are sorrowful over their sins, Koepchen declared. [He used Jacob’s exuberance at the presence of God at Bethel (Genesis 28:17) as an example of St. Luke’s also being a “gate of heaven.”] The congregation’s resolution for the new year should be to seek out those lost to worldly temptations so that, through the use of the means of grace, their faith could be strengthened.

The congregation needs to be re-energized, he asserted, warning that the few people active in the church could become exhausted or discouraged, especially when others ignore their obligations.

We need to expand Jesus’ Kingdom at this place. We must storm and conquer Satan, he declared. In a lengthy homiletical passage, he admonished the congregation to fight against Satan on the battlefield of the world and to resist the temptations of riches and pleasure. Rather, they should extend the Kingdom of God through active support of the church. The congregation should follow the church council’s good example in the reception of the means of grace. May God reward them and extend God’s kingdom at this place.

Koepchen then reviewed the year. The congregation supported three schools: Day School, Saturday School [set up to supplement the Sunday School], and Sunday School. Although the Day School instructed students in an environment of God’s Word, attendance was dwindling. In contrast, both the Saturday School and the Sunday School flourished to the glory of God under the leadership of Herr August Bush and his assistants. There, many children came to know and

love the Savior. In conjunction with the Sunday School, Bible class, taught in German and English, took place every Sunday morning to instruct the confirmands in the truth of salvation. The instruction was not only for the benefit of the individual souls, but also to benefit the congregation.

The Saturday School, which had opened in September 1902, saw numbers increase almost weekly so that by January 1903, 156 children attended. The behavior and attention of these children was remarkable, and the teachers were helped by the parents in the Christian upbringing of the children. What would happen if these children lost their faith by not being taught properly, he asked?

Eighty students attended the confirmation class, 64 of whom wished to be confirmed on Palm Sunday. The class had no mischievous students, Koepchen noted, but some took longer to learn how to behave at worship.

English worship and Sunday School had been held regularly since the fall, but it was too early to assess the success of this "necessary innovation" because the weather had often been bad. The Youth Group "gave no reason to complain last year." However, the young people seldom come to the Lord's Supper, and so Koepchen exhorted their parents to encourage them to partake of the Sacrament.

Koepchen encouraged the various congregational organizations to do more in service of the congregation as a whole and not to be satisfied with advancing their own narrow agendas.

Statistics from the pastor's annual report:

- Baptized:148
- Confirmed:72
- Married:103 couples
- Buried:72
- Communed:1,268

The annual report of the Sunday School superintendent [pp. 68-71] followed:

Bush once again asked to be relieved of his duties. He thanked Pr. Koepchen for teaching the Bible Class. The Sunday School had 24 male and 19 female instructors. There were also six teachers for the English classes. One teacher had left for health reasons; one, who had taught for 20 years, had joined an English church; another had moved out of the city. Several others, including eight female teachers, had left for various reasons [not identified].

Many teachers came from the Bible Class and were carefully supervised by the pastor.

The Sunday School had a library of more than 2,000 books.

Herr Bush urged the parents to bring their children on time and to stay to provide a good example.

Sunday School finances were healthy. In 1902 the Sunday School had contributed \$190 to missions. From 1883 to 1902 it had contributed \$3,551 to

the total Missions Fund of \$6,174.

Herr Bush hoped that more people would visit the Sunday School, especially the members of the church council and the parents of the children. He concluded by quoting 1 Peter 5:23 [no such verse].

Reports from the Missions Committee, the Support Committee, and the delegates to the Lutheran Hospital in East New York and Bethlehem Orphanage in College Point [no details].

The meeting ended with a sincere appeal that Herr Bush withdraw his request to be relieved of his duties.

4 February (p. 73) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which Johann Tietjen served as chair *pro tem*. The pastor reported that he and members of the elders had met with Paul Lübker [teacher of the Day School], asking him to be more active in the school as well as the church.

11 March (p. 74) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which they discussed a letter from the Germania Gesang Verein, offering to serve at the Easter Festival. Since it was too late to accept the offer, the council tasked Herr L. Luehrs to respond with thanks. Pr. Koepchen reported that the examination of the confirmands would be on Judica [the fifth Sunday in Lent], and confirmation would be on Palm Sunday (in German in the morning and in English in the afternoon). The council gave Koepchen permission to travel to Pittsburgh for a weekend to attend a meeting of the Missions Synod.

1 April (p. 75) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which the treasurer presented his quarterly report. H. W. Schmidt reported on the preparations for the annual boat trip in June [no details given].

20 April (p. 76) – Quarterly CONGREGATIONAL meeting at which 15 new members signed the constitution, and Herr G. Wagner was accepted into membership. Herr Schmidt reported further on the boat trip. It was decided to depart and return from the 50th St. dock [not clear if east or west side], if possible. The meeting voted to cancel evening worship services and afternoon Sunday School from June 15 to September 15. Herr Bush was asked to read the sermon in May when the pastor was at the synod meeting. The evening service that day was to be cancelled. The voters authorized the purchase of two safes. The sale of tickets (25¢) for the boat ride to the orphanage festival on Decoration Day [30 May] followed.

13 May (p. 77) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which Herr Schmidt discussed the arrangements for the June boat trip. He also reported that he had consulted with Frau Bahrenberg, who had offered a free safe. [The next sentence is unclear.] The council decided to see if a larger one could fit in the pastor's house. The chair reported that the estate of Frau Geiger had sent the treasurer \$1,000 to purchase some things [unclear what]. Whatever was purchased must have the donor's name inscribed and remain in

the church. Pr. Koepchen gave a short report on the synod meeting [no further details given]. The council decided to reimburse him for his travel expenses.

3 June (p. 78) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which Herr Schmidt informed members that J. H. Cordes and he had looked at various safes but had not purchased any. He also reported on final arrangements for the boat trip.

8 July (p. 79) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which the treasurer presented his quarterly report. Herr Schmidt informed the council that a safe had been purchased and delivered to the pastor's house. He also reported that, as in previous years, the boat trip had yielded a surplus: \$435. The council decided to cancel its August meeting. The chair gave the treasurer a check for \$250, a gift from Frau Bush [no reason for the gift given]. Pr. Koepchen announced that a missions festival, sponsored by the churches of New York, would be held on the second Sunday in September [September 13] at Palisades Park.

[No Church Council meeting in August 1903.]

2 September (p. 80) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which Pr. Koepchen reported on the Progymnasium in Hawthorne, NY [this school later became Concordia College, Bronxville] and noted that he would discuss the report at the next congregational meeting [no further details given]. The congregation would be notified of the quarterly meeting by postcard. Koepchen invited all council members to attend the missions festival. Because of the festival, the evening's service would be cancelled; evening services would resume after the summer hiatus on September 20. The chair hoped that all would go to the Bethlehem Orphanage on September 7 to play with the children. Pr. Koepchen reported that the Saturday School would start on September 12 and that the confirmation class would begin two days later. He also announced that he would give several lectures for the Reformation Festivals (on October 5 and 14 for adults; October 30 for children). Finally, he suggested that more collection boxes be purchased. The council deferred discussion on this until the next meeting.

21 September (pp. 81-82) – Quarterly CONGREGATIONAL MEETING at which the chair noted that the Progymnasium had a debt of \$14,000 and asked for suggestions about how St. Luke's might help. The meeting decided to place envelopes for this purpose in the pews until November 1, so that contributions could be collected with the weekly offering. Pr. Koepchen would announce the amount collected on Nov. 8. The chair then asked if collection boxes should be placed in the church for the benefit of Bethlehem Orphanage. The pastor announced that there would be a combined gathering of Lutheran churches on November 10 for the benefit of the City Mission. The voters then approved Pr. Koepchen's request to be absent on the second Sunday evening in October to preach at a dedication in New Haven, CT. [The next sentence is unclear. It has to do with the afternoon Sunday School and the confirmation classes.] They also approved his request for new hymnals for the choir. Koepchen read a letter from Trinity Church [6th St. and Avenue B] about the release of a young woman teacher at the orphanage. The delegates to the orphanage were to look into this matter and report to the pastor and

secretary [no further details given about this situation]. The chair read another letter [content not mentioned] from Immanuel Church, which was laid on the table. Herre Schmidt and Wittpenn were asked to work with the Sunday School to plan next year's boat trip. A report from Sunday School Superintendent Bush followed [no details given].

7 October (p. 83) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which the treasurer presented his quarterly report. The council approved the response to the letter from Trinity Church [no details given]. The secretary was tasked with making a copy and sending it as soon as possible. Pr. Koepchen reported on the upcoming Reformation Festival, which St. Luke's would celebrate along with other congregations. The council requested that Koepchen ask some of the young men of the congregation to help distribute the programs and song sheets at the event. Council members agreed that as many of them as possible should attend this celebration.

4 November (p. 84) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL, which focused on the November 10 benefit for the City Mission. The entire council was asked to participate. Several members offered to take care of the financial arrangements. The chair named a nominating committee to select candidates for upcoming expiring terms of office. Herr Schmidt reported that the annual boat trip would take place on the third Thursday of June 1904.

2 December (p. 85) – Meeting of the CHURCH COUNCIL at which Herr Schmidt reported that next year's boat trip would be on Wednesday, June 22. Pr. Koepchen announced that the profit from the November 10 benefit was approximately \$62 and had been sent to the City Mission. The council then selected the nominees for various upcoming vacancies. The election would take place at the December 28 congregational meeting.

28 December (pp. 86-87) – Quarterly CONGREGATIONAL meeting at which the chair announced the purposes of the meeting: the election of officers for 1904 and the rental of pew seats. The congregation decided to conduct a collection for the Progymnasium until January 15. The chair then announced that the congregation had a financial shortfall of about \$45 for 1903. The congregation decided to take a freewill offering at the meeting to address this. (More than necessary was collected.) Pr. Koepchen read a letter from the Church of the Redeemer on 44th St. inviting the congregation to its dedication on January 3 at 3 PM and to a special evening for St. Luke's on Thursday, January 5 at 8 PM. Elections followed. The chair announced that those elected would be installed on the Sunday after New Year's Day.