

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Agenda**  
**May 18, 2023**  
**6:30 pm 8:30**  
**Fellowship Hall**

*God's Family Serving Christ With Love*

Geoff: Present
Kory: Present
Kerry: Present
Tina: Present
Jaimie: Present
Lisa: Present
Brian: Present
Mark: Present
Braxton Druckery – Youth Representative -absent with permission

Dwelling in the Word – Jaimie Rudolph

Call to Order @ 6:38

Prayer by Mark Teslik

Approval of the Agenda

**Motion made to accept the agenda by Tina Thomas Seconded by Brian Connor Motion passed**

Approval of Last Month's Minutes

**Motion made to approve last month's meeting minutes with changes by Geoff Gilbert Seconded by Kory Anderson Motion passed**

Pastor Report

Parish Associate Report

Committee Reports

A. Finance

B. Property

C. Worship & Music

Approval of Committee Reports

**Motion made to approve committee reports by Brian Connor Seconded by Lisa Cook Motion passed**

Old Business

Taste of Portage – Brian indicates that we will not have approval for the type of food we sell until mid-June.

New Business

Strategic Planning -Will be immediately following this meeting.

Scripts now Raise Right –We can set this up so people can pay directly online, Tina will work with Carla on this.

Cab Money -Decision was made to just keep the funds in case of future needs.

Volunteer Recognition -We will do this around Thanksgiving time.

Office Hours -Proposed hours of 8-11 am, Monday -Friday – **Motion to approve office hours by Lisa Cook and second by Jaimie Rudolph- Motion passed**

Sound System Fellowship Hall -Del is looking into getting bids for a sound system. Will review once bids are in.

Door Locking Policy – Kory presented that based on sheriff recommendations we should keep the front doors locked during service. This will require 2 ushers. They have been doing this for the past 3 weeks and it has worked out fine.

Discussion around keeping admin door always locked. We do have the ring doorbell, but it goes off after people are already in the building.

**Motion to keep doors locked during service and the admin door always locked by Kory Anderson and seconded by Brian Connor Motion Passed**

Prevent Suicide Walk- We received a request to be a sponsor for the prevent suicide walk in Portage. There are 3 different levels of sponsorship \$100 for bronze, \$250 for silver, and \$500 or more for gold. **Motion made to sponsor at the bronze level by Mark Teslik and seconded by Tina Thomas – Motion Passed**

Alcohol Policy – Will be discussed at June meeting.

Adjourn @ 7:33

**Motion to adjourn by Tina Thomas Seconded by Brian Connor Motion passed**

Lord's Prayer

### Pastor's Report

Things at BLC this month continue to be busy! Here is a short overview of what I have been working on.

In worship we have continued to celebrate the Easter season each week as Pentecost quickly approaches at the end of the month. We had a "Come As You Are" worship service last week focusing on the theme of Grow Your Faith. A big thank you to Tania for putting many of the pieces together for this service and for inviting our guests from Lutheran Campus Ministry. It was great to hear about their stories and reflect on the impact a faith community can have on us as well as being a part of the prayer station in the narthex. Be sure to check it out and add your own prayers!

We had our last confirmation class last week where we played games, ate pizza, and the kids were able to spend their Bible Bucks at the store. It was a good way to wrap up the school year and we will be working on having a retreat in the future.

I made one hospice visit and a few phone calls this month to offer pastoral care. Additionally, we had Ginny Sheimo's funeral on Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. I also met with Barb last week to plan the funeral services for Dick Olson which will be on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Grief continues to be ever present for many. I am regularly reminded of this truth.

In the office, Tina has officially started in her role as the parish administrative assistant and things are going well. Tina is planning on working 8-11 am Monday-Friday so we are proposing the new office hours be posted as 8-11 am M-F or by appointment. We will need to approve the new office hours. Additionally, Tina is okay with remaining on council, however, there is a concern about having Tina on staff while also being secretary, which is a member of the executive committee. This could pose a potential conflict of interest. I would ask that we discuss as a council and decide how to proceed.

I attended a couple meetings this month to discuss strategic planning and prepare for our discussion today. I look forward to seeing where our discussion leads! Additionally, I met with my First Call Group this month and we also had a statewide Zoom call to learn about constitutions. I led our Church Activity Planning meeting (previously known as All Committee) at the beginning of the month and I met with a few individuals on an as needed basis. Other meetings I attended were finance, my weekly text study group, my weekly colleague meeting, the synod conference meeting, and the synod rostered women's gathering.

Looking ahead, there are a lot of fun things happening on May 21<sup>st</sup> with the end of the school year celebration, senior recognition, and plant sale. Also, Synod Assembly is this coming Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>

in Mt. Horeb. Thank you to Tina and Geoff for representing our congregation this year! That's all for this month!

In peace,  
Pastor Jaime Benson

## **Parish Associate Report**

### **Sunday School**

The end of the year celebration and potluck is planned for May 21<sup>st</sup>. I am working on finalizing the Sunday School calendar for next year so that the teachers can plan for their classes over the summer if they want to. We are discussing whether to keep classes on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month or switch them to every other weekend throughout the year. It was challenging for the parents, and sometimes the teachers, to remember which Sundays we had class this year.

### **Ecumenical VBS**

VBS week will be July 31<sup>st</sup>-August 4<sup>th</sup>. The theme this year will be "Stellar".

### **Fruit of the Spirit, Kids Club & Service Projects**

#### ***Fruit of the Spirit Kids Club/Family Night***

I would like to incorporate the kids club into a Wednesday night family night event, one night each month, starting in September. I propose that we make the last Wednesday of each month a casual family night with a casual worship service. We will invite the children ages 3K through 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to leave during worship for a Kids Club activity. After worship, there will be a potluck or pizza dinner night with Kids Club for the older kids to follow (3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>). Confirmation students will earn service hours for participating/helping with everything that evening. I hope the high school youth will help with the activities somehow that evening, either with worship or the Kids Club.

#### ***Local Missions/Service projects:***

We are starting the 'We Rise' helping hands program this summer at BLC. Local service opportunities will be posted on the board for anyone to complete. More information will be coming about that in an email to the congregation soon. Also, we are looking for high school youth and their parents to coordinate a build date for a new Habitat for Humanity house in Wisconsin Dells one Saturday in August. This is still in process; no one has committed to this yet.

### **Confirmation**

The confirmation students made the prayer station in the narthex that will be there until this fall. We had our last day of class on May 10<sup>th</sup> after the "Grow Your Faith" worship and pizza dinner. We are currently scheduling a mini retreat day at BLC this summer with the confirmation students, and we are also looking into a retreat weekend at Lutherdale over the fall/winter. We will need to start fundraising soon for this; the expense per person is reasonable.

### **Youth**

Pr. Jaime is planning two youth bonfire nights this summer for connection and reflection: Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>. We are hoping to add a Youth retreat weekend at Lutherdale in 2023-2024; this may help to engage the youth that are not going to the Dominican Republic in January.

DR Trip Update for Megan: no new updates. They have raised \$14,557.50 so far with a goal of \$20,000. They will plan on a few more casserole sales in the future along with a bowling fundraiser on August 26<sup>th</sup>, possibly butter braid sales, and another trivia night this fall.

## **2024 Youth Gathering**

We have not received any interest in attending the Youth Gathering in 2024, so we might shift our energy to summer camp for all ages, even family camp, during the summer of 2024. We will certainly try again for the Youth Gathering in 2027; I am personally looking forward to attending with my family at that time.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS:**

Although these events are very important for our community outreach, I am struggling with finding the right balance of my time between faith formation activities and special events. We have a full calendar this summer, and I need some of that time to prepare for the educational programs and other events at BLC this fall. It would be amazing if we could find an assistant specifically for community outreach events, but I doubt we could find a volunteer for this. We will have to get better at asking people to help. To be clear, I DO NOT believe the right answer is to not have these events. We have to put more energy into community outreach.

## **“Feed Your Soul” Summer Farmers Markets:**

So far, we have 8 vendors registered with more on the way. I will be working on a map of the parking lot with the designated vendor spaces. I have been working with Del to make sure we have the electrical power we need for our concerts. Although I have been able to organize and promote this event so far, I am going to need additional help as we get closer to the events & on the day of the events. We plan to have a tent just for BLC for donated goods, beverages, and possibly snacks/food. If we can find someone to run brats/hot dogs, that would be a great fundraiser as well.

## **PetFest Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup>: -Moving to September 10<sup>th</sup>**

It will be nice to host this event once again at BLC. However, I may not be available on Sunday, August 13<sup>th</sup> for the PetFest, although I will be available to organize everything up until that day. Do we want to consider another date? We could move this earlier to July 23<sup>rd</sup>, or we can move it back to September when the weather is cooler for the animals. Please let me know your thoughts.

## **Kaylin Kole/Brandsma: -Brian is going to see if he can get Robin to assist with this – Discussed that concert would need to be on any night but Wednesday due to service. Proposed date of August 7<sup>th</sup>**

Kaylin is interested in having a concert at BLC on Wednesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>. She is willing to start at 5:30 or 6:00 and run 1-1-½ hours. I know that she has some Christian songs in her performance list, so part of this could take the place of worship that night, possibly. She would like this to be a ticketed event, selling tickets for \$10-\$12, with 50% of the ticket sales going to the church. I personally can help organize this, but I cannot take the lead. I will be at VBS July 31-August 4<sup>th</sup> and unable to help. If we can find someone to take the lead on this, I strongly encourage council to approve this. Not only would it bring the community to our church, but it would also re-engage one of our former church families.

## **Sunday school kick-off event on Sunday, August 27<sup>th</sup>**

More information coming soon.

Tania Anderson

## Committee Reports

### **FINANCE**

Committee Met May 1, 2023

#### **Financial Update**

1. Jerry S provided the financial update. Our total income last month was \$36,007 with about \$12,000 of that coming from mission trip fundraisers. Our YTD income is about \$93,000 (subtracting youth group fundraising). This amount is consistent with last years money raised. **The concern is that while the church budgeted for an overall loss because of large property expenditures that are expected, we are falling short of our anticipated income. We are about 4% or \$4,400 short in general income. For the approved budget to work we need to grow our income. The church needs to continue to actively pursue alternative sources of income.**

#### **Old Business**

1. Council Update
  - a. Council discussed alternate revenue streams and brainstormed some ideas.
  - b. The congregational strategic planning is now working on values.
  - c. Live streaming training is set up to teach new people.
  - d. Tina Thomas was hired as the office manager.
2. Audit
  - a. Audit was completed March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Only comment was that the designated fund needs to make sure money is moved correctly, full audit report attached.
  - b. Jerry S submitted a letter for the council on the audit. Letter is attached.
3. Alternative sources of Income

Follow up discussion on alternative sources of income. Jerry said he will investigate grants. Pr Jaime B. said property committee is looking at alternate sources of income from the land

### **PROPERTY**

Max Jenatscheck from the Columbia County Sheriff's Office came to conduct a survey of the church property/building and gave some recommendations for improvements we can make with respect to a potential active shooter situation at the church. The committee discussed starting right away with the locked front door during service with two ushers monitoring the door to let people in. The other ideas on the list will be discussed by the committee at a later date. Max is willing to come back to the church and give his power point presentation to a larger group of church members (we could invite other Portage church members to attend). It is a 4-hr session that includes the power point presentation as well as some hands-on training.

Suggestions from Max:

- Review classroom door locks. Close and lock doors as much as possible.
- Add readily available door window coverings.
- During service, lock front doors after service starts and have two ushers monitor people entering.
- Outside window coverings – blinds, plastic film, etc.
- Verify outside lights are operable.
- Protect front door (bollards, planters).
- Look at locking mechanism and/or window coverings for inside front doors. Or provide a device that can prevent doors from being opened (i.e. wrap a fire hose around the handles).

Close sanctuary doors during service.  
Get training on how to barricade a door.  
Metal doors to east and west wings keep closed as much as possible.  
Get training on a safe wall.  
Make available a glass breaker for outside windows.  
Review key accountability, key locations.  
Provide shades, locks, keys for nursery.  
Cages or blocking (boulders) for the gas meter and propane tank outside.  
Get training on getting away/getting safe and rally points.  
Discussed there is no PA system

A workday was done on Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 9am to pull the 6 bushes in front of the church, plant 3 new trees, and work on adding topsoil and additional seeding to the new ditch.

We discussed the idea of converting the rental acreage on the church property to CRP. If we can do this, we could make up to 4 times what we are making now for rent.

Mowing starts this week. Jack will work on updating the mowing schedule and get that out.

Jack, Del and I will be reviewing the building use policies.

April 27, Changed mower blades and sharpened old set, with Dennis Benson

April 28 Mowed lawns for 1st time of the season.

April 29, Went to Link's garden center to purchase three varieties of maple trees and new shrubs with Jeff Melby.

May 2, Replace light bulb in Narthex with a LED bulb and that evening met Johnson Controls tech to replace the annunciator panel at front doors of the church.

May 6, Brought skid steer to church to pull existing shrubs from the front of the church and replace them with new plantings. Planted 3 maple trees on the South side of church to replace the ash trees that were taken down last year. Place black dirt in areas and seeded. Very good crew--Ed Cable, Tim Kratz, Steve McNeal, Brian Connors, Chad Hayes and sons, Alex and Ian, Jeff Melby, Ben Rudolph and Ethan.

Submitted by Del Molden

### **WORSHIP & MUSIC**

Will be meeting on June 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. Praise team will be singing during worship on June 4<sup>th</sup>. They will also be signing at the county fair service.