

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes
January 18th, 2024
6:30 pm

“God’s family working together to welcome all.”

Present: Kerry Melby, Geoff Gilbert, Kory Anderson, Jaimie Rudolph, Lisa Cook, Brian Conner, Mark Teslik, Pr. Jaime
Absent with notice: Braxton Druckrey, Tina Thomas (resigned), Mark Teslik

Council Terms:

Geoff: 1st: 2020-2023; 2nd: 2023-2026
Kory: 1st: 2020-2023; 2nd: 2023-2026
Kerry: 1st: 2021-2024; 2nd: 2024-2027
Tina: 1st: 2022-2025
Jaimie: 1st: 2022-2025
Lisa: 1st: 2022-2025
Brian: 1st: 2023 – 2026
Mark: 1st: 2023-2026
Braxton Druckrey – Youth Representative

Dwelling in the Word – Pr. Jaime

Call to Order by Kerry Melby at 6:48 p.m.

Prayer

Approval of the Agenda motion made by Geoff and second by Lisa, motion carried

Approval of Last Month’s Minutes motion made by Lisa, second by Geoff, motion carried.

Pastor Report

Committee Reports

- Kory highlighted property report, advised that he and Dell met with the neighbor as planned and that went well. They were ok with us still maintaining the property line with the trees.

Approval of Committee Reports motion made by Kory, second by Geoff, motion carried.

Old Business

Live Stream Training Follow Up

- Another person was trained, still working on getting schedules to align to train a couple more.

LEAD Conference

- Five total going, if anyone else wants to attend, let Pr Jaime know.

Treasurer Update

- Member, Steve McNeal talked with Jerry and Pr Jaime and has agreed to be the treasurer for the church. Motion made by Lisa to accept Steve as church treasurer, second by Geoff, motion carried. Steve declined the treasurer salary.

New Business

Annual Report Approval

- Reviewed and made edits, Property Improvement Plan will be added, info about youth mission trip added. Brian made a motion to approve the annual report, second by Lisa, motion carried.

Annual Meeting Details

- Discussed details of meeting. Geoff/Kory will handle the member check-off and voting slips. Jaimie will take notes. Group to preview recorded portion from Jerry if possible.

Stewardship Initiative

- Lisa/Brian will share this at the Annual Meeting. They are just doing some edits and will email it out to counsel for review prior.

Council Devotionals

- Discussed various ways to do devotionals. Pr Jaime did Dwelling in the Word today and shared Luke chapter 10:1-13. She advised that we could rotate devotional leads again and use same verses, change verses, use a form or have her lead them. People like having a form so we have some consistency. Decided to have Pr Jaime lead this again at next meeting and we decide from there what to do since we'll have a new council member joining too.

Adjourn- motion made by Jaimie, second by Pr Jaime, motion carried, meeting ended 7:54 p.m.

Lord's Prayer

Pastor's Report

Here is an overview of where I have spent my time this month:

We had our Blue Christmas service on Wednesday, Dec. 20th and then we had two services on Christmas Eve. Our 2 pm service had 113 in attendance and our 4 pm service had 135 in attendance. Overall, we had about 50 more join us on Christmas Eve compared to last year and it was a wonderful time of celebrating Jesus coming into the world. We also had 65 joins us for Lessons and Carols on Dec. 31st. We are now in the season of Epiphany and will be moving into Lent next month with Ash Wednesday on Feb. 14th. During Lent we will be having a new Lenten drama each week along with Holden Evening Prayer on Wednesdays. Be sure to sign up to play a part in the Lenten dramas if you haven't already!

I made some phone calls this month to offer pastoral care and I have been working on updating our list/system so that our visitation team can be on the same page with the addition of Janice working remotely. I also officiated a private baptism this month for a grandchild of some members.

The first week of the year was occupied with interviews, reference checks, and eventually offering the parish administrative assistant position to Amy Kozickowski who will start next week. This transition has involved a lot, but I am very excited to have Amy join us at Bethlehem! I hope we can make her feel welcome from the very beginning of her time with us. Thank you to everyone who has helped during this transition! I greatly appreciate the additional support.

After meeting with Tania to discuss confirmation, we have decided to move to having class two Wednesdays a month, the first and third Wednesdays to align with Sunday School. We are also going to try utilizing Echo the Story curriculum and working in small groups more than we have been. We are hopeful that these changes will be more sustainable in the long term because burnout is becoming very apparent with the current process.

Some meetings I attended this month include my colleague group, finance, weekly text study, synod conference, worship & music committee, and stewardship. Additionally, I have offered some additional counseling and support to some of our leaders as interpersonal conflicts arise. I was also taking some time off the week after Christmas and was grateful for a chance to decompress after the holidays and before the new year. This month has been full in a lot of ways, and I am excited to see what comes next!

Blessings,
Pastor Jaime Benson

Committee Reports

Finance

Committee met January 8, 2024

Financial Update

1. Total income for last year of about 306,450 (removed Mission Trip dollars). Compared with 2022 income of \$299,000 (removed Mission Trip dollars).
2. Expenses for 2023 were \$347,000 with \$55,000 of that in mission trip expenses for net profit of +\$12,300 for the year.
3. Overall finances stable

Benevolence

1. End of year Benevolence was paid.

Financial Self-Assessment

1. Resourceful Servant is a tool of the ELCA for congregations to look at their financial habits/status. The finance committee reviewed and discussed the questions. Pr Jaime entered our answers into the online program. The result of our discussion was that we scored an 87.6 and considered “proficient”. This can be reviewed again with a new treasurer or in a year to see how we are doing.

Budget

1. 2024 budget approved by council and will be presented to congregation for a vote on January 28, 2024.
2. Building fundraiser for the Property Improvement Plan will also be a topic at the congregational meeting.

Submitted by Jaimie Rudolph

Property

Dec 14 – Jan 15

Dec 19-----Set all thermostats for the Christmas schedule of services.

Jan 2 -----Removed a road killed deer located by the septic drainage field with the help of Dennis Benson.

Jan 5 -----Removed ice build-up under the freezer compartment of the refrigerator in the Sacristy. The problem was air not able to circulate and condensation built up.

Jan 6-----Removed snow from sidewalks and door entrances. (Jerry S. was on leave from Jan 5 –Jan 14)

Jan 9-----Removed snow from sidewalks and door entrances with the help of Kory Anderson.

Jan 10 ----Removed snow from sidewalks and door entrances and salted sidewalks.

Jan 11----Removed snow from sidewalks and door entrances.

Jan 12----Removed snow form sidewalks and door entrances with the help of Butch Jahoda.

Jan 13----- Removed snow from sidewalks and entrances prior to taking down Christmas decorations and the removal of the tree.

Jan 15----Thawed out the frozen lock on the Administration door.

Submitted by Del Molden, Property

Stewardship

Stewardship Committee met on Monday, January 15, to continue talking about plans for the upcoming year, primarily centered around the sharing of time and talents (and financial resources) to collectively work towards the goals, mission and vision we have set as a congregation. We had a great discussion around communication and being welcoming and open as we look to new ways to encourage volunteerism. We are working on a general calendar for the year to highlight activities and events, which we will share with the congregation as opportunities to share in the mission of BLC. We will ask everyone to look ahead, see what resonates with them and sign up to help. We will also use this chance to encourage everyone to share ideas they may have for other events and activities we might be able to offer. We will introduce this effort at the annual meeting, then follow up over the next few weeks to "recruit" in earnest.

Our next meeting will be Monday, February 19 at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Lisa Cook

Worship & Music

Met Jan. 8, 2024, via Zoom

Old Business: Dave Yerke called inquiring about tuning the piano in the choir room. Carla indicated that the piano did need tuning and would contact Dave. Also, the organ did need to be looked at. Carla will also contact them to come for the organ.

New Business: Discussion about Lent. Decision had been made to use the Holden evening prayer this year with a Lenten drama in the sermon spot. Carla indicated that Jamie Rudolph has agreed to be the cantor for the Holden evening prayer. Discussed Lenten suppers were discussed. Last year we sent out a sign-up sheet via email which seemed to work well. The following groups will be asked to do Lenten suppers. Women's group, Praise team, choir and organists, High school youth group, Sunday School and council, Confirmation group and All committee members. We would like an Easter brunch again with church services at 8am and 10:30. Brunch in between the services. Youth group will do the service on Feb 4 and talk about their mission trip. Katie indicated that the praise team will sing on Feb 11. Agreed to have another healing service as the first one was well received on Feb 18. Pastor Jamie will make sure palms are ordered for Palm Sunday. Office to take care of order sheet for Easter flowers from Links greenhouse. Carla indicated that she has an anthem that the choir and probably the Sunday school will sing on Palm Sunday. Pastor Jamie inquired about having first communion on Maundy Thursday thinking that it may be more meaningful for the participants. She will check with Jeff Melby. Maundy Thursday service to be at 6:30 with Good Friday at 1:00 pm. Mark indicated that the Catholic church is looking for members to be part of a choir for a Tenebrae service at 7 pm on Good Friday.

Next meeting April 16 at 7 pm

Submitted by Carla Gerhardt