

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Agenda
November 16th, 2023
6:30 pm

“God’s family working together to welcome all”

Dwelling in the Word – Was not done
Call to Order by Kerry Melby at 6:39 pm
Prayer – Pastor Jaime
Approval of the Agenda
 Remove Parish Associate listing
 Nothing to add

Jaimie R. made motion to approve Agenda with removal
Seconded by Geoff Motion carried

Approval of Last Month’s Minutes
 Discussion of Minutes
 Pastor Jaime will provide edits to Tina

Geoff made motion to approve Minutes with Pastor Jaime’s edits Seconded by Jaimie R. Motion carried

Pastor Report discussed

Committee Reports

 Kerry asked about Trunk or Treat; discussion ensued about successful event, great attendance, desire for more trunks in the future

 Mark made correction to Worship & Music report: Praise Team is singing on 11/19, not the 15th

 Kerry asked about item on Property report relating to "cleaning service by Kris"; was explained that Kris provides cleaning services as a back-up when Jerry is gone

Finance report

 Discussion around monitoring certain numbers going-forward, possibly putting some "flags" in place; discussion around Building funds, fundraising, Building Improvement Plan, etc; discussion around need for Narrative Budget to tell the story versus a spreadsheet

Approval of Committee Reports

Jaimie made a motion to approve reports and a second motion by Lisa Cook, Motion Carried

Old Business

 Property lines When things settle down at work Kory will have someone come out to survey and mark the property lines. Response will be sent to neighbors.

 Bulletin/Chimes what can be printed We agreed that we would post on bulletin boards and not put in bulletin.

New Business

 Replenish building funds. Discussion around this and it was determined that Pastor will discuss with property committee and then finance to see what the needs are. As a council we will discuss moving forward and how to best ask for funds.

Council Terms:

Geoff: 1st: 2020-2023; 2nd: 2023-2026

Kory: 1st: 2020-2023; 2nd: 2023-2026

Kerry: 1st: 2021-2024

Tina: 1st: 2022-2025

Jaimie: 1st: 2022-2025

Lisa: 1st: 2022-2025

Brian: 1st: 2023 – 2026

Mark: 1st: 2023-2026

Braxton Druckrey – Youth Representative

Set an annual meeting date. February 4th, with snow date of February 11th. The annual meeting date was later moved to Jan. 28th (approved via email) to accommodate the Mission Trip service on Feb. 4th.

Stewardship. This was covered during committee reports

Live stream training how do we get more people. Everyone is going to think of someone they think would be interested in doing live streaming and personally invite them. We will set up trainings as needed.

Portage Country Club Advertising. It was determined that we will not be advertising here.

Adjourn

Motion by Tina Thomas with a second by Geoff Gilbert to adjourn the meeting at 7:42

Lord's Prayer

Pastor's Report

Greetings, council members!

Last month we had our meeting via email. I look forward to seeing you this week at our next meeting. Here is what has been happening this past month that I have been involved with.

We welcomed our newest class of confirmands on Reformation Sunday this past month. Congratulations again to Alex Hayes, Courtney Hernkind, Shia Grosklaus, Jackson Randall, and Zoe Zellmer. Also, a big thank you to the mentors, Geoff and Linda, for walking with them during their time in confirmation. Geoff, I greatly appreciate all the time and energy you have given to this program and the kids. Thank you for being there for these many years and we wish you the best.

In confirmation we have been learning about different religions around the world and talking about them in relation to what has been happening in Israel and Gaza. We are looking into taking a fieldtrip in the future to Beth El Synagogue in Madison hopefully sometime this winter. We also had a high school youth group gathering the first Wednesday of November and had 8 students come along with Megan, Tania, and myself. Megan has been meeting with the kids before school to do a brief devotion/check in on Wednesday mornings. They are continuing this and are now meeting weekly. We have planned a service day in December for the youth and will look at monthly gatherings at church for them.

For pastoral care this month I officiated the interment for Brian Calhoun who passed away last year. I also met with the family of Diane Grueneberg after her sudden passing this past month. I officiated her funeral this past Saturday and Dan Pulsfus delivered the message. I also made a home visit and a phone call check-in this month.

Some meetings I attended this month include my colleague group, synod conference, finance, weekly text study, and stewardship. Additionally, I led the personnel committee, worship & music committee, church activity planning, and staff meetings. I also held a new member orientation this month and we welcomed 6 new members last week. Our new members are Shirley Stibb-Banks, Cary Dahl, Joe

Jackowski, Charlie Olson, and Justin & Mercedes Cave. Please be sure to greet them if you haven't had a chance yet!

I also attended two of our community events over the past month including Trunk or Treat and Trivia. It was great to connect with other members of the community and spread some joy in the process. I also have my first call conference this week, so I am out of the office Sunday afternoon through Tuesday. Hope you have a great week!

Blessings,
Pastor Jaime Benson

Committee Reports

FINANCE

Meeting held November 6, 2023

1. For the month of October, BLC had \$31,707 of income and \$282,905 year to date. Comparing October 2023 to prior year, we have received \$31,125 more this year. This is primarily related to three items. We received \$17,205 more in Memorial offering, \$4,656 in Building-Mortgage offering, and \$22,936 in Mission Trip fundraising. General Offering is income is \$4,478 lower than prior year to date.
2. We continue to keep an eye on general offerings as they are trending lower than prior year. Building Mortgage Offering has offset this trend in 2023 with the above growth year to date.
3. Total Expenses for October 2023 are \$21,791, with no significant unplanned variances this month. Year to date, we have \$255,390 in expenses compared to \$226,281 in 2022 through October. This significant variance for 2023 year to date is related to replacing a rooftop unit, pew cushions, and chair replacements. Each of these was planned for in 2023.
4. Net income year to date is \$27,739. We do have approximately \$18k in outstanding invoices for youth mission trip deposits and old construction costs where the bill was finally turned in. This will reduce the year-to-date net income to about \$10k. Overall, we are in a position to replenish some of our reserves for future years.

2024 Budget

1. Jerry emailed Janice questions to ask committee chairs at the Church Activity Planning meeting and the committee chairs for any budget requests.
2. Building Account Fund raising
 - a. A discussion on replenishing the balance in the building fund. Since we have to probably purchase more air handlers, we will need more money in this account for this and other future maintenance.
 - b. We talked about ideas like- capital campaign, basic fundraising, incentive program etc. We also talked about where the responsibility for this lies.
 - c. We decided that it needs to be an active part of council meetings and other meetings, added to November council meeting agenda.

PROPERTY

Oct 20--Prepared Scag lawnmower for off-season, pressure washed, installed newly sharpened blades and put gas stabilizer in fuel tanks. Work accomplished with Butch Jahoda.

Oct 20--Installed new emergency light by Sacristy. Emergency light model was recalled because of possible fire hazard. Company sent new light at no cost.

Oct 24--Inspected all rooftop units before the heating season, all units checked out without any issues. Changed filters for the unit that supplies heating and cooling for the office area. Dennis Benson assisted.

Nov 4—Changed all thermostats clocks for DLS and verified heating schedules.

Was informed by Jerry (custodian) that he will be gone Nov 23 thru Dec 3rd. Will need one cleaning service by Kris.

Note: We can expect a 4% increase in utilities for the coming year.

WORSHIP & MUSIC

Praise team is singing on 11/15 and choir on 11/22. Gifts of Bethlehem is 12/03, Blue Christmas is 12/20. Christmas Eve services are at 2 pm and 4 pm, lessons and carols will be 12/31

STEWARDSHIP

Pastor Jaime, Brian Connor, Judy Traut, Jeff Melby, Kerry Melby and Lisa Cook met on October 26, 2023.

Pastor Jaime explained a formal pledge letter and card would not be sent this fall, and we would instead focus on practicing gratitude. It was decided to focus on four areas for the four Sundays of November; gratitude for people who have gone before us or people in our lives now, gratitude around the various ways we share meals / food, gratitude for ministries inside our church and gratitude for ministries outside our church. Thank you cards are being offered in the Narthex, with encouragement for members of the congregation to make a goal of sending out 2 thank yous during the month. A tree of gratitude was set up in the Narthex, as well, and each week will offer different colored cut-out leaves for people to add to the tree.

We will attempt to focus on the importance of giving your time and talents, not just financial giving. And we will look at ways to create conversation around financial giving and other avenues of stewardship as a year-round focus, instead of just bringing it up once a year during a pledge drive.

Further discussion centered around ideas or themes to focus on, going forward, in order to create a consistent message of gratitude and stewardship as part of our vision and mission at BLC. We talked about utilizing our projector and screen more often before, during and after worship for thank yous and updates about ministries, as well as creating a welcoming brochure / pamphlet to give out at events and a photo card for members of the congregation to mail out or share with people they encounter. Lots of excitement and enthusiasm was shared and there are plenty of ideas to pursue.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, November 30th at 7pm and all are welcome and encouraged to join in.