

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
August 18, 2022

Called to order by Kerry Melby at 6:32 pm.

Attendance:

Halley Harms- Virtual
Kory Anderson- Virtual
Geoff Gilbert- Virtual
Kerry Melby- Virtual
Ruth Price- Virtual
Jaimie Rudolph- Virtual
Tina Thomas- Virtual
Lisa Cook- Virtual
Pastor Jaime- Virtual

Prayer by Pastor Jaime

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Jaimie Rudolph to approve the proposed agenda as presented. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF THE JULY MEETING MINUTES **Motion by Lisa Cook second by Jaimie Rudolph to approve the July meeting minutes with the addition of adding Kerry Melby as the “Called to order by”.**

Pastor’s Report

This month has had some more unique worship experiences! In collaboration with Portage UMC and Portage Presbyterian churches we hosted a Worship Experience at the Fair on Sunday, July 31st at 11 am. It was a nice service and a great opportunity to collaborate ecumenically with some of our neighbor churches in the Portage community. We had our Blessing of the Pets service and Pet Fest this past weekend! There were about 60-70 in attendance with 20-30 pets in addition to that. A big thank you to Tania for all of her work organizing the event in addition to all of the volunteers who helped make it a reality! And thank you to all of the vendors for joining us!

Over the past month, I was able to make a couple of visits to our homebound members and call a couple of others to check in with them after having surgery. I also met with the family of Carol Schumacher to plan her funeral service and we had her service on Saturday, August 13th at church with a luncheon afterward. A big thank you to all those who helped with food/setup/cleanup! Your time and talents are much appreciated!

I had multiple meetings these past few weeks regarding plans for Sunday School and Confirmation this Fall. I’ve met with Tania and Jeanette individually and together to discuss education plans for the fall. Please see Tania’s report for more information on our plans thus far.

I also was able to help with VBS on the first day leading the Opening and the Closing. It was fun to connect with the kids and learn more about how God loves us no matter what.

I was able to connect with a previous professor on Zoom and discuss some different ideas and options for stewardship for us and I shared these at our Stewardship Committee meeting on the 28th. We had the All Committee Meeting on August 1st and made some plans for the fall in addition to discussing strategic planning next steps. Additionally, I met with Jerry, Carol, Julie, and Janice to discuss data collection for the strategic planning process last week. I am so grateful we have many involved in this process. It is a blessing! I was invited to the New to Synod Gathering in July that was held at Hope Lutheran in Milton. It was a nice opportunity to connect with others who have joined our synod recently and have taken on new roles. Also, I attended my other normal meetings: finance committee, text study, first call group, synod conference meeting, and our staff meetings. It has been a very busy month!

We also had the Rummage Sale on August 6th and I wanted to thank all those who made the sale possible, especially Barb and Dick for the organization and many additional hours they put in to make this happen. It is no small feat and definitely a team effort! Thank you to all who helped with the rummage and bake sale! While on the topic of thanking volunteers, I would like us to discuss the reality of burnout in our congregation as a council. It is showing up more and more and I think it is important for us to address it, sooner rather than later. The last few years have been a lot to navigate and I think the survival mode mentality may be wearing off and many are coming to terms with how they are really feeling. I don't know if there is an answer for us to find but I would like us to discuss this. Thank you all for being here. Your presence is a gift in this community.

In Christ's Peace,
Pastor Jaime Benson

Parish Associate Report

Sunday School

After sending out surveys to all of the teachers/subs, we only have three teachers returning to help with Sunday School (Molly N., Erika Sween, Kim Bue/Olivia). I will be meeting with them, and Jeanette, Thursday, 8/18 at 7pm at the church to finalize the plan for Sunday School 2022-2023. As it stands, we will be structuring it as follows:

- Two Sundays per month, traditional lessons and music
- One Sunday per month: intergenerational activity after worship
- One Sunday per month: fun activity after worship (trying to include youth when possible)

Rally day will be Sunday, September 18th. Registration information will be available soon and will be distributed to returning families.

Fruit of the Spirit, VBS Style Class & Local Missions



VBS-Style Class: Angie Chappell, Andrea Langan and I (Halley may sub/fill in) will be running the VBS-style class, one Sunday evening each month, beginning in October. At this time, it might be the first Sunday of each month. We will get the youth to help as we can. I am currently working on the curriculum for this. The class will consist of a snack, music, fun activities and games. I have let the other churches in the Portage VBS group know about this as well as it may offer an opportunity to collaborate.

Local Missions: I have notified the Portage VBS group about this as well to see if they would like to collaborate. We will be organizing some local service/mission projects for 5th-8th graders, youth can attend as well as assistants/leads. Hoping to

Confirmation

Confirmation will begin Wednesday, Sept. 14th. Pr. Jaime and I are currently working on the schedule and curriculum. We would like to extend confirmation, 6:30 pm-7:45 pm, adding an optional (although strongly encouraged) 15 minutes in the end for games/socializing. We feel that one hour for confirmation doesn't allow enough time.

Youth

Megan has changed the Dominican Republic mission trip to the Collegiate Week in 2023, January 7th-14th. Megan cannot attend but will continue to be the point of contact. Her sister and brother will be attending, with any young adults/alumni that sign up. The church will not host any fundraising for this group; all fundraising will be reserved for the high school trip tentatively scheduled for January 2024. However, the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans is also in the summer of 2024; planning for this is ongoing. Youth service is planned for Sunday, October 23rd.

“Eight Keys to Forgiveness”

The author of this book/speaker is not available this fall so Mark T. may be moving this book study to the spring. TBD.

Safe Church/Volunteer Training

Set for Sunday, August 28th after worship. All returning teachers/mentors have been invited to attend. If someone cannot attend that day, I will work out another time to meet with them.

BLC Faith Formation Growth Chart

Ongoing, future project

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Financial Update-

1. Total revenue for July was \$19971 with total expenses of \$20520, so in July we essentially broke even with a difference of -\$503. As compared to last year with a loss of -\$6257 which was due to the purchase of a new riding lawn mower.
2. The church still has two major expenses to pay (Parking lot sealing/stripping and the final bill for the fire panel). The total for these is about \$9400. So even though we need to pay these bills the YTD net profit is still good. Currently, the net profit is \$24682, even after subtracting the \$9400 the church shows an approximate YTD profit of \$15000.

Personnel Committee Handbook Update-

1. Pastor Jaime presented the Personnel Handbook that was worked on by the Personnel Committee and provided feedback. Many areas were discussed, and comments were provided. Pastor Jaime will take this back to the personnel committee for further work.
2. The Pastor Sabbatical policy in the Handbook was also discussed. It was noted that the sabbatical policy doesn't really belong in the employee handbook because the pastor is not an employee. People felt the information should instead be in the Pastor's contract. The sabbatical policy is currently not in Pastor Jaime's contract.
3. Jerry noted that he will provide a financial analysis of what pay raises would cost the church.

Recommendations for the Church Council to review-

- 1. The Church Council should redo Pastor Jaime's contract to include the Sabbatical policy.**
- 2. The Church Council Executive Committee should meet in August on a yearly basis to review Pastor Jaime's contract and to consider a pay raise amount. This should then go to the Finance Committee in September and then review by the full Council in September. This timeline is established so that Pastor's pay raise can go into effect on her anniversary in October.**

Windbreak & Parking Lot Update

1. Windbreak is built and waiting on billing
2. The parking lot is waiting for it to be scheduled

Narrative Budget

1. Pastor Jaime introduced the narrative budget to the group and suggested we consider doing this in addition to the line-item budget. It can provide the congregation with another way to view where the money is being spent and make it easier for many to understand the budget.
2. The Narrative Budget essentially takes the line-item budget and groups it into missional categories.

Worship and Music

The Worship & Music Committee will be coming together for their first meeting since Covid on September 12th.

Christian Education Committee Report
See Parish Associate Report

Property Committee Report

- July 20-26 Constructed wind blocker at front entrance.
- Aug 4, Pulled scheduled maintenance on lawnmower, picked up 10 gallons of gas for mower. Met with Todd Hellenbrand for replacement of front entrance exterior hinges, new door closer, add hold open device to door closer, and new weather sweeps.
- Aug 5, Replaced sanctuary projector lamps and new air filter.
- Aug 9, Met with automatic door tech to repair and adjust openers at front entrance. Doors are working now for the physically challenged at our church.
- Aug 11, Repaired attachment of door closer on East door out of sanctuary by the sacristy, clamped and glued the head jamb.
- Aug 12, Cut weeds from storm outfalls in the retention pond and finished installing the door closer by sacristy. Fabricated special door stop for East sanctuary door.
- Aug 15, Installed special door stop for East sanctuary door.
- Will try to get a proposal for reinstalling a soffit panel and fastening it on the Southeast of the church. The repair is at a height of about 35 feet. I will try to get a roofing contractor to repair it. (I pointed it out to Kory Anderson last Sunday)

Submitted by Del Molden

Stewardship/Evangelism

Lisa Cook shared that there was positive feedback from the vendors at the Pet Blessing service and is something that they are looking to do annually. There are some future projects that will be shared at our September meeting.

Local and Global

items for mission kits are being collected and put together. The list of items needed for School Kits and Personal Care Kits are available.

Personnel Committee

No Report Received.

A motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Jaimie Rudolph to approve the committee reports as presented. Motion Carried.

Old Business -none

New Business

- Bridge Building by confirmation students
A motion by Kory Anderson, second by Jaimie Rudolph to approve the bridge project by the confirmation students. Motion Carried
- Strategic Planning Meetings
- Volunteer Burnout- a discussion was had on current volunteer burnout and how to move forward. Kerry will look into how the previous time/talent survey was done and ways to seek new volunteers to help serve our church.

**A motion by Kerry Melby, second by Tina Price to adjourn the meeting at 7:19
Motion Carried.**

Lord's Prayer