

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH  
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING  
September 17, 2020  
Meeting held via Zoom due to COVID-19

Called to order by Robin Kvalo at 6:32 pm.

Attendance:

Jack Paulson-Zoom  
Halley Harms-Zoom  
Robin Kvalo-Zoom  
Pastor Jen Johnson-Zoom  
Ruth Price- absent  
Kory Anderson- Zoom  
Geoff Gilbert-Zoom  
Don Bender- Zoom  
Ann Ciske- Zoom

Prayer by Pastor Jen

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

**Motion by Kory Anderson, second by Ann Ciske to approve the proposed agenda. Motion Carried.**

APPROVAL OF THE August MEETING MINUTES

**Motion by Geoff Gilbert , second by Jack Paulson to approve the July meeting minutes as submitted. Motion Carried.**

PASTOR'S REPORT

Funerals: Memorial for George Stewart 9/12/2020 at Pflanz

Worship: Continues for now live-stream or recorded for Sundays at 9:00 and Drive-up at 10:00, and Wednesdays at 5:30 for Drive-up. 88.3 WBLC!

COVID-19 Task Force: Group meets via Zoom.

Renewal: See proposal.

Administrative: Recurring problem communicating Megan around High School Youth activities. We've hashed it out and have reconciled. We need to address "job descriptions" expectations and assistance with volunteers in our congregation.

Self-Care: Took a day off on Monday. Will do it again this coming Monday.

**Thank you, EVERYONE for your continued presence and service. I appreciate you!**

Pastor Jen Johnson

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Finance Committee Report

#### **1. Financial Update**

Update: Finances/offerings would have been down for August had we not received a one-time estate gift of \$5,000 and experienced an unusually low month of expenses (please review the financial statements).

Payment Protection Program (PPP), SBA loan funds: Jerry is monitoring the situation and will share his updates with us as he has them. The bank has up to 60 days to review/approve our documents, and then they will be sent to the SBA with up to 90 days for review/approval.

#### **2. Financial Controls Manual**

The proposed changes were reviewed by council and approved. Tania will update the Financial Controls Manual with the approved changes for the next Finance Meeting.

#### **3. Bylaws**

The proposed changes were reviewed by council and approved.

#### **4. Payments/Bills Review**

John D. will be reviewing the payments made on a bi-weekly basis, initialing/signing the document(s) after, and emailing everything to Janice for filing. These documents will be kept in the Bill Payment Review Folder in the electronic files. Also, moving forward, Janice will be uploading all of the financial files to the church's One Drive on her computer which is synced with Julie's computer. Julie's computer has an automatic back-up to the external hard drive. Janice also backs-up the files to a USB.

#### **5. Fundraising**

Considering BLC's current financial position and our concerns that offerings may decline, the committee discussed a few options for events and fundraising. Also, we were approached by River Haven about our contributions, specifically to the PACAP program. We will need to send them our donations soon.

We are entering the time of year for the annual Stewardship drive. Tania will reach out to Pr. Jen and Ruth Price to see if any plans have been set for this yet. The committee also discussed the possibility of a Fall Festival and another Brat Fry. We could also consider a virtual/modified Gifts of Bethlehem concert/event with online basket auction. In the future, we would like to consider hosting drive-in movies in the parking lot. Tania will look into a few of these ideas and create a proposal for council to review after speaking with a few people.

Although not a fundraising item, the Finance Committee has discussed the possibility of a Random Acts of Kindness calendar for the congregation. Tania will look into this before the next Finance Meeting.

*As always, thank you to all of our members for their continued support of BLC!!*

**Adjourn:** 8:01 pm

**Next Finance Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, October 6th, 6:30pm

### Christian Education Committee Report

#### **Sunday School**

Please read the Sunday School Kick Off letter [HERE](#)

Schedule a time to read/record a story for “PJ” time with Julie

#### **Confirmation**

Please read the Kick off letter for confirmation [HERE](#)

#### **Youth Group**

Megan is feeling frustration with holding youth group events while following COVID-19 taskforce guidelines. She wants to help and stay involved with the youth but feels lost and unsure of how to do so virtually. She brought up the idea of a drive through casserole sale. She stated she doesn't want to do her “fun” events through a computer screen. Let's brainstorm ways we can support her and guide her with ideas/activities that follow church guidelines. She's too valuable to lose and the youth really respect her.

#### **Confirmation Ceremony**

Confirmation is scheduled for Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup>. We would like the church to offer an indoor service for these families. Each confirmation student will receive 2 tickets. They can give these tickets to the family member of their choice: parents, grandparents. For those families not comfortable being inside, Pastor Jen said she is willing to offer an outdoor service as well.

### Stewardship & Evangelism Committee Report

No Report received

### Worship & Music Committee Report

No report received

### Property Committee Report

Utility usage and billing is as expected given the minimal usage of the facility. Mowing has been scheduled through the end of October and is being done on an as needed basis. Listed below are the items that Del Molden has reported:

1. Repair storm damage at church: Removed damaged lilac trees from front of church and cleaned up large maple tree branch with chainsaw from backside of church.

2. Repaired parking lot light timer and photo eye for parking lot light and building security lighting.
3. Replaced two parking lot bulbs and order more to replenish the bulb supply.
4. Repair shingles on storage shed from the storm high winds.
5. Working on air handler units for sanctuary to provide continuous air changes for when services possibly move inside with minimum people.

#### Local & Global Committee Report

The tablets have arrived. The tablets will be loaded with the Sunday service so the “buddies” can go to the home of an elderly/shut-ins to watch each Sunday service with them. We have 6 tablets so far. Julie is setting up the tablets.

We are getting members to read Bible stories as MP4s or at the church office with Julie to the young Sunday School children each Wednesday night. We are calling it Pondering Jesus in your PJs. Please sign up to read a story.

All loaves of bread from Our Daily Bread were distributed at the Brat Fry Sunday. We will make more when it is safe to do so.

We are starting up ‘rolled bandages’ for Global Health Ministries again. Sheet were donated by the Kalahari.

The Quilt Drawing began on Sunday. It will go until the next Brat Fry.

We have decided to partner with the Gift’s of Bethlehem for our basket action. We have too many activities going on and not enough people to plan them.

Mission Possible will be starting Wednesday at 9:00. Included in the note is a task for members to do and a reach out to members.

We hope to do a Highway clean up soon.

#### COVID-19 Task Force

Meeting Summary 9/8/20

In attendance: Pr Jen, Melissa Bradbury, Kerry Melby, Del Molden, Dan Pulsfus, Ann Ciske, Larry Sween, Julie Saalsaa. Janice Peterson joined at 7:18pm

#### **Covid-19 & Ministry Stressors Survey**

Kerry Melby and Pastor Jen reported on a webinar they both attended, put on by the Wisconsin Council of Churches (WCC). The purpose was to review the results of a survey the WCC sent out to ministers to gauge their stress levels with Covid-19. Feedback included:

- There is a lot of pressure being put on pastors
- This is causing a divide in some churches

- Positive: There is a lot of collaborating between churches – not reinventing the wheel

### **Christian Ed Classes**

We talked about whether or not Christian Education classes could be help at church. The Faith Formation ministry team has decided to start classes online for now. Since they will be virtual, no details were discussed.

### **Moving to Inside Worship**

Knowing we will not be able to continue having drive-in worship as the weather gets colder, we are moving forward with making plans to offer indoor worship services. Del Molden has researched and learned that we are able to run the fans on the air-handling units continuously to improve the air flow. This can be done throughout the church building. It is a manual process though, which requires him to be here to turn it on and off. He plans to train others. We agreed to the following:

- Start with allowing 10% capacity in the sanctuary = 30 people not including staff and volunteers
- September 27 at 9 am will be a trial run for indoor worship for the C19TF and Church Council and their spouses are also invited. We will then write up guidelines for the worship volunteers and members.
- October 4<sup>th</sup> is our goal to offer indoor worship for the first time to members. A reservation will need to be made, masks are mandatory, as well as social distancing.
- We will wait to offer communion at this time.

Our goal is to get to two services on Sundays with an hour in between services, as this will help recycle the air in the sanctuary, and one on Wednesday evenings.

### Renewal Team Report

Dear members of the council,

Following the Renewal Reflections meeting on August 26th, Pr. Jen and Rev. Baires reflected upon the conversations that occurred. As a result, Rev. Baires gave Pr. Jen the following recommendations for moving forward:

1. Get 3 or 4 Dwelling in the Word groups going ASAP. Walter encouraged that each group be led by members of the congregation, and that the leaders would meet with me prior to beginning and before each session, for instruction and a text overview. Walter identified Mark as someone who has the gifts to coordinate this, with help and encouragement.
2. Use the Faithful Innovations Learning Network as a framework and tool for Renewal. The Synod FIN event kicks off in January. Here's a link: <https://scsw-elca.org/faithfulinnovation/>. This would allow time to identify and assemble our FIN team leaders. One of the cool things about FIN is that Pr. Jen gets to be a pastor as spiritual guide. The sessions are led by a one of my FIN Synod colleagues and our team will be assigned a coach that will shepherd them.

3. Look beyond the usual doers in the congregation. When checking off a to-do list it is a natural tendency to go to the same people and ask them to complete a task. That's what is called seeing people as transactional. The other end of this spectrum is to see people as relational. Like Mary and Martha when Jesus is visiting them. Our challenge is to balance the transactional and relational. One way to work toward this is to look around and see who isn't involved in activities at BLC and invite these Beloved Children of God into participation.

The renewal team decided to meet at the church on Thursday, Sept. 3rd to discuss the above proposal from Rev. Baires'. While we respect Rev. Baires' insights and perspectives, we would like to modify the proposal to move forward as shown below. We recommend these changes based upon what the congregation has completed so far with the renewal, while considering all of the barriers that prevented the completion of Year Two of this process.

1. We agree that we should form discussion groups based upon Dwelling in the Word, understanding that this is not simply a step in the process that needs to be completed. Dwelling in the Word is the practice that is the spiritual foundation for renewal. It's a practice that is integral to who we are as followers of Christ, and one that we grow into, as opposed to a "once and done" action. Adding the Dwelling in the Word groups is something that will continue past the 3-year renewal term; Dwelling in the Word study groups would become a permanent part of the culture at BLC.

To begin this process, Mark Teslik and Dan Pulsfus will create two Dwelling in the Word study groups; some may be in-person, some may be on Zoom. The structure for the groups and the initial meeting dates have yet to be determined.

2. We believe that adding in the Faithful Innovations framework will be confusing to the congregation. The renewal process, up to this point, has been somewhat inconsistent, and changing our direction right now may add confusion and may further detach our members from the process. We feel that some important elements of Faithful Innovations could be added, but only within the Dwelling in the Word groups.

However, we feel that we should address the necessary goal of year two of the renewal, as written in the original plan: determining the gifts and assets of our congregation. Because of this, we would like to schedule focus groups, as in-person small groups and Zoom discussions, to respond to the question, "Where is God Calling us to Go?"

3. In response, we do acknowledge that there are many transactional members in our congregation, many within our volunteer groups. We are grateful for that as many of those volunteers keep us moving forward. However, it is challenging to switch from transactional to relational, and we feel that beginning the Dwelling in the Word groups will help to shift that mindset. We may need to create other activities once the COVID-19 pandemic has passed and we can begin to focus on building in-person relationships with one another.

Another issue that we need to keep in mind is that we will have a new synod bishop soon. The new leadership has the authority to decide which programs continue or which programs end. This is an issue that we had with the start of the last bishop; it did affect the renewal process. If we can move forward with a plan that is somewhat autonomous from the synod's involvement, that may be best for the sake of consistency.

Lastly, we feel like it might be necessary to gauge the congregation's interest in this proposal as we move forward. We recommend creating and distributing a survey to our members asking for their interest in participating in what is proposed above. This will be a brief survey with a deadline so that we can move forward with the next steps as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted,

The Renewal Team

#### APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Motion by Don Bender, second by Ann Ciske to approve the committee reports as submitted. Motion Carried.**

#### New Business

- Constitution and By-laws
- Renewal Year 3 Proposal- Council supports a survey sent to the congregation in the directions where to go for year 3 of the renewal process.
- Events/Fundraising Calendar  
A motion by Ann Ciske second by Jack Paulson to continue with planning for the Fall Festival and Virtual Gifts of Bethlehem

**Motion by Ann Ciske second by Don Bender to adjourn the meeting at pm . Motion Carried.**

Next Finance Committee Meeting: October 6th

All Committee Night: November 9th

Next Council Meeting: October 15th