

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH  
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING  
June 18, 2020  
Meeting held via Zoom/In-Person due to COVID-19

Called to order by Robin Kvalo at 6:28pm.

Attendance:

Jack Paulson-In Person  
Ann Ciske-Zoom  
Halley Harms-In Person  
Robin Kvalo-In Person  
Pastor Jen Johnson-Zoom  
Ruth Price-Zoom  
Kory Anderson- Zoom (came in at 7:00 with notice)  
Geoff Gilbert-Zoom within the church  
Don Bender- In Person  
Julie Saalsaa - Zoom within the church

Prayer by Pastor Jen

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

**Motion by Jack Paulson, second by Don Bender to approve the proposed agenda. Motion Carried.**

APPROVAL OF THE May MEETING MINUTES

**Motion by Ann Ciske, second by Geoff Gilbert to approve the May meeting minutes as submitted. Motion Carried.**

**Pastor's Report**

**Action item:** Form a COVID-19 task force. The purpose of this ministry is to evaluate physical gathering proposals from within the congregation. Evaluation will be done using prayer and the Back to the Building Plan. This ministry will consist of at least 5 people; including staff, council members, and at-large members of the congregation. This ministry will receive proposals directly or have them forwarded to them. The persons on this task force shall be given the authority and responsibility to approve or deny any proposal they receive without recourse. All approved proposals will be sent to the Church Council as information items. [Draft of purpose and responsibilities]

**Motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Ann Ciske to form a COVID task force Pending Survey Results sent out to the congregation. **Motion Carried.****

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Finance Committee Report

**1. Financial Update & Chimes**

Update: Finances are somewhat down, but not terrible considering the circumstances that we are in. The comparables for 2019 during this time of year are skewed due to youth fundraising for the mission trip. Some of the current expenses in 2020 are due to mortgage refinance fees, which we did not have last year.

Payment Protection Program (PPP), SBA loan funds: We are still using these funds for payroll consistently. We have spent \$1300 more on salary & benefits this year compared to last year, but that is due the fact that the current parish secretary did not start consistently until August 2020. The SBA continues to make updates to rules; nothing too impactful but something to be aware of. It may take up to 5 months to approve the forgiveness of the loan after reporting is submitted. In June, Jerry and Janice will begin the reporting process to the SBA. Also worth noting: the SBA is requiring our organization to keep our records for up to 6 years post-loan forgiveness for document retention purposes.

Review of expenses: Pr. Jen expressed a concern about the humidity level in the church. Could this potentially be a problem? Pr. Jen will contact Del to see if it's an issue.

## **2. Mortgage Refinance Update**

Thrivent is mailing us the final paperwork. When that comes, Robin and Don will need to be involved in some of the next steps. A notary is needed. Also, there are a few upcoming bills having to do with the refinancing, but they are manageable/small amounts. Once everything is complete, they will be sending us @\$138,000 to begin paying off the loan certificate holders. We anticipate that the entire refinancing process will be complete by June 15th.

## **3. Loan Certificate Holders Program Update**

We will have to make the final interest due payment to the loan certificate holders when we close the program. We are still waiting to discuss the endowment trust details with one of our members and Thrivent.

## **4. Financial Controls Manual**

Check signers: Don replaced the current Treasurer with check signing responsibilities as the current Treasurer, Jerry Saalsaa, has a conflict of interest. Because of Accounting controls, Denise's current job description would prevent her from having check signing authority. If we would allow for Denise to become a signer, we will need to designate someone to review the accounts payable distribution on a regular basis so there is oversight. That person could put a signature on it that it has been reviewed and documented. This would provide proper accounting. John D. has volunteered to fill this role.

***Motion by John D. to create an Accounts Payable Oversight volunteer position. 2nd by Janice.  
Motion Carried.***

***Motion by John D. to recommend that Denise Derey be authorized to sign checks. 2nd by Janice.  
Motion Carried.***

The Finance Committee recognizes that the **Financial Controls Manual** at the **BLC Constitution & Bylaws** will need to be updated based upon the recommended changes. We will begin our discussion about this at the July committee meeting and submit something to the council for approval.

## **5. Fundraising**

The committee discussed creative ways that we can begin fellowship activities and fundraising events during the current COVID-19 crisis. Jerry mentioned looking into renting our outdoor space for weddings this summer considering many venues/halls have had to close. We also discussed hosting an outdoor concert & cookout this summer, while adhering to the social distancing guidelines that are in place. John reminded us of the importance of fellowship with our members, and we discussed organizing a picnic in July. Do we need waivers? Masks? Hand sanitizer?

**Action Item:** The Finance Committee would like to recommend that BLC host a picnic toward the end of July for our members, and host a fundraising cookout & concert in August. Council to approve and set dates. Also, do we want to consider hosting weddings on BLC grounds (outdoor only) this summer?

**Motion by Don Bender, second by Geoff Gilbert** to approve the Fundraiser to be held on August 2nd. Online service is to take place at 9, Outdoor Service to take place at 10:00 followed by a congregational picnic to include a brat sale. A Drive through brat pick-up will be available for those not comfortable attending the picnic. **Motion Carried.**

In conclusion, *the Finance Committee wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to the entire congregation for its continued support of Bethlehem Lutheran Church during this pandemic!!*

## Christian Education Committee Report

### Sunday School Age

Tania and Jeanette are putting together Sunday School in a Bag for the children enrolled in S.S.

### Confirmation Age

We are currently not hosting Summer Zoom meetings. I will be collaborating with other mentors and Pastor Jen on how to prepare for confirmation in the fall in the event we won't be returning to church. An idea is to have lessons put on YouTube and then discuss weekly via Zoom. We need to prepare and think outside the box on how to confirm the 9th graders if we can't be in the church.

I would like to see a monthly activity this summer for the youth to participate in.

### High School Age

**Action Item:** Megan would like us to revisit the parking lot campfire.

**Motion by Ann Ciske, second by Robin Kvalo** to host a bonfire for the high school youth to attend with no more than 10 in attendance. An exception on numbers is permissible if a sibling is sharing the same vehicle. Attendees must stay in their cars/trunks, and parent permission will be required. Vehicles will be expected to remain socially distant. All clean up must be done by the end of the event and council must be notified of the date. **Motion Carried.**

### Other

The Christian Ed Committee would like to consider ways to reach our families and rebuild the connection with one another as a congregation. There seems to be a sense of disconnect for many from church, so we have compiled a list of unique ways to reach members. Our number 1 priority is safety and staying within the guidelines. Below is a list of ideas we have accumulated. We would like to take 2-3 of these ideas and implement them soon. It's important to have something to hold the congregation together.

Create a service calendar to distribute to the congregation with a new activity each week: pickup garbage in your neighborhood, pay it forward week, helping hand to a neighbor, etc. Submit photos.

Create an online calendar for worship: sports shirt day, crazy socks day, pajama day. Take a picture of yourself and send it in.

Create a wellness calendar with different weekly activities and distribute: get outside, walk with a fellow member, ask our members if they would like a buddy and pair people up for the challenges (keep them all outdoor activities). Submit photos.

Secret Santa in July: Church office draws names for those that want to participate. You give small gifts or do small things for that person in July (by our guidelines). Submit photos.

Scavenger Hunt: Paint larger rocks with "BLC Loves You" and hide them in public places throughout the city. Have families find them, submit photos of someone next to the rock, and send them in. Gift cards from Portage small businesses to the winners (I'm happy to donate).

Have a Chalk the Parking Lot night. Families/individuals could have an assigned parking lot spot to design with a positive message/picture. Every other parking spot could be done to maintain social distancing.

Put together a Congregation COVID cookbook. Many are doing a lot more cooking/trying new recipes. We could put together a cookbook of recipes.

People are longing to get back to the church. Could we set up an outdoor prayer station or fountain? Something that people could safely use outdoors to feel like they are back at church?

Outdoor Car Service (An FM Transmitter would need to be used)

Are there any projects that could be done? It would be nice to "spruce" up the Sunday School rooms. Could we look at some of our talented artists to paint some murals?

Create a video channel on YouTube (we may already have this). Have members submit how-to videos of something to teach other members (knitting, quilting, cooking, etc), submit music videos of singing/playing spiritual music, submit devotional readings. Bethel Lutheran does something similar: <https://www.youtube.com/user/BethelLutheranTV>

BLC Pandemic Photo Album:

Collect/gather all photos that are submitted to the church to create a historical photo album, electronic and print form. Printed copies can be sold as a fundraiser...? We can do a summer edition and a winter edition, or just combine it all when it's finally all over. \*Consider this: if we had to do this right now, would we even have experiences to share in this? When this is over and we want to look back at how we handled this time, what can we do now that will make us the most proud? What will we have to show our future members of how we rose to this occasion, got creative, and kept our community connected?

Stewardship & Evangelism Committee Report

No report received

### Worship & Music Committee Report

No report received

### Property Committee Report

The rooftop air handler units were cleaned and inspected. All units are in good working order for the summer cooling season. Utility bills and usage are at all time lows as expected.

Del Molden repaired damage to some piping in the septic system drain field, possibly done over the winter by a 4 wheel drive vehicle.

Work is continuing this week on the storm water drainage system which is nearing completion. Thanks to everyone who is taking part in this project.

Additional volunteers are needed to help with the lawn mowing. Julie will put a notice in the weekly newsletter, bulletin and The Chimes. Thanks to Butch and Jake Jahoda for helping out last week, but more help is needed.

### Local & Global Committee Report

We did not meet this month again, due to the pandemic. We continue to call congregation members 70 and over. A team is also calling members under 70 years. The Community Meal at ST John the Baptist church, scheduled for Saturday June 20, was cancelled due to Covid-19.

### APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

### New Business

Need for Covid-19 Task Force & Coordinator- See Pastor's Report for Motion.

### Opening Office & Hours Open

Beginning June 21, 2020 Office Hours will resume. Hours will be posted on the doors. Doors will be locked and must call the posted number to be let into the building.

Youth Group Request for Parking Lot Campfire- See Christian Ed Report for Motion.

Walk Through Church Building – Plan for Reopening- Pews have been set up for every other pew. A minimum of 4 ushers will be needed when we are able to open up to 50 attendees. Ushers will seat members and dismiss members through designated entrances/exits. The COVID task force will lead us in the procedures for when we enter this phase.

**Motion by Don Bender second by Geoff Gilbert to adjourn the meeting at 7:55pm . Motion Carried.**

Next Finance Committee Meeting: June 2

All Committee Night: August 10

Next Council Meeting: June 18