

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes
August 15, 2024
6:30 pm

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

Attendance:

Kerry Melby- In person
Brian Conner- In person
Jaimie Rudolph- In person
Kory Anderson- In person
Lisa Cook- Absent with notification
Bonnie Dixon- In person
Amanda Bell- In person
Mark Teslik- In person
Pastor Jaime Benson- Absent with notification
Geoff Gilbert- In person

1. Dwelling in the Word – moved text and questions to next month
2. **Call to Order by Kerry Melby at 6:31 p.m.**
3. Prayer – Bonnie Dixon
4. Approval of the Agenda—**Kerry added air handler topic to new business, see (h.). Motion made by Amanda Bell to approve the proposed agenda with the addition, second by Bonnie Dixon. Motion carried.**
5. Approval of Last Month’s Minutes – **Motion by Brian Conner to approve last month’s minutes as written, second by Geoff Gilbert. Motion carried.**
6. Pastor Report
7. Committee Reports
8. Approval of Committee Reports – **Motion by Kory Anderson to approve committee reports, second by Geoff Gilbert. Motion carried.**
9. Old Business
 - a. Taste of Portage – Brian shared the Bethlehem cards he had made that will be handed out with pies. Need more volunteers to work the booth and about 40 more pies, sign up online. \$3/piece, or \$15 pie.
 - b. Camp Scholarships – Other churches offer to help pay for Christian church camps for their members. Discussed possibility of using choice dollars for this, or the Thrivent grants. Discussed how we might do this given the cost and potential for varied amounts annually and how to find the most equitable way to distribute it. Geoff suggested we figure out the total budget we have to allocate and then divide that by how many are going and they each get the same amount. Group to think about options and bring back for decision in Sept.
10. New Business

- a. Monetary Donation box for Harbor Recovery Center in October. **Motion made by Geoff Gilbert to approve donation box when Harbor Recovery Center representative is at church to talk about their non-profit. Jaimie Rudolph seconded the motion and motion carried.**
- b. Spectrum service – as of now \$16,000 to install, Spectrum covers \$10,000, received a private donation for \$5,000 leaving \$1,000 for the church to pay. A new survey is required which could affect price. Per phone call with Frontier 8/7/24 no cancellation fee to get out of current contract. Survey could reduce the cost, but we voted tonight so work could continue to get this re-survey and new price so we are ready for spring install. **Geoff Gilbert made a motion to approve the switch to Spectrum as the service provider, approving up to \$1000 for the church to pay, and a total of \$6000 being paid due to the \$5000 donation already received. Amanda Bell seconded the motion. Motion carried.**
- c. Helping Hands – Bonnie has talked with Tanya about an expansion of the Love Your Neighbors concept that was done this past summer. This would focus on reaching out via chimes/bulletin/at church asking members if they have chores around their homes that they need help with. Could help youth get service hours. Bonnie will be sharing out more communication and be looking for volunteers to assist. Starting with members, but could also expand later into helping others in the community.
- d. September 15th picnic – Jerry Saalsa is smoking pork, Amy will set up an electronic sign up sheet for other members to sign up for other dishes/sides/drinks. Council will serve at the picnic.
- e. Raise Right- Will share more information with kick off September 15. Carla will be sending these twice/month.
- f. Emergency Funds Assistance- People stop at church asking for financial assistance for various things. Some are members, some are not. The community churches have a clergy relief fund that they use to help when this happens. St. Mary's used to issue checks, but there are some delays now with a new priest. Unsure exactly what requests are coming in/how often. We will have Pastor Jaime provide additional information at our next meeting so we can brainstorm and review options for support.
- g. Financial Plan Task Force – Review of Janice report -- **Kerry read the recommendations shared from the finance committee below. She will have the Financial Sustainability Task Force email shared out with council, you can join or share with anyone you feel might be interested/gifted in this work. Currently, members of stewardship and finance received the invitation.**
 1. Emergency Reserve Fund
 - a. The finance committee had a long discussion about how to raise more money and give a more understandable account of our financial situation.
 - b. The committee came up with several proposals
 - i. Set a goal of \$70,000-\$75,000 to have in an Emergency Reserve Fund. This would be for emergencies that arise and need funding.
 - ii. Start a Capital Replacement Fund. This fund would be for the replacement of expected repairs and replacement that occur with the aging of the building (ex: air handlers, roof, parking lot sealing etc.) The amount in this fund needs to be determined but depends on

the upcoming costs in the next year to the next couple of years and the life span of the items.

iii. Build into the budget a Cash Reserve line item. Suggested cash reserves can be 5-10% of the church's budget. If this is built in, it can be a means for the church to save money. If for example, we had an extra \$1000/month that could be distributed to meet our Emergency Reserve Fund, Capital Replacement Fund and other funds we might be saving for (ex. electronic sign). The exact distribution of the Cash Reserve funds could be managed by finance and overseen by council.

c. The finance committee also suggests that we need a long-term campaign and not a short-term fundraiser. This campaign would include multiple members of church, finance committee, stewardship committee, and others with gifts and interests in this.

d. This campaign would include increasing giving strategies and maybe fundraising opportunities. It would have to be a multi-faceted approach to building our savings and raising money for desired projects.

e. Steve M and Pr Jaime will set up a meeting with Stewardship and Finance to begin this process.

h. Air handler replacement – Research done to review options for replacement of unit over the administrative offices. Lennox model for \$7600 found with proper refrigerant. **Kory Anderson made a motion to purchase the unit for \$7600 with our building fund previously noted in the 2024 budget. Brian Conner made a second, and the motion carried.**

11. Adjourn— **Geoff Gilbert made a motion to adjourn, Bonnie Dixon second, motion carried and meeting ended at 7:40 p.m.**

12. Lord's Prayer