

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
July 16th, 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-Zoom
Kory Anderson- Zoom
Geoff Gilbert-Zoom
Don Bender- Zoom
Julie Saalsaa - Zoom
Ann Ciske- Absent with notice

Prayer by Pastor Jen

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Don Bender , second by Kory Anderson to approve the proposed agenda. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF THE June MEETING MINUTES

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

Pastor's Report

Funerals: Community member, Ashley Vasquez on July 6, 2020
Stu Gerhardt, July 9, 2020
Community member, Mavis Solitaire will be on July 17, 2020
Also spoke with Cloe Rehdantz about inurning Bob's ashes.
Also spoke with Gladys Bell about Steve's passing and possible service.

Bishop Election: Date for Assembly and election continues to change. Set now for August 29th at 12 sites connected via Zoom. Geoff Gilbert and Ann Ciske are delegates.

Worship: Continues for now live-stream or recorded for Sundays at 9:00 and outside at 10:00 for seniors with no internet access.

COVID-19 Task Force: Has been created (by answering a call for volunteers) and has met two times. Priorities have been set. Group meets via Zoom.

Renewal: Synod Renewal Team is producing an evaluation procedure for the renewal congregations in the synod. Rev. Baires will meet with us via Zoom, or in person if possible when we do our evaluation, in the next month or so. Our renewal team has not formally met, but 2 out of the 3 remaining members are active in other ministries and are seeking to implement activities that nurture relationships within the church family (our biggest challenge during the pandemic, in my opinion).

Administrative: Office staff are working from church when able, following safety procedures.

Self-Care: I will be on vacation from July 19- July 25. One of my ELCA colleagues from our area is on call for pastoral emergencies. The worship service for the 19th has been pre-recorded, and there will be no outdoor service that day. Attendees have been notified.

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 are down (please review the financial statements). We would like to ask Pr. Jen and Robin/council to remind our members to continue their stewardship throughout the summer. We are grateful for everyone's support of BLC during this pandemic.

Payment Protection Program (PPP), SBA loan funds: Janice has completed the paperwork to be submitted for the PPP loan; it requires a signature from Robin and then it will be mailed.

2. Mortgage Refinance Update

The mortgage refinancing is complete and \$53,000 still remains in the building fund. The new, lower mortgage payment begins this week. The loan certificates have been paid out. The loan certificate interest account needs to be closed, and the small balance left in that account should be transferred.

3. Financial Controls Manual

Check signers: Denise was approved in June by the Finance committee to become a check signer with oversight by John Denhartigh in the position of Accounts Payable Oversight. Jerry will be providing John D. with the Adobe software that he needs to review the

transaction list & check detail twice per month (on the 15th and 30th). Robin will also be added as a check signer. This transition should be happening in the near future.

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 spoke briefly about this at our meeting and decided that Tania, Janice and Denise would review both documents prior to the next meeting and come up with the proposed changes to submit to council. The rest of the BLC Constitution & Bylaws will need to be updated this year as well.

4. Fundraising

The brat sale & picnic that was approved by council last month has gone on to the COVID task force for review and planning. Considering the spike in COVID cases in Columbia County, fundraising activities that require gatherings may not be possible. This will be an ongoing discussion, and we welcome any no-contact fundraising ideas that anyone has.

The committee also discussed other ideas for worship and local missions that would allow us to engage our members while reaching out to the community. Pr. Jen is going to talk to Ruth/Stewardship Committee to see if there are any local missions that we could focus on during this time. Other ideas: Random Acts of Kindness Week; Connected in Christ; Computer set-up/program for members

Again, 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 High School Youth

A couple weeks ago we were able to get the entire Dominican Republic youth back together again for a bonfire. With a lot of uncertainty going on right now, this time was much needed for the youth. We spent time recalling our trip and all of the memories made through that week. We also made cards to send to the family whom we built the house for in Hato Mayor. We were able to sit around the fire and make s'mores, pies, and just enjoy each other's company which has been missing a lot lately. This was a great night and looking forward to getting together with the rest of the youth group soon.

Sunday School

Sunday school bags were assembled for July. Pastor Jen and Brenda delivered them to all the Sunday school students in early July.

There has not been any recent discussion about our plans for Sunday school for the school year.

Confirmation

Our digital subscription for Sparks Youth was coming due in August. The confirmation mentors and Pastor Jen discussed whether it was worth keeping this curriculum, as the kids did not find it engaging last year. They decided to forgo the renewal and develop a new curriculum. They are in the planning stages of what this will entail.

Other

Last month the Council approved some non-contact activities for members of all ages: Christmas in July, BLC Loves You Rock Scavenger Hunt, and Chalk the Lot. Six people signed up to participate in the Christmas in July. We have had a lot of positive feedback from the rock scavenger hunt. Five members have sent in their photos; each winning a \$25 gift certificate to a local business, which were donated by members. Chalk the Lot date(s) has not been scheduled, although it will be sometime in August.

Stewardship & Evangelism Committee Report

No report received

Worship & Music Committee Report

No report received

Property Committee Report

Utility bills continue to run as expected due to the building usage being down. The office has reopened and the air conditioning will be run throughout the entire building every day for 1 1/2 hours to reduce the humidity levels.

Carpet cleaning in portions of the sanctuary and the main hallways is scheduled for Monday, July 13th.

Lawn mowing is being done on an as needed basis. Thanks to everyone who volunteered!

Local & Global Committee Report

Calls are still being made to members to check on how they are doing. Some cards are being sent out.

COVID-19 Task Force

The Covid-19 Task Force (C19TF) met for the first time on Thursday, July 9th. All those who initially replied to the survey that wanted to be included were invited to be a part of the group. Those present included: Julie Saalsaa, Del Molden, Ann Ciske, Janice Petersen, Kerry Melby, Tina Thomas, Melissa Bradbury, Larry Sween, Pastor Jen Johnson.

Summary from the first meeting, July 9th:

- All meetings will be recorded for those unable to attend.
- Overview of the purpose and duties of the task force
- Reviewed survey results: ~250 survey emailed or mailed hard copies, 62 responses, ~25% response rate. All responses were shared with the group.
- Task force will affirm decisions at a 75% agreement
- Task force will consult information that is science-based and will include Dane County numbers in decision-making.
- C19TF will meet weekly initially

Initial Task force priority list:

1. Discuss and update the Return to Church document at second meeting
2. Decide what our benchmarks will be – discuss at second meeting and where the data will come from
3. Develop worship plans that are fluid according the current data

- a. (2 outdoor services? Sunday and Wednesday?)
4. Building use for things other than worship and office work
5. Brat and Worship event on August 2

Summary from second meeting, July 14th

Those present: Pastor Jen, Julie Saalsaa, Del Molden. Ann Ciske, Janice Petersen, Tina Thomas, Melissa Bradbury, Dan Pulsfus.

- Benchmarks resources were presented by Melissa Bradbury. It was agreed that we will look to the following resources for benchmarks and gating criteria to make our decisions:
 - o Gating Criteria from the Badger Bounce Back Plan:
 - SYMPTOMS: Downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses (ILI) reported within a 14-day period AND downward trajectory of COVID-19-like syndromic cases reported within a 14-day period
 - CASES: Downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period
 - HOSPITALS: Treat all patients without crisis care AND Robust testing programs in place for at-risk healthcare workers, with decreasing numbers of infected healthcare workers
 - o Wisconsin Department of Health Services: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>
 - o Public Health Madison & Dane County*: <https://cityofmadison.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/e22f5ba4f1f94e0bb0b9529dc82db6a3>
 - *Important to Note: Columbia county does not have specific information like Dane County has and we have members commuting between Dane and Columbia.
 - o We will also take into consideration any local orders from the City of Portage
 - o We will consult with the Wisconsin Council of Churches
- It was discussed that there are some scams regarding Covid-19 targeting the elderly and churches. That information will be shared with our congregation.
- The “BLC Return to the Church Building Plan” is being revised and updated. It will not be based on phases, but the criteria referred to above. The draft will be discussed at the July 21st meeting.
- We are inviting Rev. Kerri Parker from the Wisconsin Council of Churches to come to one of next meetings. Melissa will reach out to her.
- At this time, it is our recommendation that we do not offer in-person worship indoors.
- We will continue to offer in-person worship outside for groups of 25 on Sunday mornings, and Wednesday nights at 5:30 pm beginning August 5th. Additional bodies are allowed that include staff members, readers, ushers and others that are directly including in the worship service. Members will be required to wear a mask (unless they are unable due to a health condition – they will be asked to sit further away or they may sit in their car), bring their own chairs and communion elements. Members will call the office to

reserve a spot. The office will maintain a list for contact tracing and also to ensure all have a chance to worship.

- Clarification was made regarding numbers of people allowed: 10 people = individuals and not family units. It does not include staff or volunteers helping with worship. This number represents the number of individuals allowed indoors during the production of the online services.
- Del and Melissa will focus on gathering information on the cost for an FM transmitter for us to be able to hold larger outdoor group worships.
- The Brat Fundraiser was discussed. This will now be a drive-through only take your brat home fundraising event. We will pair this with our first FM transmitter worship as a kick-off to the fall season. We are aiming for September 13th.

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Motion by Geoff Gilbert , second by Kory Anderson to approve the committee reports as submitted. Motion Carried.

New Business

Need for Bylaws to be reviewed

The constitution and bylaws need to be updated in the next few months. The bylaws should be compared with the ELCA. The changes from the congregational meeting will need to be adjusted within the document. Pastor Jen will work alongside Halley Harms and Ruth Price on reviewing the document.

All Committee Meeting in August

Will be held by Zoom.

Motion by Halley Harms second by Robin Kvalo to adjourn the meeting at 7:07pm . Motion Carried.

Next Finance Committee Meeting: June 2

All Committee Night: August 10

Next Council Meeting: June 18