**Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes**

**March 21st, 2024**

**6:30 pm**

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

Attendance:

Kerry Melby- In person

Kory Anderson- In person

Jaimie Rudolph- In person

Lisa Cook- In person

Brian Conner- In person

Bonnie Dixon- In person

Amanda Bell- In person

Mark Teslik- In person

Pastor Jaime Benson- In person

Geoff Gilbert- Absent with notification

1. Dwelling in the Word – Pr. Jaime
2. **Call to Order by Kerry Melby at 6:57 p.m**.
3. Prayer
4. Approval of the Agenda—**Motion by Brian Conner, second by Amanda Bell to approve the proposed agenda. Motion carried.**
5. Approval of Last Month’s Minutes—**Motion by Brian Conner, second by Lisa Cook to approve last month’s minutes as written. Motion carried.**
6. Pastor Report
7. Committee Reports
8. Approval of Committee Reports—**Motion by Lisa Cook to approve the committee reports as presented, second by Kory Anderson. Motion carried.**
9. Old Business
   1. Council Devotionals – Used Luke 10:1-12 again and discussed in pairs. Group agreed they like the format of the devotionals with set questions to consider, but would like to use different passages. Pastor Jaime will choose the text each month.
   2. Networking Bids status – see attached bids. Recommendation is Sugar River IT Consulting, if council agrees there is a contract to sign in Kerry’s mailbox.
      1. Reviewed contract, one edit needed-- top line item should be qty 7 not 77, but price is correct to the right. Bill is willing to speak to the internet providers for us to ensure we have the best price and obtain the service we need to align to what we do at church with our internet service. **Amanda Bell made a motion to accept the bid from Sugar River as proposed. Second by Bonnie Dixon. Motion carried.**
10. New Business
    1. Building use policy- need updates of pricing, especially with continued use for a class, for profit vs. nonprofit – see attached
       1. Discussed and agreed to charge $25/hour for recurring use request from a member, Julie Saalsaa, that will be holding some exercise classes. Council will revisit the full policy and pricing in the future.
    2. Wedding policy review – see attached
       1. Reviewed and discussed draft. Suggestions-- Have one copy with member info, one separate copy for non-members vs. mixing it together. Could we get over the pew hangers for all use to avoid any damage? Read drafts again from lens of welcoming people to use the building and reword some of the sentences. Some items are incorrect and were just pulled from prior documents. Everyone review, if you have feedback send directly to Pastor Jaime. Document is still a draft.
    3. Pastor Housing Allowance— Discussed tax documentation needs for Pastor Jaime as she is looking to move to a home vs. apartment. **Amanda Bell made a motion to modify the ratio of the base salary to housing cost for Pastor Jaime. Brian Conner second, motion carried. See document on file.**
    4. Installation of Amanda & Bonnie to council will occur on April 21, 2024.
    5. Bonnie Dixon shared idea from a prior congregation – During summer, interested people would meet up at church on a set evening maybe twice a month or so and have a meal, then head out and do some work for people in the congregation that need some help. Ahead of the dates people would submit a card with a request for some help around their house/yard, i.e. need someone to rake, need someone to paint a chair, need someone to watch my child for an hour, etc… Bonnie would be willing to lead/organize this. Depending on how it went, could expand it to the community and not just members.
11. Adjourn—**Lisa made a motion to adjourn, Amanda Bell second, motion carried and meeting ended at 8:06 p.m.**
12. Lord’s Prayer

**Pastor’s Report**

**March 2024 Council Meeting**

Here is an overview of where I have spent my time this month:

Over the past month we have been in the season of Lent and started off the season with Ash Wednesday and our first soup supper. On Wednesdays we have been using our Lenten Drama series called “Jerusalem Book Club.” Thank you to everyone that has been a part of making this happen! It has been fun to see what the book club is up to each week! A big thank you to Carla for organizing this and for all of her work in making worship a meaningful experience week after week.

During Lent, our confirmation students have been helping with setup and clean up for soup suppers each week. A big thank you to them and their families for making Wednesday evenings an enjoyable experience for so many. At the end of February we had some kids attend Lutherdale for a confirmation retreat with Tania and Geoff as chaperones. It sounds like they had a very positive experience and thank you to Tania and Geoff for making it possible! I met with Tania, Megan, Travis, Max, and Riley this month to brainstorm a high school/community service week this summer. Tania is in the process of drafting a schedule for the week based on the ideas that were shared. I am excited to see the impact of this service week not only on our kids but also the community!

For pastoral care this month I made one home visit and had one counseling session at church. I also led our pastoral care meeting with Janice and Barb to touch base and update one another. Betty Levzow passed away this month and I met with her family and officiated her funeral. Lucile Gauger also passed away this month and we offered some prayers in worship for her since her funeral was so far away.

The Synod LEAD Conference was on Saturday, February 17th at St. John’s in Sauk Prairie. I attended the conference with Kerry & Jeff Melby, Mark Teslik, and Carla Gerhardt. It was a day of sharing experiences and ideas, and I am grateful we had leaders attend and share in this time together. Some other things I attended this month include my colleague group, finance, weekly text study, synod conference, and stewardship. I was able to attend a couple of our Tuesday Bible Study sessions over the past month. A big thank you to Nancy for organizing and leading these sessions!

Looking ahead, there is quite a bit happening in April, including our church field trip to Temple Beth El on Sunday, April 7th, a new member orientation on Sunday, April 14th, highway clean up on April 21st, the Women’s Tea on Saturday, April 27th, and I will be on vacation April 22nd - 28th. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Blessings,

Pastor Jaime Benson

**Committee Reports**

**Finance Meeting –** Meeting held March 4, 2024

Financial Update

1. Total income for Feb was $23431 with total expenses $21045 for a net profit of $3958.

2. YTD total net year profit is greater than last year at this point with total income this

year, $61248 and total expenses for the year $47764 with YTD profit of $13620 as

compared with last year at this time a net profit of -$2955.

3. The overall general offerings are up this year, helped especially by a $7000 donation

from a member for general use. We haven’t had to transfer any money to pay bills.

Audit

a. Audit is scheduled for April 4.

b. Jerry Saalsaa will lead this audit and our new treasurer, Steve McNeal will be a participant, so he can learn the Audit routine.

Temple Beth El Donation

a. The church is doing a field trip to a reformed Jewish Temple in Madison on April 7, 2024 and they are putting together a presentation free of charge for us. Pr

Jaime suggested we provide a donation, finance committee voted and motion carried to donate $200.

Tribute Income

a. We recently stopped doing fresh weekly flowers on altar because of cost. Ginny Paulson created artificial seasonal floral arrangements for the altar.

b. In place of congregational members donating money for the weekly flowers, we are now doing a tribute where members can acknowledge their loved ones and special moments in the bulletin. A suggested donation of $20 for this.

c. We had been putting this money in the altar flower category, but Janice suggested it would be better in another category. After much discussion, Janice will create a new income category labeled Tribute Donations to better track this income.

Submitted by Jaimie Rudolph

**Property Report -** Feb 10 – March 15

Feb 14-------Removed snow from sidewalks (Jerry on leave).

Feb 15-----Met with 1 Electric to get a proposal to run wiring for hand dryers in both men’s and women’s restrooms.

Feb 16----Order hand dryers for restrooms and verified stud locations in walls.

Feb 19----Hand dryers arrived, verified contents and all parts were included.

Feb 21----Received wiring proposal from 1 Electric----$740.00

Feb 26----Met with MnM Electric to walk through wiring project for the hand dryers.

Feb 27----Received MnM Electric Proposal for wiring the hand dryers for a total sum of $375.00. Signed the proposal and informed MnM Electric they had the project.

Feb 28---- Installed the hand dryers with Steve McNeal in both rest rooms. Will evaluate if a wall plates are needed below each dryer to protect the drywall from moisture splash.

Mar 4----Met MnM Electric to pull wire for a 20-amp circuit for each hand dryer and install circuit breakers. Note: One circuit breaker was damaged from shipping, contractor will replace.

Mar 7----Met MnM Electric to install new 20-amp breaker and button up the electrical panel.

March 9-----Reset all thermostats for Day Light Saving Time and timers.

March 14----Met with Pastor Jaime, Amy, Steve McNeal to go over a proposal for updating our church WIFI capabilities and needed computer updates for Amy & Janice. The proposal will be brought forward to the next Council meeting.

Property Manager

Del Molden

**Stewardship**

Nothing submitted

**Worship & Music**

Nothing submitted

**Global & Local Ministry**

Highway clean-up scheduled for April 21st at 10 am.

Geoff Gilbert