

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
December 16, 2021
Meeting held in hybrid format due to COVID-19

Called to order by Geoff Gilbert at 6:33pm.

Attendance:

Jack Paulson-Zoom
Halley Harms-In Person
Ruth Price-In Person
Kory Anderson- absent with notification
Geoff Gilbert-In Person
Don Bender- In person
Ann Ciske- Zoo
Kerry Melby- In Person

Prayer by Pastor Jaimie

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Kerry Melby, second by Jack Paulson to approve the proposed agenda with the changes of two dates. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER MEETING MINUTES **Motion by Don Bender, second by Kerry Melby to approve the November meeting minutes. Motion Carried.**

Pastor's Report

Our weekly worship rhythms have continued with fairly regular attendance on both Sundays and Wednesdays. We had a nice Thanksgiving Eve service with similar numbers to our normal Wednesdays and it was nice to gather together before the holiday. We are also well into the season of Advent as Christmas is quickly approaching. Looking ahead for worship, we will be having a Blue Christmas service on Wednesday, Dec. 22nd to acknowledge some of the griefs and challenges this season brings. We will also be having three services on Christmas Eve at 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm, and 6:30 pm with the hope to spread our numbers out a bit. On Sunday, Dec. 26th we will have a lessons and carols service that will be led by Marty Genrich. Before we know it, we will be in the new year!

There were a few more visits Janice and I had yet to make due to different facilities being closed to visitors. This past month we made the last few of those visits as well after the facilities opened back up. In addition, we are taking turns visiting different members on our list. I made five visits solo and will look forward to this new rhythm as we move forward. I have been bringing the loaves from Our Daily Bread to those who can have it when I visit, and they are very grateful for it. Besides the home visits, I have also made some phone calls this month to check in on members who have been faced with some especially difficult circumstances to offer some pastoral care in addition to some spontaneous visits as members stop in the office.

This past month, Carla and I met with a candidate interested in the choir director position who has been asked to fill out an application. We are still waiting to hear back from them, but I will keep the council updated on the process as it unfolds. Speaking of hiring, I met with the personnel committee last week and they have begun to work on crafting a job description for the parish associate position so that we can hopefully vote on it in January. The personnel committee will be working with Jerry to discern and curate the budget for the coming year, specifically regarding the salary of this position. In addition to these meetings, I attended my other regular meetings including my weekly text study group, our biweekly staff meetings, and my monthly meetings with the finance committee, our synod conference, and my first call group.

On Sunday, Dec. 5th we welcomed six new members to Bethlehem, Beth Gilpin, June Benson, Tyler, Kristy, Mikayla, and Zane Bovre. Last week, another couple who had attended the new member orientation decided they would like to officially join as well. We welcomed Emil and Nancy Loether on Sunday, Dec. 12th. We are excited and grateful to have these members join our Bethlehem family! Some other events that have happened over the last month include some meet and greets I had with the congregation at coffee hour, with the confirmation families, and with the 3rd-5th grade Sunday School class. In confirmation, we had a game night on Dec. 8th, a potluck on Dec. 1st, and are currently working on a service project for residents at Tivoli. This past week we had our Gifts of Bethlehem auction which had a lot of engagement, but we have some changes in mind to make for next year to help reduce some of the extra work it created and to help it run more smoothly. The Gifts of Bethlehem concert was a great event, and I am grateful for all the gifts that were shared.

With Advent Blessings,
Pastor Jaime Benson

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Financial Update

- Revenue for November: \$26,090 up from previous year. An increase in general offerings is noted from last month as well as last year. Expenditures: \$34,936. This represents an increase and is due to approx. \$15,000 paid out for the youth mission trip, so a net loss in November of \$8845. Year to date we have a profit of \$37,284
- A Personnel Committee formed and met to discuss position descriptions. Pr Jaime asked Jerry to be a part of a committee for monetary information. Pay raises to be considered for existing staff members
- Benevolence will be paid out this month to Synod- \$600, World Hunger- \$350, Portage PACAP- \$500
- 2022 Budget/Annual Meeting. Jerry presented the budget and was reviewed by the committee. Jerry needed a couple more documents to project the budget more accurately. He will finish the budget and email to the committee.

Christian Education Committee Report

Confirmation

Confirmation has had a busy December with a potluck and acolyte training on Dec. 1st, a game night on Dec. 8th, and a service night on Dec. 15th. We will take time off for Christmas and will return to in person classes on January 5th. We will be starting a unit on the Bible in the new year.

Sunday School

The children sang at the Gifts of Bethlehem and will sing this Sunday as well. They will not be having class 12/26 or 1/2.

Youth Group

No updates provided.

Worship & Music Committee Report

Property Committee Report

Year End utility reports were completed and trend analysis sent to the council. A new report was created to track increases in natural gas rate elements.

Building Maintenance:

- An air deflector was fabricated and installed on the supply vent on the east side of the altar to redirect the airflow.
- LED lights on the crosses marking the driveway entrance were replaced.
- Reattached soffit and j-channel on the second story gable on the southwest corner of the building torn loose by high winds.
- Plumbing repairs were made to the flush valves in the mens' room.
- Snowblowers were prepped for the season.

A big thanks to everyone who helped get the Christmas tree into the sanctuary.

Local & Global Committee Report

No Report Received

Stewardship/Evangelism

No Report Received

Covid Task Force

December 13, 2021, Minutes

In attendance: Del Molden, Janice Petersen, Melissa Bradbury, Ann Ciske, Julie Saalsaa, Pr. Jaime Benson, Larry Sween

- Max attendance for Christmas worship

Create a form for people to indicate which service they will come to with an estimate of the number of people attending, which will allow for us to plan accordingly for seating and set up.

There will be a maximum of 200 people seated in the sanctuary (if 10-15 extra come they will be seated in sanctuary; more than 15 will be seated in the narthex)

- Communion and offering for Christmas worship

We will offer communion cups at the altar for Christmas worship. The ushers will dismiss each pew to come up and will have a basket of communion cups to distribute to those who wish to stay seated. We will encourage everyone to use hand sanitizer which will be placed where people can access it. The offering bowls will be passed out.

- Close Contact for Confirmation

Parents and mentors were notified via email that someone who was at Confirmation on Dec. 8 tested positive for Covid. Julie and Pr. Jaime received a text from this individual Sunday evening right after this person found out. This person had not been to any other gatherings at church during their infectious period except for Confirmation. This was discussed at our Covid meeting. An email was sent to parents that there will still be class on Dec 15, but the parents should use their discretion as to whether or not to send their child/ren and to keep them home if symptoms arise. Follow health department protocols.

A motion by Kerry Melby, second by Geoff Gilbert to approve the committee reports. Motion Carried.

Old Business

Portico update

The council did not receive any feedback from any members regarding this matter for the 2nd meeting in a row.

Personnel Committee Terms

Members of the committee will commit to the three year term.

New Business

2022 Budget (Jerry Saalsaa)

A motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Don Bender to approve the associate job description as presented. Motion Carried.

A motion by Halley Harms, second by Geoff Gilbert to approve the annual budget as presented by Jerry to present to the congregation at the annual meeting. Motion Carried.

Approval of New Members (Pr. Jaime)

A motion by Don Bender, second by Geoff Gilbert to approve the above listed new members in the Pastor's Report. Motion Carried.

Stewardship Christmas Letter- It was discussed as a council that this is something that the stewardship committee should further discuss for an upcoming stewardship campaign.

A motion by Don Bender second by Jack Paulson to adjourn the meeting at 7:16. Motion Carried.

Lord's Prayer

