

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH  
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING  
December, 2020  
Meeting held via Zoom due to COVID-19

Called to order by Robin Kvalo at 6:34 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  
Ann Ciske- Zoom  
Jerry Saalsaa-Zoom

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 OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

**Motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Kory Anderson to approve the November meeting minutes as submitted. Motion Carried.**

Pastor's Report

**WORSHIP:** It isn't what we want. It isn't what we feel we need. We're all feeling some loss in this area of BLC. What I recommend is that since we're all grieving to some point or another, that we be opened to listening to each other. Even invite people into speech by using active listening. We can't fix this problem of COVID in our midst. This is really hard! But we can remain in a compassionate community.

I have a daily Advent Devotion on our BLC Facebook page. Just a little something I've written, based upon the daily lectionary for Advent.

FAITH FORMATION:

- **Pre-k thru 5<sup>th</sup>:** I've received positive (and certainly welcomed) feedback from families regarding the way we are proceeding with instructional materials. I'm working closely with a small team of volunteers who are getting materials for lessons, packing the monthly bags, and assisting with delivery. My feeling is that this is going well.
- **6<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> confirmation** I'm really excited about how things are going with our format. The kids want more class time to discuss and share with each other! We've expanded

class time by 30 minutes and are open to staying online beyond one hour if needed. Oh, my heart! Megan Jahoda has joined the mentor team, making sure we have enough Safe Church certified mentors for each class session. She brings her incredible energy and love for the kids to our class time.

- **Dwelling in the Word** We initiated 3 online monthly offerings for people to participate. My time slot is the only one where people have joined. We are continuing with my monthly time and discontinuing the other two.

RENEWAL: My struggle has been, “How do we engage in Renewal as I’ve been trained in a time when we cannot physically be together? Every model I’ve learned has people physically with others.” I’m beyond frustrated by this. I guess we keep doing what we’re doing now, which is coming together in our ministries at BLC and discern ways and opportunities for our church family to keep connected. In this department I believe we are doing a fantastic job.

ADMINISTRATIVE: I could not do what I do without the staff and volunteers in our congregation. This is a faith community that works well together to be God’s Family Serving Christ with Love. And I think that that last line sums up my report for this month.

In the name of our God of Joy,  
**Pastor Jen**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### Finance Committee Report

#### ***Financial Update (Jerry & Janice):***

Janice had to transfer \$2,000 money to pay the mortgage in November. We have paid River Haven, but we still have to pay out the food pantry and synod benevolence. General offerings have decreased in November compared to October; and offerings are somewhat down from this time in 2019.

Thrivent Choice Balance: \$1,324. Denise will be managing this at Marj’s request. Denise and Janice will talk further about this.

#### ***Church Usage:***

The property committee created a fee list for building use a few years ago, so we reviewed the fee schedule/guidelines tonight. Although it was created two years ago, we do not know if it had been approved by council at that time. John, Janice and Tania are going to meet next week to add a few details such as fees for members/non-members, etc. A draft will be sent to the Finance Committee to review, and then will be sent to council this month for approval.

Finance reviewed the non-member wedding fees since Julie had a call from someone inquiring about a wedding at the church. The wedding fees as written are fine to use.

#### ***2021 Budget (Jerry):***

Jerry reviewed the draft of the budget with the committee. Total 2021 revenues show a decrease due to a decrease in projected offerings (as we will ultimately face this situation due to the ongoing pandemic). As for expenses, Jerry used the actuals for 2020 to set the expenses for 2021, which shows an overall a decrease. We did add a line item for the call committee expense; we are budgeting \$5,000.

Committees/ministry groups expenses have decreased; everyone has done a great job of being conservative with their requests. However, the proposed 2021 budget does show a deficit, and we feel that being transparent with the congregation about this is important. Additional fundraising will be important in 2021.

**Motion** by John D. to send the 2021 budget as prepared to council for approval; 2nd by Denise D.; all in favor. ***Motion Carried***

***Call Committee Expenses (John D.):***

The council was concerned that the amount requested, \$8,000, was too high; they were not aware that we need to reimburse the expenses of any future candidates. However, we will add a line item in the 2021 budget for this expense.

***Gifts of Bethlehem/Holiday Stewardship Campaign:***

We have changed the format for the Gifts of Bethlehem fundraiser to avoid licensing issues with YouTube. Instead of collecting a suggested donation from everyone in order to view the recordings, we will be distributing copies of the recording to every active member of the congregation along with a holiday stewardship letter.

***Annual Report/Annual Meeting:***

Jerry will be presenting the 2021 proposed budget to the congregation at the annual meeting. In consideration of the pandemic, the Finance Committee will be working through the details of a contingency plan in the event that our financial situation is worse than expected in 2021.

Christian Education Committee Report

**Motion by Halley Harms, second by Geoff Gilbert for a tubing event at Cascade Mountain to be planned. Megan will notify the council when the event will be scheduled. Motion carried.**

Office staff have sent out notifications to those who needed to complete the safe church training and required background checks as required by our insurance policy.

Stewardship & Evangelism Committee Report

No report received.

Worship & Music Committee Report

No Report Received

Property Committee Report

Year-end utility reports were sent to the Council. The reports reflected a five-year low in billing and usage due to the pandemic.

Winterizing projects for the building have been completed. The last four filters were changed in the air handlers. A large mud wasp nest was cleaned out from the handler serving the music room. Wind damage on a portion of the fascia was repaired.

An a/v cable that had been lying on the floor in the sound room was fished through the ceiling and walls to the office. Thanks to Del for all the effort this project involved.

#### Local & Global Committee Report

No report received.

#### COVID-19 Task Force

No report received.

#### Call Committee

The committee has finalized the congregational survey and sent it out via e-mail and snail mail. Approximately 100 responses have been received so far. Jeff Melby has provided a summary of the responses to date and is giving the snail mail responses a little more time to be returned. He will check this week.

Work continues on the site survey and it is hoped to get that completed in the next week.

Rev. Kottke attended last week's meeting and fielded some questions. He said it was not appropriate to interview the staff of any prospective candidates as they may not know their pastor is looking for a new call.

He also indicated that the church council is obligated to accept any recommendations from the call committee since that is what they are charged to do.

The call committee will be meeting next week, not sure yet about the following week.

#### APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

#### Old Business

- Approval of Building Use policy revisions

**Motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Jack Paulson to approve the building use policy revisions. Motion Carried.**

New Business

- Review of proposed 2021 budget (Jerry Saalsaa)  
**A motion by Ann Ciske, second by Geoff Gilbert to send the proposed budget to the Annual congregational meeting. Motion Carried.**
- Christmas plans
- Annual meeting agenda, format and date (bylaws state not before Jan. 15<sup>th</sup> and not later than Feb 15th) – suggested date Feb. 7th. Council will be moving forward with the date of Feb. 7th, 2021. Julie and Melissa are working on the format - may be a combination of in person, Zoom and transmission in the parking lot.
- Council member open seat for 2021- President Robin Kvalo will be stepping down
- The Finance Committee is looking for approval to pay out the following:

This is what we will mail out now in addition to what we have already sent.

River Haven	\$500
Food Pantry	\$300
General Synod Benevolence	\$1500
World Hunger	\$300
PACAP	\$1000
Total	\$3600

**A motion by Don Bender, second by Kory Anderson to approve the above gifts from the church. Motion Carried.**

**Motion by Robin Kvalo second by Ann Ciske to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 pm . Motion Carried.**

Next Finance Committee Meeting: January 6th

All Committee Night: February 8th

Next Council Meeting: January 21st

Annual Meeting: February 7th \*How it will be done TBD