

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
January 21, 2021
Meeting held via Zoom due to COVID-19

Called to order by Robin Kvalo at 6:37 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- Absent with notice
Ann Ciske- Zoom
Julie Saalsaa-Zoom

Prayer by Pastor Jen

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Kory Anderson, second by Ann Ciske to approve the proposed agenda. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

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

Pastor's Report

WORSHIP: I'm grateful for those who work throughout the week and come together on Sunday morning to make this happen. While we pine away for what we cannot do, we continue in a different way. God is present. The Good News is still the same.

FAITH FORMATION:

- **Pre-k thru 5th:** No change, which is good.
- **6th thru 8th confirmation** In spite of all the goodness going on here, participation continues to drop. Zoom fatigue is the main reported culprit.
- **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 at first. Now Mark Teslik's slot is getting a positive response.

RENEWAL: I don't know. We haven't met for some time. Now that we are trying to schedule a meeting before the annual meeting Team Members' availability is a problem.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

I'm nearing burn-out. I would like to take Feb 9-Feb 15 off. Totally off. Unreachable off. Dan Paulfus will be present for the service.

Pastor Jen

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee Report

1. Financial Update

We had a good December; the revenue from the Gifts of Bethlehem online auction helped with that. Despite the expenses, we are still showing a profit of \$7,000+ even after paying out the benevolence/charitable givings. Going into December, we had some concerns but it turned out ok. We have been able to pay the bills, and it is comforting knowing that we are going into January without having to make the loan certificate interest payment. We are closing the year with approx. \$104,000 in combined savings.

2. Annual Meeting/Annual Report

We will be including the same reports that we included last year in the annual report. We will also add in some additional information about the mortgage considering the refinance this year. Janice is trying to calculate some attendance numbers for an attendance graph (*considering the pandemic/online worship, this is proving to be challenging; the synod has provided guidance: attendance = all in-person #'s + all online views per week*). She will also add some identifiers recognizing key changes in service/worship offerings during this pandemic. We will also update the powerpoint presentation from last year in preparation of the meeting this year.

3. Charitable Donation Letter

Julie will create this for Jerry S. as he volunteers his time toward the Treasurer position. This charitable donation amounts to \$300 per month for 2020. Thank you, Jerry!!!

4. 2021 Check Signer

Robin will be stepping down. Council will need to appoint the next check signer.

5. Thrivent Choice (Denise & Janice)

Thrivent Choice money will be added into designated funds for tracking purposes.

6. Stewardship Campaign Results

We received 52 pledges for a total of \$148,807.84. Janice will look up pledges for 2020 to add into the annual meeting presentation to give a historical perspective.

7. 1099's

We will need to issue the 1099s for loan certificate holders/the final 1099's for closing of the loan certificate program. These will be due by the end of January.

8. PPP Loan

After further review by Jerry, we are not eligible for any other draws for 2020. However, if we see substantial decline in our revenues in Q1 and Q2 of 2021, we may be able to take a draw. For example, if our revenues for the quarter dip below 80% of 2019's same quarter, we will be able to claim a credit with the IRS at a level of up to \$7k per quarter per employee (70% of wages paid maxed at \$7k). We'll need to work with our payroll provider to process this credit claim on the 941 quarterly filing before they file it. Jerry will continue to monitor this situation.

9. Job descriptions

We reviewed Janice's role (she created a document that outlines the responsibilities of the various financial positions; she is the Parish Nurse and volunteers time as the Financial Assistant). We will continue to modify/update this document and create a final version. This is a reminder that we should revisit/review these volunteer roles.

We recommend the council to have staff reviews (something simple), and possibly individual check-ins with the volunteers/committee leaders. This will allow for a two-way conversation for feedback & suggestions. We also recommend something creative for volunteer appreciation this year (Tania has been in contact with Lori Cox and Pr. Jen about this).

Next Finance Committee Meeting: Tuesday, February 2nd, **6:30pm**

Christian Education Committee Report

A mid year survey was sent to families of confirmation students. We received feedback from 12 families. The purpose of the survey was to seek out comfort levels of students meeting in-person with the safety precautions in place. According to the survey results, 10/12 families are comfortable with in-person activities. We are planning some outdoor outings including tubing at Cascade Mountain on Wednesday the 27th. Pastor Jen and mentors are taking the next week to brainstorm and collaborate how to move forward offering more opportunities to meet in person. We have several parents who are willing to help with this.

Stewardship & Evangelism Committee Report

Everyone should have received the draft of the first letter to our inactive members. My plan is to skip March then send a second letter at the beginning of April getting a little more specific with what we haven't seen or heard from you. Then skip May and send the third in early June. Hoping we will be back in the church by then so we can offer specific ways for them to get back into church.

Do we need a vote on moving forward with this plan?

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

L&G did not meet this month. Some of the members participated in delivering the Gifts of Bethlehem video.

COVID-19 Task Force

Columbia County Numbers & Local Hospital Capacity

We took a look at the current numbers in Columbia County. Hospitals are not at capacity at this time. There seems to be a downward projection, but the data on the DHS website is preliminary. We decided we would take things two weeks at a time. Our guidelines to return to worship, as well as those set forth by the ELCA, state that the benchmark we will follow is 2 weeks of declining positive Covid-19 cases.

Youth Activity Requests

- tubing

The youth outdoor activities with proper safety precautions were approved by all.

Fundraising Event Ideas

- Casserole Sale
 - *We decided this would be safe to proceed with. The food would be cooked and prepared at home and brought to church for pick up. Pick up will need to be done in a safe manner (i.e. no mass gathering pick up).*
- Valentine's Day Drive by Spaghetti Dinner
- Pizza sale
 - *We would like the organizers of these events to write out a plan for how these events will take place with safety precautions. Because we are not allowing for worship at this time, which is our priority, we are asking for these events to be put on hold for two week until we see what happens with current Covid case numbers. If there is no decline in the numbers, these events will need to be postponed until there is a decline.*

Planning for Ash Wednesday (Feb. 17th), Lent and Easter

Some ideas for Ash Wednesday include:

- *Drive-in service*
- *Ashes to be put in individual cups (communion cups)*
- *Each member would put their own ashes on*

- Confirmation students would have their February outdoor activity be the burning of the ashes
- We did not discuss anything for Easter at this point
- The idea of drive-by soup night was brought up

Review of Instructions for indoor worship

No changes need to be made to the instructions for worship, except to include that individually, prepacked communion is offered for those who are comfortable.

Call Committee

The committee plans to do a final review of the congregational survey at its next meeting as well as completing the last elements of the Ministry Site Profile.

APPROVAL OF THE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Motion by Ann Ciske, second by Kory Anderson to approve the committee reports as submitted. Motion Carried.

Old Business

- Council member open seat for 2021
- Annual meeting format (Julie Saalsaa)- Julie presented the council with the choice of a parking lot meeting or a Zoom meeting. Council chose to hold the meeting via Zoom. Julie will be hosting several training sessions to make sure everyone helping run/attend the meeting is comfortable. The Annual meeting will be held on February 7th at 10:30 am.

New Business

- BLC Logo tie breaker needed
 - ELCA Congregational Report Questions #15 & 16. See Appendix A.- Council completed
 - Approval of 2020 annual report
- Motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Kory Anderson to approve the annual report as submitted. Motion Carried.**
- Addition of two bylaw changes for future meetings during a pandemic
 - (C10.08 and C12.02). See Appendix B.

Motion by Jack Puason, second by Ann Ciske to approve the addition of the changes to the bylaws (C10.8 and C12.02) and will be presented at the annual meeting to the congregation. Motion Carried.

- Letter to inactive members (Ruth Price). See Appendix C.

Motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Halley Harms to approve the letter to inactive members as presented. Motion Carried.

- Keeping track of all motions/votes made via email- Halley will create a section in the minutes for any electronic votes that took place in between council meetings.
- Nominate new Council President- Council members will prayerfully consider the opportunity to step into the role.
- Assign the new check signer to replace Robin- Jack Pauslon will replace Robin as a check signer.

Motion Geoff Gilbert by second by Ann Ciske to adjourn the meeting at 7:44pm . Motion Carried.

Next Finance Committee Meeting: February 2, 2021

All Committee Night: February 8th

Next Council Meeting: February 18, 2021