

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

Called to order by Ann Ciske at 6:34

Attendance:

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

Prayer by

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

**Motion by Don Bender, second by Geoff Gilbert to approve the proposed agenda. Motion Carried.**

APPROVAL OF THE OCTOBER MEETING MINUTES

**Motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Jack Paulson to approve the October meeting minutes. Motion Carried.**

Pastor's Report

We have been continuing to have worship on Wednesdays and Sundays which has been going well. We celebrated the Affirmation of Baptism of 10 confirmands on Reformation Sunday which was wonderful! I am glad that we could celebrate them and this milestone together. We also celebrated All Saints Day and I believe this was a meaningful experience, especially since we have not been able to mark this day in the ways we are used to in the recent past. Our attendance numbers have been setting a higher average than this summer, which is nice however, our numbers are down a little on Wednesdays due to it becoming darker earlier and some being uncomfortable driving in the dark. There is still a faithful group that comes so we will continue as we are and look forward to having those folks back in the spring. We will be having a Thanksgiving Eve service on Wednesday, November 24th and the first Sunday in Advent is November 28th. We are in a busy season, and I am excited to see what God has in store for us!

Janice and I have done 5 more visits with members. I think we will soon be finalizing the list of who to visit and then splitting it in half, one for each of us. Then we can alternate between them every month or so and this way we both get to visit everyone while also making the number of visits more manageable. Heidi Wylesky, Judy LaMarche's daughter, died near the end of October

and they had a visitation for her. I met with the family before the visitation time to pray with them and to read a psalm. Please continue to hold their family in prayer.

Julie, Janice, and I have started meeting biweekly as staff and we will continue this in the future. I have found it helpful for us to have some dedicated time for discussion so we can all be on the same page. As far as meetings go, I met with the Finance Committee, the Covid Task Force, the Sunday School teachers, some individual members, and with those who attended All Committee night which I felt had a good turnout. I am continuing to learn more about who Bethlehem is and what God might be calling us to at this time and in this place and have found these meetings to be informative and helpful in discernment.

I enjoyed being a part of our Trunk or Treat event on October 26th where we had 9-10 trunks and a good number of kids attend. I think we will move the time to earlier in the day next year because it got kind of late for the little ones, especially on a school night. In Confirmation class we have been talking about Luther, the Reformation, and some of our beliefs as Lutherans about grace. I will plan to focus on this for the remainder of the fall term and then look into learning more about the Bible in the new year. Ann and I worked on getting a personnel committee together and we officially have a committee, pending council approval, with members Barb Rothwell, Robin Kvalo, and Jim Crawford. I am grateful for their willingness to serve and step into this needed role. We also had our New Member Orientation on Sunday, November 14th and had eight people attend (with some of their family members missing) and we have six members who are interested in joining at this time. We will plan to install these new members on Sunday, December 5th. The rest of those who attended the meeting would like to get to know the church better before they officially commit to being members. It is exciting to have these siblings in Christ join our Bethlehem family!

I have been continuing to attend my weekly text study group with other pastors and this has proved to be fruitful. I also met with my First Call Group again at the end of October and we will plan to meet again at the beginning of December. I believe this group will be influential in my own continued formation as a pastor and I look forward to seeing where we go together. I have also continued to meet with our Synod Conference group and in this last meeting we met with the Synod Staff to talk about what is happening in our communities and what needs are there in our synod. It was a good conversation and I am grateful for the staff's attentive ear and willingness to meet with us as we need.

When I said we are in a busy season, I did not realize how busy we are! It has been a full month with many more good things coming up. In looking ahead, I will be having meet and greets with members at coffee hour, in confirmation, and in Sunday School to continue to get to know more people and to get to know people better. Well, I think that is more than enough for now!

In peace,

Pastor Jaime Benson

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Finance Committee**

#### **Financial Update**

1. Revenue was \$20,000 in October, that amount was less than we had in September, but this is due to youth mission trip fundraising. Expenses were \$15354. Overall profit of \$4649 for the month and \$47052 for the year.
2. Overall good financial situation. We will be paying out the money that the youth have raised for the mission trip in the next few months

**Old Business**

1. Pr Jen Portico

Jerry notified Pastor Jen, Janice notified Portico, and Pr Jaime notified the bishop of this decision. Explanation of this situation was put into the Chimes for the congregation to be aware of what happened, and final decision.

2. Fire Alarm System

When we switch to Best Defense, we will need to cancel two phone lines. The telephone contract is up in early February. This would also be the time to switch the internet, if it is decided there is a better internet availability for our live streaming.

3. Parttime Parish Associate/Youth

- a. The church council is forming a personnel committee to evaluate the need for another employee. They need to consider job description (input from Staff and other invested people), salary, and the timing of this position, since it most likely needs to be approved by the church congregation.
- b. A personnel committee also needs to consider pay raises for staff. The job market has become competitive, and the current staff (incl custodian, organists etc.) have had no pay raises in the last years.
- c. The personnel committee also looks at unfilled positions (choir director) and fills them.

4. Benevolence

a. Benevolence current breakdown of what is owed as of Oct 2021

	Budget or Received	Paid	Owed
Synod	\$1200 (budget)	\$600	\$600
World Hunger	\$480 (received)	\$180	\$300
River Haven	\$600 (received)	\$600	\$0
LWR	\$130 (received)	\$67.72	\$62.28

- b. Janice made a motion to donate \$500 to the Portage Ministerial Fund, Jerry seconded.
- c. Motion carried

5. Memorial donations

- a. Geoff Gilbert will contact family members as to their wishes for the memorial money and their wish was to have it be used wherever needed.

- b. The amount of money \$3525 will be transferred on the Designated Savings Fund Activity Sheet from Memorial Funds undesignated to Unrestricted funds category.

## **New Business**

### 1. Budget 2022

- a. Janice prepared a Budget to actual worksheet in preparation for creating next year's Budget.
- b. Jerry will review this and then it will be sent out to committees to review at the All-Committee Meeting on November 8.
- c. Annual Meeting needs to be scheduled and if there is a new position added to staff it will need to be voted on prior to presentation of the budget at the annual meeting.

### 2. Shed Reimbursement

- a. Council voted to reimburse Del Molden \$1000 for the materials he supplied to build the shed extension for the new mower.
- b. Janice will create a purchase order for this payment.

## Christian Education Committee Report

### Worship & Music Committee Report

Carla is going to attempt to start up the praise team in January and also get a feel for any interest in starting a choir chime group.

### Property Committee Report

Utility bills continue to be monitored. And while the bills for last month are in line with previous years, we did see an increase in one element of the gas bill. The Gas Supply Market Adjustment increased for the first time in the last 3 months. I expect this portion of the bill to increase as seasonal demand goes up.

The Christmas tree has been ordered and will be picked up and decorated on December 4th.

### Other items:

- The door lock on Pastor's office was replaced.
- The parking lot light at the entrance was repaired.
- A new vacuum was purchased for the pew areas.
- The door closer to the main entrance was repaired.
- All thermostats were reset for Standard Time
- Septic tanks were pumped out.

## Local & Global Committee Report

No report received.

## Stewardship/Evangelism

Fall pledge letters were mailed out on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

## Covid Task Force

Summary from November 4<sup>th</sup>

- Fans – The fans will not be turned on and run continually any longer due to the concern of condensation being brought in from the outdoors. This condensation will lead to freezing in the ductwork and possible leakage (which happened last year in March in the nursery). In order to still address the need for airflow, the heat will be scheduled to turn on right at the start of worship service which then the fans will be blowing.

- Christmas - we are going to send out an email survey to members to see if we offered 3 services, which one they think they may come to. We wanted to gauge where we would have the most attendance.

- Our intent is to try to spread the attendance out amongst the services offered and give people choices based on their comfort level
- We think the fans should be running the entire time of these services though since there will be more people than normal.
- Masks will be encouraged.
- the FM transmitter will be turned on for those that are not comfortable coming inside
- one service will be live-streamed
- possible times of the services would be 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm
- overflow seating in the narthex
- we will wait until it's closer to decide maximum number for capacity
- based on the survey results, we will then decide if we need to have 3 services or stick with two

**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.

### Fire Inspection & Monitoring Quotes

Will be installed on January 26th.

### Safe Food Handling

Kerry and Julie revised the coffee hour “how to” guide to include safe food handling instructions. A sign with “wash hands before serving food” will be posted in the bathrooms.

## **New Business**

New Members (Pr. Jaime)

6 members are interested in joining BLC after attending the new member class.

Hope House Fundraiser approval (Pr. Jaime)

Maddy Cook would like to do a bake sale fundraiser on December 19th for the Hope House.

**A motion by Don Bender, second by Kerry Melby to approve the bake sale fundraiser.**

**Motion Carried.**

Sympathy Cards from Council (Pr. Jaime)

Council will make it a common practice to sign sympathy cards to church family members when there is a passing of a member or their immediate family.

Set annual meeting date:

Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> snow date

**A motion by Geoff Gilbert, second Jack Paulson, to approve the annual meeting to be held on January 30th with a snow date of February 13th. Motion Carried.**

Personnel Committee Description Review & Approval (Pr. Jaime)

Pastor Jaime provided a description of what the responsibilities for the personnel committee would entail. It was discussed that the committee should be no more than 5 members but kept at an odd number. Currently there are three members committed to being involved in the committee.

**A motion by Geoff Gilbert second by Pastor Jaime to approve the personnel committee description and responsibilities with the term to be decided at a later date. The following members are approved at this time: Robin Kvalo, Jim Crawford and Barb Rothwell.**

Constitution & Bylaw updates for Congregation Approval (Pr. Jaime)

**A motion by Kerry Melby second by Geoff Gilbert to change the wording of Chapter 11 from 3 consecutive terms to 2 consecutive terms. Motion Carried.**

**A motion by Don Bender second by Jack Paulson to approve the wording in section 6 item 5 in the bylaws removing the wording “The annual every member visit”. Motion Carried.**

**A motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Jaime Benson to approve the addition of the Personnel Committee description to the bylaws under Section 7 - Committee. Motion Carried.**

Council will revisit section 1 and 5 in the bylaws regarding the annual meeting and the fiscal year at a later time after further information is gathered.

Benevolence

The Finance Committee provided items in the budget for the benevolence as stated in the finance committee report to close out the budgeted items for the year.

A motion by Geoff Gilbert second by Kery Melby to donate \$500 to the Portage Ministerial Fund. **Motion Carried.**

#### Staff Raises

The finance committee will make an estimate for the budget to be taken into consideration for staff raises and a recommendation will be provided to the council.

#### Sunday School Brunch

**A motion by Kerry Melby, second by Geoff Gilbert for the Sunday school to provide a brunch on December 19th. Motion Carried.**

#### Internet & phone lines for 2022

It was decided that we will leave things as are since the internet is working for our needs at this time. Once Star Link has been tested and has reputable service we will consider a change at that time. We will be decreasing by two lines and redo the contract with Frontier due to the fact that the fire protection service will be wireless.

**A motion by Don Bender second by Jack Paulson to adjourn the meeting at 7:46. Motion Carried.**

Lord's Prayer

