

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING
October 21, 2021
Meeting held in hybrid format due to COVID-19

Called to order by Ann Ciske at 6:42

Attendance:

Jack Paulson-in person
Halley Harms-In Person
Ruth Price-In Person
Kory Anderson- Absent with Notification
Geoff Gilbert-In Person
Don Bender- In person
Ann Ciske- In Person
Kerry Melby- In Person

Prayer by

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Kerry Melby to approve the proposed agenda. Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF THE August MEETING MINUTES

Motion by Jack Pauslon, second by Don Bender to approve the September meeting minutes. Motion Carried.

Pastor's Report

My first couple weeks here at Bethlehem have been full and fun, from leading worship on both Wednesdays and Sundays to learning the inner workings of the office and the life of this community. I think there are a lot of good things ahead for us as we begin this new chapter together. As for worship life, I was officially installed on Sunday, Oct. 10th and the Sunday School kids sang wonderfully that day. 4th graders received their Bibles on Sunday, Oct. 17th and we had an informational meeting on the National Youth Gathering to gauge potential interest in attending. There was one family in attendance. I have been attending Confirmation on Wednesday evenings as well. The first week was more of a meet and greet with the kids and the second week I put a short lesson together. Confirmation curriculum will be something I will be looking into in the future to help develop a program that works well for both the kids and the mentors.

Janice and I have done a couple visits together with homebound members and plan to do more in the future to give a chance for introductions. We will plan to then divvy up visits, after introductions have been made, between the two of us to disperse the work more evenly and to ensure our members are being cared for. I have been working with Julie and Janice on the office details and I believe things are going well as I learn more of what there is to do. I was able to

attend the October Finance Committee meeting and found that to be helpful. I also met with our Covid 19 Task Force on Thursday, October 14.

I did attend the Bishop's Convocation which was held September 26-27th in Dodgeville. This was a great networking and educational event as I begin my time in the synod as a rostered clergy member. I have been attending our weekly text study group with other pastors in the synod and I attended our monthly synod conference meeting with other pastors in the Columbia-Sauk region. This group appears to be supportive and I look forward to working with them in the future.

As for my personal studies and continuing education, I had some at the Bishop's Convocation and have been keeping up on my weekly podcasts and reading articles on the Scripture passages for the week. I am also meeting monthly with other first call pastors in the synod for support and learning opportunities. Our October meeting will be at the end of this month. I will plan to explore more educational opportunities in the future but for now I figured learning the ins and outs of Bethlehem is more urgent at the moment. 😊

Well, I think that might be enough for the first couple of weeks! I am looking forward to getting to know people better in the future and to begin establishing more relationships in the community.

In peace,
Pastor Jaime Benson

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Committee

Financial Update

1. Total revenue in Sept was \$23,860 including \$5100 in youth fundraising. Total expenses \$11622. Net profit for month: \$12,237, net for year \$42,402. As a note the net is high because of youth fundraising of approximately \$19,000 which will be spent in a later month. We have not had pastor payroll for two months, so that has also placed us in a positive financial situation.
2. Actions coming up that will need to be addressed in future meeting. Next month we will need to look at our Benevolence income/expenditures as well as begin the budget process.
3. Janice will provide reports on Committee spending this year vs budget. Also a report on Benevolence spending.

Old Business

1. Council Update

- a. Don reported that council spent most time on the activities in the church and the arrival of Pr Jaime.
- b. The council also discussed the fire alarm system maintenance and surveillance bids. There was some concern over Best Defense because of some negative experiences with

the company from one council member. The council decided that they would look at another company for bids and check references on Best Defense. If finance needs to review proposals, they will be presented at a future meeting.

2. Pastor Jen Portico

- a. Jerry updated the committee on the status of the overpayment to Pastor Jen of her employee contributions to Portico that were not deducted from her paycheck.
- b. Attached is a summary of the situation, and a detailed chart of the overpayment.
- c. Jerry made a motion recommending that Bethlehem Lutheran Church not move forward in attempting to recoup employee retirement contributions paid by the church but not deducted from Pr Jen's paycheck. Don seconded the motion.
- d. Motion approved

3. Pastor Jaime Payroll

- a. Jerry came into the office today (October 5) to help Janice, Julie set up payroll and benefits for Pastor Jaime. A Portico account needs to be set up by Pastor Jaime and she needs to decide if she wants any additional benefits deducted from her paycheck.

4. Memorial Donations

- a. Jerry asked the question about if the Council carried out the contacting family members of the undesignated Memorial Donations. Janice said that the list was put together and a procedure has been written by Geoff Gilbert. Janice had spoken to him during the process, but didn't know where the process was at this time.

New Business

1. Additional Staff Positions

- a. The committee discussed the potential need for an additional staff person. In the past the church has had a Parish Associate and a Youth Leader as paid positions.
- b. It was discussed the possibilities this person could do to support the staff and the volunteer committees currently functioning
- c. The committee felt that there needed to be more input from the congregation and the council about the need and the ability to finance this position.
- d. The Finance committee suggested that the council and the church consider this option.

Christian Education Committee Report

There are 22 children registered for Sunday School. They are unsure of a Christmas program at this time, but will be singing at the gifts of Bethlehem. Jeanette said that we owe \$ for VBS. Julie and Janice were looking into how this would be paid and from which funds.

Confirmation will take place on Sunday, October 3rd at a special 11:00 service.

An email vote took place on October 4th and was approved to allow the 9th graders to raise funds for the purchase of recreation equipment for the church. **Motion Carried.**

Worship & Music Committee Report

No Report

Property Committee Report

The addition to the shed has been completed with additional space provided for youth activity equipment. A big thank you to Del Molden for donating his time and the materials and to everyone who helped on the project.

The basketball hoop has been relocated to avoid a conflict with the shed addition.

All of the lawn and garden equipment has been winterized and put away until spring. Snowblowers are ready to go and marker stakes are put out for the snow plow.

Air handlers were serviced and filters replaced for the heating season.

New shades have been in the windows in the sanctuary.

Utility bills were reviewed. Billing and usage is at a five year low for last month although there is concern that natural gas rates will increase. The rates charged will be reviewed every month to help with the budgeting process for next year.

Local & Global Committee Report

Local and Global committee did not meet in October, but we continue to collect food for the Wyocena food pantry during the month of October. November/December will be a food pantry collection for the Portage food pantry.

God's work our Hands work in the community is ongoing raising money for River Haven and the roadside cleanup has been cancelled for this fall.

We are thinking of a possible food collection for the Portage Schools Market in the month of February.

Mission kits and quilts will be delivered October 23rd.

Pastor Lee from the United Methodist Church as asked if Bethlehem would like to be part of a community of churches in Portage to sponsor a family from Afghanistan. Local and Global will get more details and share with the council next month.

Stewardship/Evangelism

We will be looking for additional members to join the Stewardship committee.

Covid Task Force

We met with Pr. Jaime on October 12th to introduce ourselves and give an overview and history of the group. We discussed the following:

- adding liturgical music back into worship and decided to start slow with this and only add the Alleluia at this time.
- Adding back the passing of the offering bowl and decided to keep it as is for now.

- Adding back acolytes to service to light candles, check communion cards and offering envelopes and decided this was a good idea and to do it sooner in the school year than later
- Tania Anderson and her family would like to start up Our Daily Bread again. It was approved for her to do this at church
- Gifts of Bethlehem: as long as the covid situation doesn't get worse, having an indoor concert is approved. We suggest having it be a free ticketed event to control the number of people attending.

A motion by Don Bender, second by Geoff Gilbert to approve the committee reports.

Motion Carried.

Old Business

Portico update

The council agrees with the recommendation of the Finance Committee that Bethlehem Lutheran Church will not move forward in attempting to recoup employee retirement contributions paid by the church but not deducted from Pr Jen's paycheck. A written explanation of this to the congregation will be included in the November and December Chimes. **A motion by Geoff Gilbert, second by Jack Pauslon to approve the above statement regarding Portico. Motion Carried.**

Fire Inspection & Monitoring Quotes

A motion by Halley Harms second by Jaime Benson to approve the use of Best Defense as a Fire Alarm System Monitor and Inspection company with a disclaimer written into the contract that if a call comes in due to faulty equipment Best Defense will need to reimburse the church for charges made by the fire company. Motion Carried.

Safe Food Handling Procedures

Kerry will put together a list of bullet point recommendations to take to the COVID task force committee.

New Business

Fall Pledge letter review & approval

A motion by Jack Paulson, second by Kerry Melby to approve the fall pledge letter as presented by Ruth Price which will also include a pledge card. Motion Carried.

Stewardship Committee

Covered under committee report.

Faith Formation Personnel & Personnel Committee

A discussion was had that there is a need for a future parish associate to coordinate faith formation which would include but not be limited to faith formation for youth and adults. The

first step needs to be to form a personnel committee to proceed to form a job description of what this position will entail. Council would like the finance committee to look at numbers of what the previous salary included and what the potential salary is available. Ann will take the lead on forming the personnel committee.

Reimbursement for youth storage in new shed

There was a \$1000 donation by Pastor Tom. It has been put into the general funds, but as a council we would like to take the donation to reimburse Del for the shed addition. **A motion to reimburse Del the \$1000 out of the general fund was made by Ruth Price, second by Geoff Gilbert. Motion Carried.**

Card Club time change

Ann will let Chloe know that changing the time to 1:00 is OK.

Daily Bread

Kerry Melby wrote a grant to cover the cost of the funds for making the Daily Bread. The Anderson family will be taking responsibility for making the bread after Sunday Services as needed. A need for congregation donations is not needed at this time, but if there is a future need, a jar can be placed out.

New Member Orientation

Individuals have approached Pastor Jamie expressing interest in joining BLC. Pastor would like to hold a single class mid-November for those interested in joining the church.

A motion by Don Bender second by Jack Paulson to adjourn the meeting at 8:01. Motion Carried.

Lord's Prayer

