

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church

Congregational Meeting Minutes

11:00 am Sunday, February 7, 2021

A called Congregational meeting of Bethel Lutheran Church was held on February 7th, 2021. The meeting was hosted on Zoom to allow social distancing, necessary for participant safety in the Covid-19 pandemic. Facilities were made available for up to 10 people to attend the Zoom meeting from Discipleship Hall to accommodate members who lack internet reliable highspeed internet connections in their homes. Approximately 75 members of the congregation attended either via Zoom, or live, constituting a quorum.

- **Opening prayer**

Pastor David Young opened the meeting with a prayer at approximately 11:10 am.

- **Financial review**

Bookkeeper Kim Williams shared a financial report. In 2020, giving was less than expected, due to the pandemic. Expenses were also significantly reduced. Omitting a Payroll Protection Program loan, Bethel's expenses for 2020 exceeded income by \$1,125.97. Kim noted that, given the total size of the spending plan, that amount is very close to break-even. The PPP loan added an additional \$45,200.00 of income. Therefore, including the loan, Bethel's income exceeded expenses by \$44,074.03. Per the terms of the loan, those funds were used to cover payroll cost. Because the loan was used exclusively to cover payroll cost, and because the funds replaced income lost due to the pandemic, Kim anticipates that the loan will be forgiven. The lender will review our application to have the loan forgiven in the near future. Kim also reported that the outstanding amount due on Bethel's mortgage is approximately \$143,000.00. Jonathan Bellingham asked whether Bethel would apply for more loans through the PPP program. Kim replied that she was prepared to apply for additional loans, but our lender, Bank of Clarke County, is not yet prepared to receive applications. Kim will apply for a second loan when BoCC is ready to receive applications.

Kim noted that the Good Samaritan Fund saw increased use during 2020. The fund is used to offer small amounts of immediate assistance to people who have short term, one time needs, generally at the discretion of the Pastor. As the church office reopens, requests for assistance are likely to continue increasing, given the economic impact of the pandemic on the county. Kim requested that those members of the community who have the ability to make an additional commitment sign up to support the fund.

- **Introduce Staff and Council**

Pastor David Young introduce all members of the Bethel Staff.

George Donovan, Director of Music

Sue Correll, Associate Director of Music

Kim Williams, Administrator and Bookkeeper

Kristin Siebert, Parish Communicator

Shari Fletcher, Church Secretary

Patty White, Parish Custodian

Edie McGoff, Parish Nurse

Cliff Crowder, Facilities Manager

Gretchen Meade, Nursery Manager

Musicians Alex Kimble, Charlene Romano, and Darlene DeMott.

Pastor Young also introduced the 2021 council.

John Frederiksen, President

Vonda Wilt, Vice President, Pray and Chair Board Chair
Betty Puffinberger, Treasurer
Bruce Lothrop, Secretary
Beth Garner, Servant Board Chair
Mike McKiernan, Ministry Support Board Chair
Lee Braithwaite, Worship Board Chair
Curtiss Grymala, Congregation Life Board Chair
Dustie Fisher, Education Board Chair
Ella Carlson, Youth Liason

- **Line of Credit recommendation and future plans**

John Frederiksen reported that Bethel has access to a \$100,000 line of credit, secured to finance repairs to the “Underground” youth space. Repairs and renovation for that space will likely require only a small part of those funds. When the line of credit was secured, a vote of the Congregation designated that those funds be used exclusively for repair and renovation of the Underground. There are several other repair and maintenance projects that Council is considering, and would like to proceed with while most areas of the church are not in regular use. It would be ideal to execute some projects while most areas of the church are not in regular use. Areas for improvement include sound, video, and internet in the Sanctuary, flooring in the Sanctuary, flooring in the education wing, repairs to the HVAC system, and several areas needing paint. Council would like the ability to pay for such maintenance with funds from the line of credit. John noted that final plans and cost estimates will be presented to the congregation for discussion. There was discussion as to whether the line of credit would be used to pay down the mortgage. John reported that it was not Council’s intent to do so. Several members of the Congregation emphasized the importance of keeping repairs to the Underground as the top priority for the funds. John stated that Council clearly understands that a dedicated space for Youth activity is highly valued by the Congregation. Returning that space to a useable state will continue to be the top priority in building repairs.

A motion was made and seconded to use the \$100,000 line of credit not only for repair of the Underground but also for repair and maintenance projects in other areas of the church building. The motion passed by acclamation, although not unanimously.

- **Information**

- Office hours

Starting in March, the office will be open to the public 9:00 am to 12:00 noon on Monday through Wednesday each week. Masks and social distance will be required until current restrictions are eased.

- By-laws Update

Council is planning a bylaw change to allow for the use electronic communications to notify members of Congregational meetings and similar required communications. All those who prefer written notice will continue to receive written notice by US Post.

- **Closing Prayer**

Pastor Young closed the meeting with a prayer at approximately 12:00 noon.