

## **Bethel Lutheran Church Council**

### **Minutes**

**March 9, 2021**

A Monthly meeting of the Congregational Council of Bethel Lutheran Church was held by Zoom on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Pastor David Young, Council President John Fredericksen, Vice President Vonda Wilt, Treasurer Betty Puffinberger, Secretary Bruce Lothrop, Dustie Fisher, Beth Garner, Curtiss Grymala, and bookkeeper Kim Williams were present at the meeting. Lee Braithwaite was not able to attend.

#### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:05 pm.

#### **Opening Prayer and Devotion:**

Pastor Young offered an opening prayer, and Bruce Lothrop shared a brief devotion.

#### **Minutes of the March Meeting:**

Secretary Bruce Lothrop had distributed the minutes of the February 10<sup>th</sup> meeting via email to members of Council prior to the meeting. The minutes were accepted, as presented, by motion. Kim Williams reported that she did not receive the minutes by email. The secretary will include Kim on future emails.

#### **Financial Reports:**

Bookkeeper Kim Williams distributed detailed financial reports to all members of Council prior to the meeting. Giving and other income in February totaled \$24,575.91. Total expenses were \$26,306.86 accounting a net loss of \$1,730.95. Kim noted that this is not a usual outcome for February (in three of the last five Februarys Bethel saw substantially larger deficits.) Kim noted that giving will likely rebound when the Congregation is able to gather in person again.

The financial reports were approved as presented, by motion.

Kim reported the Patty Whites hours are being expanded to ½ time. Patty's pay rate will be changed from an hourly rate of \$20.00 to salary of approximately \$800 per month Kim and Pastor Dave expect that Patty will have an appropriate amount of work to keep her busy for those hours.

Kim reported that she completed an application for the upcoming round of Payroll Protection Plan loans. Bethel is eligible for about \$34,000 as a forgivable loan. The application has not yet been processed by the Bank of Clarke County. The Bank of Clarke County is processing new applications prior to reviewing requests for forgiveness due to time constraints, so the loan extended to Bethel in 2020 has not yet been forgiven. Kim reported that Bank of Clarke County expects that the prior loan will be forgiven without issue.

#### **Pastor's Report:**

Pastor David Young submitted a written report to all members of Council prior to the meeting. Pastor Dave reviewed highlights of the report. Lenten activities include weekly worship on Wednesday evenings, followed by "Bethel Café," a Zoom event for fellowship, and discussion of the service, as well as a weekly study of the

book “Lent in Plain Sight.” Pastor Dave plans to return to outdoor, in person for Palm Sunday, all Holy Week services, Easter, and following Sundays, weather permitting.

Confirmation class is continuing, with a goal of confirmation in May. Pastor Dave has contacted 12 students who are potential members of the next Confirmation class, and is working towards confirmation camp in June.

“Little Lutherans” were able to have a Zoom meeting. Pastor Dave is working with Judy McKiernan and Matt Meade to plan activities for Middle School students.

Planning is beginning for a partially combined Women’s and Men’s retreat at Graves Mountain Lodge in November 2021.

Bethel has not yet found a suitable candidate to act as a Youth Leader/Organizer.

Pastor Dave has also volunteered to assist with COVID-19 Vaccination at Shenandoah University.

Pastor Dave expressed interest in Bethel becoming involved with a Lutheran organization called “Reconciling Works” that works to welcome groups who do not typically feel welcomed in the Lutheran community, including people in the LBGTQ community, and racial and language minorities. Pastor Dave encourage council members to learn about the group in preparation for future conversation.

### **Board Reports:**

Beth Garner reported on Servant Board activities. She has been in touch with Hannah Nadeau, director of GRACES in regard to planning a “virtual vision trip” to Escuela Integrada in Antigua Guatemala. Plans are moving forward.

The Lenten food drive is going well.

Curt Gryamala reported that he is working on plans to provide the traditional breakfast on Easter Sunday morning, and considering COVID-safe food options. Based on CDC recommendations, individually wrapped food items would be best. Pastor Dave suggested that funds would likely be available from Thrivent to support such an event. Pastor Dave will reach out to Curt for further discussion.

Beth reported that she is considering creative options for carrying out “Returning Thanks” on Good Friday.

Betty Puffinberger requested information about graduating seniors in the Bethel Congregation, and their post-graduation plans so that the quilting team can begin make quilts for the students. There are at least six Bethel students graduating from high school in 2021.

### **Return to In-Person Worship:**

Pastor Dave proposed a plan under which Bethel will return to in-person, outdoor worship beginning on Palm Sunday (March 28<sup>th</sup>). All Holy Week Services, including Easter would be held outside, weather permitting. Going forward, weekly worship would continue outdoors until state and local regulation and CDC recommendation allow for indoor worship in near-normal conditions. All outdoor worship would be recorded, and made available on-line as quickly as possible (hopefully by noon on Sunday.) In cases of inclement weather, services would be recorded ahead of time, and made available on-line, as has been done for the past several months. Parish Nurse Edie McGoff is reviewing all plans. George Donovan and Pastor Dave are working on worship plans for upcoming outdoor services. Council approved a motion to return to outdoor, in-person worship, according to the plan presented, by unanimous acclamation.

**Mowing proposal for summer 2021:**

For the past several summers Bethel has paid Ian Shoberg has been mowing nine acres of Bethel property about once every other week. Ian is now transitioning his yard care business to a more professional status. As such, he has proposed an increased rate for mowing and related services at Bethel. The new rate will be \$390 per mowing. Pastor Dave and Cliff Crowder agreed to retain Ian’s mowing services at least for the 2021 season.

**Bethel New Day initiative:**

- Updates to sanctuary sound and recording equipment.

Pastor Dave provided council with three estimates for upgrading audio and visual equipment in the sanctuary, as follows:

Only Live-streaming -	\$13,000
With audio -	\$15,000
With in-person screens -	\$18,000

After discussion, council reached a consensus that the capacity to live stream worship from the sanctuary will be useful in maintaining our sense of community worship as the pandemic wanes, and we transition back to in-person worship in our sanctuary. A motion to proceed with upgrades for live stream only, at a cost of about \$13,000 was passed unanimously by acclamation.

- Estimates for HVAC and Roof work

Kim reported estimates to repair the roof are about \$40,000. ME Flow estimated that the HVAC unit in the office will cost about \$10,000 to replace. The HVAC unit in the Sanctuary would cost about \$9,000 to replace. Kim will forward estimates to council.

- Underground

Brian Shiflett is prepared to begin work in the underground, including installation of cabinets, replacement of countertops, installation of the sink, trim installation, painting and installation of flooring. Kim emailed flooring estimates to council prior to the meeting, as follows:

Epoxy flooring	\$36,275
Vinyl waterproof flooring	\$39,400
Epoxy in the kitchen area & vinyl elsewhere	\$37,837

The vinyl flooring proposed would look like wooden flooring. The epoxy flooring would be similar to garage flooring, but would be prone to scratching. After discussion, Council reached a consensus that the price variation was minimal, and the more durable vinyl waterproof flooring would likely last longer than epoxy, and should be used in all areas of the underground. Beth Garner suggested that youth participation in finish work would help create a sense of ownership of the space.

A motion to proceed with work in the underground, including installation of cabinets, replacement of countertops, installation of the sink, trim installation, painting and installation of vinyl waterproof flooring in all areas passed unanimously by acclamation.

All payment will be made through the line of credit obtained to pay for maintenance projects. Depending on timing, other funds may initially be used for down payments, but any funds used from other sources will ultimately be replenished from the line of credit, or specific donations.

- Planning process - Sanctuary

Pastor Dave reported that a team will be formed to plan changes in the Sanctuary. The team will consist of six to eight members, plus Pastor Dave. The team will present a complete plan, integrating all aspects of improvements, to the Congregation.

- General “freshening-up” facility and grounds

Council does not yet have estimates for other work around the building and grounds.

**Closing prayer:**

Pastor Young closed the meeting with a prayer at approximately 8:48 pm.