

Bethel Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Meeting
Minutes
February 6, 2022

The annual Congregational Meeting of Bethel Lutheran Church was held in the sanctuary following worship on February 6th, 2022. Approximately 75 people were present in the sanctuary. An additional 13 people attended via zoom video conference. The total of approximately 88 people constituted a quorum.

Call to Order

Council President John Fredericksen called the meeting to order at approximately 10:40 am.

Opening Prayer

Pastor David Young opened the meeting with prayer.

Introductions

Council President John Fredericksen thanked Council members Beth Garner and Mike McKiernan for their service. Beth and Mike completed service on December 31st, 2021. John introduced 2022 members of Council

- President John Fredericksen
- Vice President Vonda Wilt
- Treasurer Betty Puffinberger
- Secretary Bruce Lothrop
- Dustie Fisher
- Lee Braithwaite
- Curtiss Grymala
- Diane Milburn
- David Look

John also Introduced Bethel Trustees

- Sarah Smith
- Gary Nichols
- Ron Lauck

Finally, John introduced all members of the Bethel staff.

- The Reverend Doctor David Young – Pastor
- George Donovan – Director of Music
- Kim Williams – Office Administrator and Bookkeeper
- Kristin Siebert – Parish Communicator
- Mel Siebert – Senior High Youth Minister
- Patty White – Custodian

Edith McGoff – Parish Nurse
Gretchen Meade- Nursery Manage

2022 MSP

A summary of the 2022 Ministry Spending Plan was distributed to the Congregation. The same summary had been mailed to all members of the Congregation prior to the meeting. The plan anticipates \$382,516.16 in spending and \$382,700.00 in income. Therefore, income is expected to exceed expenses by \$243.84.

A motion to Approve the 2022 spending plan as presented was made and seconded.

A members of the Congregation asked how the 2021 fiscal year had concluded. Bookkeeper Kim Williams reported that 2021 ended income exceeding expense by \$7534.

The 2022 Ministry spending plan was approved as presented unanimously by acclamation.

Bethel New Day Project

A team had reviewed building condition and usage and compiled a list of recommended repairs and improvements. The Congregational Council and Trustees met with the team several times to review and prioritize the list of proposed changes. The combined group identified a subset of items to recommend to the Congregation for approval.

A summary budget for the project and a form for pledges to support the project were distributed to the Congregation.

Darline Demott described the “New Day” process and goals. Priorities in planning included honoring Bethel’s past and looking forward to future use. The team carefully considered how to maximize use of sacred space, provide a welcoming worship experience, allow for flexible use of space, and integrate newer technology into the sanctuary.

John Gavitt asked if financing for the project would roll in Bethel’s existing debt. Bookkeeper Kim Williams replied that it would, since Bethel would receive a more favorable rate that we have on existing debt.

John Gavitt also expressed concern about the plan to take a loan with an adjustable rate in light of expectations that interest rates will rise in the near future. Kim Williams reported that the rate would only change after 10 years. Although the proposed loan has a twenty-five-year term, Bethel leadership hopes to retire the loan within ten years.

Gary Nichols spoke about the proposed financing for the project. The proposed loan is offered by First Bank at 3.75% for 25 years. To lock in those terms Bethel will need to commit to the loan by the end of February, and close by April. Gary noted that the importance of keeping monthly payments low in the short term because the ongoing pandemic has generated economic uncertainty. He emphasized the long-term goal of retiring the loan early. Bethel has a history of retiring debt ahead of schedule.

An attendee from zoom asked about the boundaries of the choir area in the new sanctuary layout. Darline Demott showed where the choir would be located, and how the space could be

adjusted to accommodate changes in the size of the worship ensemble, or other groups using the space.

Jon Bellingham asked why the pledge forms only had options to make commitments for the next five years if the goal is to pay off the loan in ten years. Kim Williams replied the goal of the form is to encourage initial giving, but assured John that longer commitments could be accommodated for all who desired to make them.

Sherry Shipp asked why “Upper Bethel” items initially considered by the “New Day” team were not included in the recommendation. John Fredericksen replied that the Council, Trustees, and New Day Team had worked to set a scope of work that would not commit more funds that could be supported by the Congregation. Renovations to the sanctuary were prioritized. If more spending appears viable in the future, other items will be reconsidered.

John Fredericksen reviewed the major areas of work on the proposal.

John Gavit proposed moving forward with the project as quickly as possible.

John Fredericksen replied that intention of the Council, Trustees and New Day Team was to open discussion of the project in order to allow the Congregation to carefully consider the plan. A final vote was planned for a second meeting on February 20th, but that the Congregation could vote to move forward at the current meeting.

A motion was made, and seconded that the Congregation hold a vote on the question of approval of the New Day Project as recommended by the Council, Trustees, and New Day Team at the current meeting.

Karen Shipp asks about the reduction of the alter area proposed under the plan to allow a more space for pews. Karthryn Carpenter described the planned change in the size of the dais, noting that the alter will not be moved.

The motion to vote on the proposed changes at the current meeting was approved unanimously by acclamation.

Jack McAllister asked about proposed time line for work defined in the plan. Kathryn Carpenter reported that the original time line was for 15 weeks of work. The timeline is currently uncertain due to challenges in obtaining construction materials.

A motion to approve New Day initiative, as recommended by the Council, Trustees, and New Day Team, was made and seconded.

John Fredericksen asked if any members of the Congregation would prefer the vote be held by paper ballot. There was no request to vote by paper ballot.

Pastor David Young offered prayer for guidance prior to the vote.

The motion to approve the work recommended by the Council, Trustees, and New Day Team was approved unanimously by acclamation.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:35 am.