

Bethel Lutheran Church

Council Minutes

October 12, 2022

7:00 pm

The October meeting of the Congregational Council of Bethel Lutheran Church was held on Wednesday October 12th in the Church Library. Pastor David Young, Council President John Fredericksen, Treasurer Betty Puffinberger, Secretary Bruce Lothrop, David Look, Lee Braithwaite and Church Administrator Kim Williams were present at the meeting.

Call to order

Council President John Fredericksen called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 pm

Opening Prayer

Pastor David Young offered an opening prayer.

Devotion

Betty Puffinberger presented a devotion.

Minutes of the September Meeting

Secretary Bruce Lothrop emailed minutes of the September Council meeting to all members of Council prior to the October meeting. Reading of the September minutes was waived by motion.

Kim Williams noted that the September minutes incorrectly stated that the traditional Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve would not be held in 2022. The Secretary deleted that statement from minutes. The minutes of the October meeting were approved as amended by motion.

Financials Reports

Church Administrator Kim Williams distributed detailed financial reports to all member of Council prior to the meeting. The report showed income for September of \$20,930, \$8,285 less than expected. Expenses for September totaled \$45,823, \$13,581 more than planned for in the Ministry Spending Plan. Most of the reported excess expenses were related to planned AC repair, payments for Sanctuary renovation, and similar items that were approved, but not specifically allocated to September spending. Expenses for September exceeded income by \$24,893. Year to date expenses have exceeded income by \$65,712. Pastor Dave will send a letter to the Congregation stating the need for giving to support for the “New Day Initiative” spending approved by the Congregation.

The financial reports were approved, as presented by motion.

Kim Williams presented four options for a 2023 Ministry Spending Plan:

- A plan with minimal spending and no staff raises.
- A plan with minimal spending and 3% raises most staff.
- A plan with higher expected spending, and no staff raised
- A plan with higher expected spending and 3% raises for most staff.

In spending plan options with staff raises, all staff would receive the raise indicated, except those hired during 2022 and those who received promotions or raises already in 2022. After discussion, Council reached a consensus that spending should be minimized, but, given recent inflation, a three percent raise for most staff seemed reasonable and necessary. A motion was made to recommend the spending plan with minimal spending and a three percent raise for most staff to the Congregation for approval. Total spending anticipated by the plan is \$427,004. The motion was seconded, and passed unanimously by acclamation. The MSP will be presented to the Congregation for approval at the November Congregational meeting.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Dave submitted a written report by email to all members of Council prior to the meeting. Highlights of the report included:

- Pastor Dave hosted "Bethel 101" meetings for new members, and will host a reception at his home on October 14th.
- Pastor Dave participated in the Winchester Pride festival, and acting as the featured preacher at the Pride Worship service at the 50/50 Taphouse.
- He attended an Alumni Board Meeting at Lenoir-Rhyne University.
- He is leading a Discipleship Bible Study class with Jennifer Lafollette and Bruce Lothrop.
- He is leading a cohort for the Virginia Synod Lay Preaching Academy.
- Plans are underway for Men's and Women's retreats in November
- Worship attendance in September ranged from about 100-110 in person, and 140-150 combined in person and online.

New Business

Up/In/Out priorities discussion

Council reviewed lists of possible priorities from brain-storming sessions about Up, In and Out ministry priorities.

An active Senior Ministry program stood out as a priority for "In" Ministries.

Council identified activities that build stronger community as common themes for "In" and "Out" ministry priorities.

Council discussed pursuing partnership with "Reconciling In Christ" ministries, and hosting Pride Week worship at Bethel, and other community churches, rather than at locations not associated with communities of faith.

New Council Candidates

Lee Braithwaite, Diane Milburn and Vonda Wilt will complete terms on Council at the end of 2022. Council members identified several members of the Congregation who would be strong additions to the 2023 Council. Pastor Dave and John Fredericksen will reach out to the members identified, and encourage them to consider accepting nomination for Council.

Reorganization of Worship Assistants

Pastor Dave shared a proposal to form up to eight worship teams, with a clearly identified leader. Teams would take turns filling all roles needed during worship, such as greeters, ushers, communion assistants, scripture readers, and prayer readers. This would simplify organization of worship, allow for people who participate in multiple roles to fill those roles on the same Sunday, and promote community bonding. When a team is shorthanded at worship, they would be able to ask for help for those present at worship, and potentially expand the team. Council expressed support for the plan.

Holiday for Heroes

Shari Fletcher requested permission to ask for donations of toiletries and personal items for veterans in need, in conjunction with the Central Appalachia Region of the American Red Cross. Donations would be made at Sunday Services in November. A motion to approve the request passed unanimously by acclamation.

Informational Items

Advent Worship

After additional consideration, three Wednesday Advent services will be conducted, as well as a “Blue Christmas service on Sunday December 18th.

Christmas Morning Worship

Pastor Dave will conduct a casual, guitar-oriented service on Christmas Day.

Bethel New Day Construction

Demolition is expected to start Monday, October 17th. Current plans are to return to the Sanctuary for worship on Easter 2023

Coffee with Council

Coffee with Council will be held on October 23 in library, concurrent with a Care of Creation presentation in Fellowship Hall.

200th Anniversary Cookbook

Vonda Wilt will lead compilation of a Bethel Cookbook during 2023.

Solar project progress

A team is reviewing funding options for a solar array that could be constructed on the church property. Some funding options may allow Bethel to receive payment for power generated beyond Bethel's need.

Gluten Free Communion

Gluten free communion is now available. The response has been positive.

The meeting was adjourned by motion at 8:35 pm