

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

COUNCIL Minutes

April 12, 2023 – 7:00pm

The April meeting of the Congregational Council of Bethel Lutheran Church was held on April 12th at 7pm in the library at the Church. Pastor David Young, Council President Traci Shoberg, Treasurer Betty Puffinberger, Secretary Bruce Lothrop, John Fredericksen, Curt Grymala, and Brian Davies were present at the meeting.

Call to Order

Council President Traci Shoberg called the meeting to order at approximately 7:05 pm.

Opening Devotion and Prayer

Pastor Dave offered an opening prayer and devotion.

Consent Agenda Items

The minutes of the March Council meeting and the agenda for the April meeting were approved by unanimous acclamation under the consent agenda for the meeting.

Financial Items

No Financial reports were available as Church Administrator Kim Williams was on vacation, and not available to produce the final reports.

Ministry Investment Committee

John Fredericksen is leading a Ministry Investment team to identify actions that can be taken to improve Bethel's financial situation. John shared a report from his team by email prior to the meeting. Council discussed the report, and concrete steps that could be taken in the near term. Council reached consensus on the following actions:

- Continue to communicate the need to focus giving toward operating costs
- Initiate a fund-raising drive to reduce debt. Lower debt will reduce monthly payments, and free more funds for operating expenses. A general fund-raising effort should precede outreach to potential large donors so that such donor's don't feel that they are being asked to carry the entire load.
- Begin a program of "Cottage Visits" to share information and raise awareness of the debt-reduction campaign.
- Information about Bethel's endowments will be shared at an "OWLS" group session about estate planning.
- Pastor Dave will discuss giving with new members
- Brian is editing "Ministry Moment" videos to raise awareness of Bethel's need for giving, Bethel's and impact on members of the community.

Pastor Dave proposed the name "Bethel's Next Day" for the fund-raising campaign to reduce debt.

Update Reports

Pastor's Report

Pastor Dave emailed a full report to all members of Council prior to the meeting. In addition to the items in his report, Pastor Dave noted that he would be at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary on May 7th and May 10th. On the 7th he will attend the opening of the "Hammock Hangout," supported by Bethel. On May 10th he will attend a ceremony where his Mother-in-law will receive an award.

Pastor Dave also reported that Pastor Heidi David-Young and George Donovan will represent Bethel at the Virginia Synod Assembly in June.

Staff Updates

David Shoberg will transition to an unpaid position, with similar duties to his current position, but more flexible hours.

Upcoming Event:

- 4/15 OWL Bingo
- 4/22 Onsite Women's Retreat
- 4/23 Youth Red Envelope Campaign
- May – Bright Futures Snack Drive

Old Business

Renovation Update Report

Traci Shoberg and Betty Puffinberger reported on the Sanctuary renovations. AV equipment will be installed soon. Pews need to be installed. We will need volunteers to help with pew upholstery and painting the old Sunday School halls.

New Business

Event Approvals Needed

Caroline Furnace camp and retreat center is preparing for its annual "Give Back" golf tournament fund raiser. In 2022, Bethel sponsored the tournament for \$1,000.00. A motion was made to support the tournament with a \$1,000.00 sponsorship, paid from the memorial funds, since those funds cannot be used for operating expenses. The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

Sanctuary Dedication Date & Plan

A date for the Dedication of the Sanctuary will be determined after work is completed.

Small Groups

Council discussed ways to encourage formation of small groups for prayer, study, and fellowship. There are many materials available for small group study in the library. Council agreed that repeated opportunities to start small groups are important, as many groups start don't continue over the long term. Building a team to encourage and support small group ministry would help new groups form, and find study resources.

2nd Worship Service – pros/cons discussion

Council received a request to consider returning to two worship services each Sunday. The goal of adding a later service would be to attract more attendees who may not wish to attend an early service. After discussion, Council reached a consensus that new attendance related to a new late service would likely be small. The second service would create more demand for worship assistants and ensemble members. A late service would likely be lightly attended, provide less energy, and might not be attractive to potential attendees. Council concluded that, at this time, a second worship service would be unlikely to be successful.

Other New Business

Sara Smith submitted a brief written report from a meeting of the Shenandoah Fellowship Foundation. The Foundation supports low-income seniors. The foundation continues to be financially sound, and effective.

Pastor Dave requested that the May Council meeting be rescheduled. After discussing the meeting date and time was set at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday May 16th.

Closing Prayer

Pastor Dave closed the meeting with a prayer.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.