

**BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MINUTES
JANUARY 14, 2023**

A monthly meeting of the Bethel Congregational Council was held in the Library at the Church on the morning of Saturday January 14th as part of the 2023 Council Retreat. Pastor David Young, Council President Traci Shoberg, Treasurer Betty Puffinberger, Secretary Bruce Lothrop, Curtiss Grymala, Brian Davies, Dustie Fisher, David Look, John Fredericksen, and Church Administrator Kim Williams were present at the meeting.

Call to Order

President Traci Shoberg called the meeting to order at approximately 9:20 am.

Opening Devotion and Prayer

Pastor Dave opened the meeting with prayer.

Explanation of Consent Agenda

Council President Traci Shoberg explained the idea of a “consent agenda.” Items included in a consent agenda may be approved by a committee by a single vote. The concept is usually applied to routine items that are included in nearly every meeting. Traci proposed including the minutes of the prior meeting, the Pastor’s and Staff reports, and financial reports as consent agenda items for all 2023 Council meetings. A member of Council asked if items on the consent agenda could be discussed, in particular, monthly financial reports. Traci responded that any items on the consent agenda could be discussed, as any other agenda item, when necessary. All the items on the proposed consent agenda are typically distributed prior to the meeting, so any members of Council can ask for details or clarification prior to the meeting. The goal of the proposed consent agenda is to reduce time spent on routine tasks, to allow more time to focus on other business.

A motion to include the minutes of prior meetings, Pastor and staff reports, and financial reports on a consent agenda for 2023 Council meetings was made and seconded. The motion passed unanimously by acclamation.

Consent Agenda Items

December 2022 Minutes

The minutes of the December 2022 Council meeting were distributed to all members of Council by email for review prior to the meeting.

Financial Reports

Kim Williams distributed detailed financial reports to all members of council by email prior to the meeting. The reports showed Income for December 2022 at \$33,839, \$16,218 less than expected in the Ministry Spending plan. \$6,613 of the shortfall was due to lower than anticipated giving in December. \$9,650 of the shortfall was due to

facilities use income included in the MSP. The anticipated income could not be realized because of the renovations in the Sanctuary. Use of Fellowship Hall for worship has made it difficult to open the space for weddings or other events. The time needed to complete renovation has been much longer than originally expected.

Expenses for December 2022 were \$36,127, \$3,766 more than planned for in the MSP. Part of the overage was due to the need to provide suitable computer equipment for the office staff. Expenses for 2022 were \$424,318, while income for the year was \$350,162. This constituted a net loss of \$74,155. Council will put significant effort into finding ways to improve income in 2023.

A possible refund, or future credit is under discussion for the tent that was intended to be used for Rustic Christmas. Windy weather damaged the tent, so that it could not be used for Christmas Eve worship as originally planned.

Council discussed how best to encourage giving for Bethel's operating expenses. Bethel still receives significant giving in support of community and global ministry. Continued support of those ministries will be in jeopardy if Bethel can't meet its basic operating expenses.

Pastor's Report

In addition to his written report, Pastor Dave noted several Sundays that he will be away from Bethel. Late in January, Pastor Dave will accompany the Bethel Youth to the Virginia Synod Winter Celebration. In February, Pastor Dave will attend a board meeting for the Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary. In March, Pastor Dave will travel to the Holy Land, with the hopes of being able to lead future trips to the Holy Land himself. Moving forward, Pastor Dave will focus on building fellowship within the Bethel Community, with a particular focus on involving new members.

All items on the Consent agenda were approved, as presented, by unanimous acclamation.

Old Business

Internship Site Informational Zoom

Pastor Dave will organize a zoom meeting between Council and representatives of the internship program at Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary to discuss the advantages and responsibilities of hosting a candidate for divinity degree as an intern.

New Business

Ministry Area Reports – Up, In, Out

The Out Team met to ensure preparations for the Lenten Food Drive are complete. The team plans to meet quarterly to plan support for Out Team activities.

Conversation on Outreach Fundraising Plan

Kim Williams proposed the following time frame to focus on fundraising projects during the year.

88 Keys Campaign (January-March)

WATTS (January-February)

Lenten Food Drive (February-March)
Advent Food Drive (December)
Global Christmas (December)

A motion to approve the proposed fund-raising schedule was made, seconded, and approved unanimously by acclamation.

Kim also presented a draft of a fund-raising brochure for the 88-keys drive to purchase a new piano for the Sanctuary.

Congregation Meeting Planning

The first Congregational Meeting of 2023 will be held on February 5th. The purpose of this meeting is generally to report to the Congregation on the activities of the prior year. After discussion, Council agreed that the meeting will include the following agenda items:

- Update on Bethel Priorities
- Council President's report by 2022 President John Fredericksen
- Pastor's report
- Financial Reports

Other New Business

Council discussed possible accommodation for sight and hearing-impaired worshipers during Sunday Worship.

Council discussed how best to use screens, bulletins, and the "Book of Worship" during worship to provide all members of the community easy access to readings, responses, worship music and other elements of corporate worship. The goal is to make all text as accessible as possible without placing an unnecessary work burden on staff. Members of the community have expressed a wide range of ideas on what is most user-friendly, and what is liturgically appropriate.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:30 am.