

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

COUNCIL Minutes

March 8, 2023 – 7:30pm

A monthly meeting of the Congregational Council of Bethel Lutheran Church was held on Wednesday March 8th following Lenten Worship. Pastor David Young, Council Vice President Rachel Carlson, Treasurer Betty Puffinberger, Secretary Bruce Lothrop, David Look, Curt Grymala, Dustie Fisher and Church Administrator Kim Williams were present at the meeting. Rachel chaired the meeting in the absence of the President.

Call to Order

Vice President Rachel Carlson called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

Consent Agenda Items

The meeting agenda and minutes of the February meeting were approved by unanimous acclamation as parts of the consent agenda.

Financial Items

Church Administrator Kim Williams provided detailed financial reports to all members of Council prior to the meeting by email. Income during February was \$27,120, \$365 more than anticipated in the Ministry Spending Plan. Expense for February were \$34,119, \$1,700 less than expected. Expenses in February exceeded income by \$6,998. Kim reported that it may be necessary to use Bethel's line of credit late in March if income does not increase. Unanticipated expenses in February included a required upgrade to payroll software and music license fees. Kim is working with George Donovan to minimize licensing fees for worship music without compromising the quality of worship.

The February Financial reports were approved, as presented, by unanimous acclamation.

Ministry Investment Committee Update

John Fredericksen is chairing a Ministry Investment committee to help stabilize Bethel's finances. The team met, and John shared minutes of the meeting with Council. John's team provided nine recommendations. Those recommendations were:

1. Clearly communicate Bethel's financial needs
2. Simplify giving process for parishioners
3. Encourage Bethel inclusion in Wills and Trusts
4. Seek outside revenue streams
5. Adjust endowment policy to allow support for operational support
6. Train parishioners in electronic giving
7. Rotate bulletin topics
8. Pivot "Temple Talks" away from funding to how Bethel/Christ makes a difference in people's lives
9. Coach parishioners on securing "Thrivent Action Cards" funds for Bethel operations

Council discussed whether the team would continue to meet with a goal of defining action plans for those nine actions.

Brian Davies is working on a series of "Ministry Moment" videos to share information about the impacts of Bethel's ministry with the congregation in an effort to build support.

Council discussed the endowment policy. It was not entirely clear how any funds held in an endowment could be used by Bethel. Kim will share the policy documents with members of Council for future discussion.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Dave emailed a report to all members of Council prior to the meeting. The report noted that a new team had been formed to visit sick or homebound members of the Congregation so that Pastor Dave will not be solely responsible for such visits. Pastor Dave is focused on how to connect worshipers new to Bethel with the full Bethel community.

Staff Updates

Nina will be in the office on Thursdays, rather than assisting with Sunday Worship.

Dave Shoberg will focus on the renovation until it is complete.

Ministry Area Breakout

The Up, In, and Out ministry teams separated into breakout groups for 10 minutes of discussion.

Ministry Area Reports

After breakout discussion, each team reported on their actions and plans.

Out Team

The out team will support a bright futures snack drive in May, and support the team pursuing a "Reconciling In Christ" designation.

The quilting team is planning on recognizing "National Quilting Day" on Sunday March 19th.

In Team

The In team is planning for a brunch in the weeks after Easter. They are exploring the possibility of having the event catered. There will not be an Easter brunch, as Easter and the return to the Sanctuary will require additional effort from many members of the community.

Up Team

The up team is planning on cleaning brassware, and purchasing new candles and other items in preparation for our return to the sanctuary.

Upcoming Events

Bethel's traditional Easter post-service meal will not be held, but a similar brunch will be planned by the "In" team for later in April.

The Senior Ministries Team (OWL) will host a Bingo event on April 15

"Golf in the Spirit" will be an overnight event including Golf, Fling Golf, and a weekend stay at Capon Springs Resort on April 21st and 22nd.

A one-day, onsite Women's Retreat will be held at Bethel on April 22st. Women fourteen years old and older will be welcome.

Old Business

Renovation Update Report

Kim and Betty updated Council on progress in the renovation of the Sanctuary. Carpet is being installed. The flooring in the Narthex is in place. Pews will be moved in soon. The organ will be installed next week. Progress is on pace to allow Easter Worship to be held in the Sanctuary. The installation of the sound system may be delayed beyond Easter. If so, ways to accommodate Easter Worship in the Sanctuary will be considered.

88 Keys Update

Pastor Dave and Kim Williams announced that an electric piano has been purchased at a significant discount. George Donovan, Charlene Romano, and Darleen Demott endorsed the purchase of the instrument as a good value and appropriate to Bethel's needs. George Donovan announced the intention to purchase the piano prior to worship on the prior Sunday. Some members of council expressed concern that George may not have been entirely clear that the intent was to purchase an electric piano, rather than a traditional acoustic piano. After discussion, Pastor Dave agreed to send email to the community clarifying the type of piano purchased so that any members with concerns can raise them.

Other Old Business

There was no other old business.

New Business

Event Approvals

Karen Shipp has requested that the "Wheels for Wellness Raffle" fund raiser be held in November. The request was approved by acclamation.

LTSS Hammock Hang Out Appropriation

Pastor Dave elected to use funds from his continuing education funding to support a facility for Seminary Students at the Lutheran Southern Seminary. Pastor Dave is an alumni and director of LTSS.

Synod Assembly Delegates

The Synod Assembly for the Virginia Synod of the ELCA will be held at Roanoke College in Roanoke Virginia on June 9th-11th. Bethel may send two delegates. Pastor Dave offered the spots to any members of Council who are interested. Since none could commit, the Council identified possible other candidates. Pastor Dave will reach out to those candidates, or others, as needed.

Pew Kneeler Discussion

Betty requested input as to whether kneelers should be attached to pews after the pews are installed in the sanctuary. Kneelers have not been available while worshiping in fellowship hall, and can be labor intensive to attach to the pews. They can be installed after renovation is done, at any time. Council agreed no decision should be made until members of the Congregation can offer input as to whether we should use kneelers, and whether volunteers are willing to do the work.

Other New Business

New Council members have not been issued keys to the Church. Council discussed whether locks should be re-keyed at some future point, and whether a keypad could be used on at least one entrance to allow temporary access to be granted to anyone with a short-term need.

Closing Prayer

Pastor Dave offered a closing prayer

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:40 pm.