

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL Minutes
June 14, 2023 – 7:00pm

A monthly meeting of the Congregational Council of Bethel Lutheran Church was held on Wednesday June 14th at 7:00 pm in the library at the church. Pastor David Young, Council President Traci Shoberg, Vice President Rachel Carlson, Treasurer Betty Puffinberger, Secretary Bruce Lothrop, Dustie Fisher, David Look, Brian Davies, Curtis Grymala, John Fredericksen, and Church Administrator Kim Williams were present at the meeting. Ron Lauck attended to represent Bethel's Board of Trustees.

Call to Order

Council President Traci Shoberg called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 pm.

Opening Devotion and Prayer

Pastor Dave provided a devotion, and opened the meeting with prayer.

Consent Agenda Items

Approval of the meeting agenda, approval the minutes of the May Council meeting, May Financial Reports, the Pastor's report, the Renovation update, the youth planning team report, the solar project report and the endowment policy update were presented as consent agenda items.

A motion to extract the financial reports from the consent agenda was made, seconded and passed by acclamation.

The remaining consent agenda items were approved as presented by acclamation.

Council then reviewed the detailed financial reports provided by Kim Williams.

Income for May was \$25,833, \$568 less than expected in the Ministry Spending Plan. Total expenses for May were \$25,219, \$8,561 less than projected by the spending plan. Income for May exceeded expenses by \$613. Expenses year to date exceeded income by \$5,394. After reconciling the Facility Renovation account, Kim made corrections going back to the beginning of the project. These corrections were captured in May and as a result the May financials are shown in a more positive light. The year-to-date numbers are now accurate and more fully show the scope that was captured on the expense side

Bethel's year-to-date ratio of expense to income is better than average in recent years. Bethel is still planning on paying \$20,000 in benevolence funds to the Virginia Synod before the end of 2023.

The financial reports were approved as presented by acclamation.

Old Business

Capital Campaign/Debt Reduction

Council discussed possible new income streams and plans for a capital campaign to shore up operating expenses and reduce debt incurred during the sanctuary renovations.

Council agreed that a fundraising drive should allow funds to be applied to operating expenses, if needed, so that giving does not move away from operating expenses, leaving Bethel with a larger short fall. After keeping up with operating expenses, the next priority should be to pay down money borrowed against the line of credit. The next priority would be to collect funds to be split between paying down the mortgage and save for future capital improvements. (Kim Williams has a list of projects that should be part of capital improvement fund raising.)

Council discussed how much money should be targeted by a fund-raising campaign. In order to pay off the line of credit established in 2022, and cover operating expenses Bethel would likely need about \$150,000 by the end of March 2024. To continue covering operating expenses, reduce the mortgage, and begin to fund some capital projects, a reasonable goal would be to raise \$500,000 by the end of

2025. Rachel Carlson calculated that paying off all debt, and covering other objectives would require about \$900,000, which could be Bethel's long-term goal.

Pastor Dave suggested that families could take on fund-raising projects, with support from Thrivent action cards, as an alternative to traditional tithing.

Council discussed a phased rollout of the proposed investment plan that would begin with a silent campaign, followed by a general invitation for members of the community to support the plan.

Council discussed setting three main goals: \$150,000 in time to pay off the line of credit, \$500,000 in three years, and \$1,000,000 in seven years to pay off the mortgage, and achieve other goals. Ron Lauck advocated for focusing on shorter term goals, including raising \$150,000 by March of 2024, and \$500,000 by the end of 2025. Since our mortgage rates are fixed until 2032, Ron suggested laying the ground work in an effort to pay off the mortgage by 2032, before rates change.

Council generally agreed that the silent portion of the campaign should begin as soon as possible. A "pre-rollout" message should be shared with the congregation on the first Sunday that worship is held in the renovated sanctuary. The official rollout should take place the week after Labor Day which will likely be the first Sunday many members worship in the renovated sanctuary. A follow up should occur on Reformation Sunday, when formal dedication of the renovated sanctuary is planned.

Rachel Carlson, Pastor Dave, Gary Nichols and Brian Davies will finalize plans for the campaign.

Other Old Business

There was no other old business.

New Business

Event Approvals Needed:

No new event approvals were needed.

Other New Business

Pastor Dave requested that \$300 from good Samaritan fund, to be matched by the Virginia Synod, be allocated to support orientation for on campus and virtual students at the Lutheran Southern Theological Seminary. The Virginia Synod will invite other congregations to contribute through Bethel as well, since the Synod cannot request donations directly from congregations for this cause. The request was approved by acclamation

An unofficial "Bethel Night" at the Winchester Royals Baseball field is scheduled for Friday July 7th, with a rain date of July 22nd.

Council members are invited to Pastor Dave's home on July 29th to meet Hannah Nedeau, from Escuela Integrada in Guatemala.

New members will be invited to Pastor Dave's home on three dates in late June and early July

Closing Prayer

Pastor Dave offered a closing prayer

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by motion at approximately 9:00.