

# Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes

## Tuesday, November 21, 2023

<b>Title</b>	Council Meeting			<b>President</b>	Jason Bruns	
<b>Purpose</b>	Monthly Business			<b>Secretary</b>	Bob Ihrig	
<b>Date</b>	November 21, 2023		<b>Time</b>	7:00 pm	<b>Location</b>	Grounds for Joy
<b>Meeting Time</b>	Start	Stop	Total Time			Council Members/Guests
	7:00 pm	7:30 pm	30 min			
<b>Council Members Terms of Office</b>				<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>	<b>Position</b>
1.	Jason Bruns	2023-2024		X		President
2.	Marie Slotemaker	2023-2024		X		President-Elect
3.	Matt Drewitz	2023-2024			X	Vice President
4.	Bob Ihrig	2021-2024		X		Secretary
5.	Jeremy Carter	2021-2024			X	Treasurer
6.	Josie Lust	2022-2025		X		Member at Large
7.	Amanda Neubert	2023-2024		X		Member at Large
8.	Cynthia Zacharias	2023-2026		X		Member at Large
9.	Pastor Jay Dahlvang			X		Lead Pastor
10.	Pastor Jacie Richmond			X		Associate Pastor
	<b>TOPIC</b>					<b>PRESENTER</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Devotions</b>					Amanda Neubert
<b>2.</b>	<b>Additions to &amp; Approval of the Agenda</b> <u>Motion</u> by C. Zacharias; Second by M. Slotemaker to approve agenda with flexibility. Approved.					Jason Bruns
<b>3.</b>	<b>Secretary's Report</b> October 17, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes <u>Motion</u> by B. Ihrig; Second by A. Neubert to approve minutes as printed. Approved.					Bob Ihrig
<b>5.</b>	<b>Financial Report</b> September 30 & October 31, 2023 Reports Printed minutes reviewed: A. <u>General Fund Balance</u> : September 30 deficit of -\$62,076.01 reduced to -\$31,786.86 at 10/31. Attributed to increased giving& reduced expenses. B. <u>Giving</u> : Year-to-date budgeted giving at 93% for October. C. <u>Mortgage</u> : Balance as of 10/31/23 = \$632,066.75. This represents a reduction of \$10,378.02 from 9/30/23.					Jeremy Carter
<b>6.</b>	<b>Lead Pastor's Report</b> A. <u>Budget Deficit</u> : Improving from 9/30. Hopeful for positive balance by end of year. B. <u>Men's Group</u> : Participated in Rake the Town with BLC youth. C. <u>Financial Peace</u> : Fall session ended. Ben & Danielle Johnson will be future coordinators. Winter group will be held online. D. <u>Stewardship</u> : Good response to fall pledge campaign. See New Business 9B below for details. E. <u>New Members</u> : Motion by Pr. Jay; Second by B. Ihrig to reinstate Tanya Mallen & children Rose & George as BLC members. F. <u>Synod Listening Panel</u> : Traveled twice to Rochester to listen to pastors & members of conflicted congregation share their concerns. Consulted with bishop & other panel members to discuss recommendations & action. G. <u>Compassionate Community Celebration</u> : Attended Mankato community celebration & accepted award for BLC as charter member. H. <u>Iambi Secondary School</u> : BLC has raised \$10,000+ for scholarships. Very positive BLC response. I. <u>Cruz Family Celebration</u> : Attended Christ the King celebration. Thanks to BLC members for involvement & leadership with WELCOME.					Pastor Jay Dahlvang

	J. <u>Pastoral Care &amp; Acts</u> : Made 30 home, hospital or care center visits in October. Officiated memorial service & performed committal service at Fort Snelling.	
7.	<p><b>Associate Pastor's Report</b></p> <p>A. <u>Youth Activities</u>: Winter Warm-Up involving youth from 6 Mankato Lutheran churches held a week ago with positive outcome. High school youth also had event at WOW Zone for laser tag. Will join young adults for Maverick hockey game on 12/8.</p> <p>B. <u>Young Adults</u>: Encountering struggles increasing participation. Working through this with plans to try new ideas.</p> <p>C. <u>Brave Conversation</u>: First conversation to be held for 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders. Goal to engage youth with trusted adults for safe conversations on difficult topics. To be held 11/29 on topics of mental health &amp; suicide. Speaker to be brought in to facilitate conversation.</p> <p>D. <u>Community</u>: After joint worship for Pride weekend, churches looking at future opportunities to collaborate more. Forming new ministerial association with initial gathering of 10 pastors to be held in December.</p> <p>E. <u>WELCOME</u>: See Old Business 8A.</p>	Pastor Jacie Richmond
8.	<p><b>Old Business</b></p> <p>A. <u>WELCOME Update</u>: Asylum paperwork officially filed at start of Oct. Must wait patiently for next steps. Work permit applications allowed 150 days after filing of asylum petition. If granted asylum, Cruz family will be eligible for residency/green cards 1 year after asylum granted. Great turnout of 200 members of 5 sponsoring churches at Cruz celebration.</p> <p>B. <u>BLC Internal Financial Review Report Update</u>: <b>Motion</b> by B. Ihrig; Second by M. Slotemaker to approve final draft of report form. Approved. This standardized report form will be used to conduct the annual BLC internal financial review by the Review Committee.</p> <p>C. <u>Strategic Plan Updates</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Strategic Plan Goal #4 Progress Report</u>: <u>Goal #4 Community Partnerships</u>: "We will continue to work in partnerships to serve the needs of the community with relevant purpose and meaningful action." Objectives 23-33 address this goal. Positive progress is being made regarding refugee/asylum seeker support, Connections Shelter, community needs assessment, Lincoln Park neighborhood participation, Compassionate Community, community use of BLC facilities, the REACH, tax preparation services, blood drives and community meals. Development/implementation of a strategy to connect with the neighborhood &amp; businesses needs action.</li> <li><u>Community Leader Interview Reports</u>: None presented.</li> </ol>	<p>Pastor Jacie Richmond</p> <p>Bob Ihrig</p> <p>Pastor Jay Dahlvang</p> <p>Council Members</p>
9.	<p><b>New Business</b></p> <p>A. <u>Budget Forum and Semi-Annual Meeting Review</u>: Members expressed positive opinions about the conduct and outcome of meeting. 2024 proposed budget approved without opposition. Budget forum effective in providing preview &amp; discussion of budget. Effective review of proposed budget led by E. Ruiz. Positive leadership of meeting by J. Bruns. The BLC budget process is very positive. Council members acknowledged by congregation.</p> <p>B. <u>Fall Stewardship Campaign Pledge Update</u>: As of 11/12/23, a total of 165 members pledged \$379,289 for 2024 or an increase of \$13,056 more than pledged for 2023. This represents a 3.64% increase. The stewardship board has mailed thank-you notes to pledging members and will send reminder cards to non-pledging members once received from E. Ruiz.</p> <p>C. <u>Designation of Pastoral Housing for 2024</u>: <b>Motion</b> by Pr. Jay; Second by J. Lust to designate \$30,000 of Pr. Jay's salary and \$28,000 of Pr. Jacie's salary to housing expenses to comply with IRS requirements. Approved.</p>	<p>Jason Bruns</p> <p>Bob Ihrig</p> <p>Pastor Jay Dahlvang</p>

	D. <u>Financial Review Committee Term Expiration: Kristine Rebelein:</u> Kristine's 3-year term on committee expires 12/31/23. She has elected not to run for reelection. B. Ihrig has visited with a BLC member about filling this position. The member will notify Bob with a decision by 12/15/23.	Bob Ihrig
10.	<b>Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, December 19, 2023 7:00 pm</b> <b>Devotions: Josie Lust</b>	
11.	<b>Adjournment</b> <b>Motion</b> by C. Zacharias; Second by A. Neubert to adjourn at 7:30 pm. Approved.	Council Members

***Our Mission: Bethlehem is an inviting community that is growing in Christ, loving our neighbors and serving God's world.***