

# Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes

## Tuesday, December 19, 2023

<b>Title</b>	Council Meeting			<b>President</b>	Jason Bruns	
<b>Purpose</b>	Monthly Business			<b>Secretary</b>	Bob Ihrig	
<b>Date</b>	December 19, 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	7:52 pm	52 min			
<b>Council Members</b>			<b>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>					Josie Lust
<b>2.</b>	<b>Additions to &amp; Approval of the Agenda</b> <u>Motion</u> by B. Ihrig; Second by A. Neubert to approve the printed agenda with flexibility. Approved.					Jason Bruns
<b>3.</b>	<b>Secretary's Report</b> November 21, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes <u>Motion</u> by B. Ihrig; Second by C. Zacharias to approved printed minutes. Approved.					Bob Ihrig
<b>4.</b>	<b>Financial Report</b> November 30, 2023 Report A. <u>General Fund Balance</u> : October 31 deficit of -\$31,786.86 increased to deficit of -\$47,270.50. B. <u>Member Giving</u> : 91% of monthly budgeted income. C. <u>Mortgage Fund Balance</u> : \$626,793.88 compared to original mortgage of \$2,055,694.00. D. <u>November Mortgage Reduction Receipts</u> : \$14,186.49 to apply to future principal reduction. E. <u>Mission Investment Fund Balance</u> (Used to make monthly mortgage payments of \$8,187): \$ 84,304.38					Jeremy Carter
<b>5.</b>	<b>Lead Pastor's Report</b> A. <u>Budget Deficit</u> : Concern about increasing deficit from October 31 deficit balance adding to current financial struggles. Future discussion by Council and other BLC boards needed to determine financial capacity & direction. Mission priorities and future commitments to be reviewed. B. <u>Spring Catalog</u> : Catalog of spring BLC activities at printers to be available soon for BLC members. C. <u>Diversity Council Director Meeting</u> : Met with Mohamed Alsadig, Executive Director of Mankato Diversity Council. He will present adult forum on January 7. D. <u>Men's Group</u> : Active participation at December dinner/bowling event. E. <u>Book of Faith</u> : 12-15 participants involved in Wednesday morning Bible study. Group has been active for 10+ years. F. <u>Stewardship</u> : Hosted fall pledge campaign celebration meal on 12/10 in cooperation with Adult Education hymn sing. G. <u>Care Ministry</u> : Team met last week. 37 Christmas gift bags purchased with memorial funds for care center & homebound members.					Pastor Jay Dahlvang

	<p>H. <u>New Ministerial Group</u>: Participated in meeting to create new ministerial association that will meet weekly to study texts for preaching. Thanks to Pr. Jacie for efforts in organizing this group.</p> <p>I. <u>Choir &amp; Ensemble Program</u>: Thanks to Charlie Leftridge for organizing and preparing outstanding music program on December 10.</p> <p>J. <u>Facilities Board</u>: Meet regularly with board. Priority is purchase &amp; installation of security cameras. Other projects needed being identified.</p> <p>K. <u>Continuing Education</u>: Starting an online class in January based on work of Parker Palmer.</p> <p>L. <u>Lent</u>: Reached out to area pastors about sharing pulpits for Lenten Wednesday worship services. 5 positive responses. Goal to find one more church to be involved.</p> <p>M. <u>Pastoral Care &amp; Acts</u>: Made 33 home, hospital, care center visits and officiated 4 funeral/memorial services since last report.</p> <p>N. <u>Personal News</u>: Wife Tammy beginning her own business consulting service. Will take vacation time between Christmas &amp; New Year.</p>	
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Associate Pastor's Report</b></p> <p>A. <u>Youth</u>: Successful FFF fall activities. Monthly high school youth gatherings held with positive feedback from youth &amp; families. First "Brave Conversations" held on 11/29 about mental health &amp; suicide with positive attendance by youth and parents. Plans being made for BLC youth to attend summer ELCA national youth gathering. 8 BLC youth are registered.</p> <p>B. <u>Community</u>: First gathering of new Mankato ministerial group held on 12/7. 8 clergy attended with another 5 interested by unable to attend. Desire expressed for relationship building among area faith leaders. Regular weekly meetings planned for sermon text studies starting 1/9 at BLC.</p> <p>C. <u>WELCOME Update</u>: No updates on Cruz asylum petition. Core team will meet with pastors of 5 participating churches to determine future role and needs of Cruz family. ELCA network encouraging churches to contact elected Congressional representatives about possible asylum law changes being discussed and potential impact on refugees like Cruz family.</p> <p>D. <u>Welcome &amp; Inclusion Board</u>: RIC Sunday scheduled for 1/28. Adult forum to be presented. Congregational art project planned for January. 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Reconciling Works organization. Preparing for worship service on 1/28. Plans to sell BLC T-shirts to be worn that day.</p> <p>E. <u>Personal</u>: Completed ELCA Power &amp; Boundaries training required of pastors every 3 years.</p>	<p>Pastor Jacie Richmond</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>Old Business</b></p> <p>A. <u>WELCOME Update</u>: See Associate Pastor report.</p> <p>B. <u>Fall Stewardship Pledge Update</u>: Total of 171 pledges received for 2024. No updated \$\$ total received from E. Ruiz. Previous total = \$13,000+ pledge increase compared to 2023. Stewardship Board mailed pledge reminders to 154 BLC members who have not yet made a 2024 pledge.</p> <p>C. <u>BLC Financial Review Committee Membership Update</u>: Wendy Keenan has agreed to serve a 3-year term on the BLC Financial Review Committee. <b>Motion</b> by B. Ihrig; Second by M. Slotemaker to approve Wendy and ask her to chair the group in 2024. Approved.</p> <p>D. Strategic Plan Updates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>Strategic Plan Goal #5 Progress Report</u>: <u>Goal 5</u>: "Embracing Diversity – We will embrace diversity by demonstrating welcome and respect for different identities, listening to develop growing relationships with diverse communities, and working for the good of all in the community." Positive progress made on Objectives and Practices 34-38. Strategic Planning Task Force to be convened in summer to review overall progress and determine</li> </ol>	<p>Pastor Jacie Richmond Bob Ihrig</p> <p>Bob Ihrig</p> <p>Pastor Jay Dahlvang</p>

	any needed plan revisions.  2. <u>Community Leader Interview Reports</u> : Waiting for report from J. Carter to complete interview process. To be scheduled at January Council meeting.	Council Members
8.	<b>New Business</b> A. <u>Christ the King Church Collaboration</u> : A team at Christ the King has updated its constitution and board responsibilities with reference to those documents at BLC. Appreciation has been communicated in two conversations with B. Ihrig about the value of those documents. A future meeting is planned to review more details of board operations at BLC.	Bob Ihrig
9.	<b>Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, January 16, 2024 7:00 pm</b> <b>Devotions: Jeremy Carter</b>	
10.	<b>Adjournment</b> <u>Motion</u> by Pr. Jay; Second by B. Ihrig to adjourn at 7:52 pm. Approved	

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