



Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation
Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Mankato, Minnesota
April 21, 2024
10:45 – 11:18 AM

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE: 91 (Quorum = 75)

CALL TO ORDER: President Jason Bruns

MINUTES: **Action:** Minutes of the last semi-annual meeting held on November 19, 2023 taken by secretary Bob Ihrig, were approved on a motion by Bob Ihrig and a second by Jessica Auel with all in favor on a voice vote.

OLD BUSINESS: None

2024 KATO SLEEP OUT UPDATE

Secretary Bob Ihrig presented an update on the 2024 Connections Shelter Kato Sleep Out. It will be held on Friday, April 26 in the BLC parking lot. The event will start at 5 pm. BLC members were invited to attend and observe.

BLC will be represented by Pr. Jacie, Amy Haigh, Ben Johnson & Danielle Johnson. They will sleep out on Friday evening. Lori Ruthenbeck is also participating independently.

A total of \$3,000 has been donated thus far from BLC members. This will assure that the 4 BLC team sleepers will be able to end their evening at 12 midnight since we have raised the required \$500 per team participant.

Contributions will still be accepted this week and can be given to Bob or submitted online. Our goal is to repeat as team champions for BLC funds raised for the Connections Shelter.

2023-24 ANNUAL REPORTS: Available on BLC website and in print at this meeting for member review.

Secretary Bob Ihrig encouraged BLC members to review the annual reports. They include 54 annual goals and 81 activities for 2023 as well as information on how the 5 major goals and 37 implementing objectives included in our 2022-26 strategic plan were addressed by the BLC Council and boards/committees during 2023-24.

Bob presented 7 examples of annual goals from the Council, Personnel, Stewardship, Children's, Facilities, Fair Trade and Finance boards and committees to illustrate goals pursued by BLC groups.

Bob also presented 7 examples of goal accomplishments from Music & Worship, Welcome & Inclusion, Youth, Adult Education, Community & Global, Endowment and the Council.

Council/board/committee members were thanked for all of their accomplishments this year. We made a real difference for our church and community.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Election of 2024-25 BLC Officers, Council and Board/Committee Members

Bob Ihrig, chairperson of the Nominating Committee, presented the ballot of nominees for positions on the Council and boards/committees for 2024-25.

- The ballot represents the names of members who agreed to continue service for additional 3-year terms to expire on May 31, 2024 and new members filling open positions on various boards and committees. A total of 91 such leadership positions exist to guide church activities.
- Starting with 40 open positions in February, the Nominating Committee was able to fill 33 of these positions by individuals willing to renew their terms for another 3 years and new members who were contacted or volunteered to serve. Board and committee chairpersons were thanked for their efforts in this process.
- A total of 7 open positions remained today after completion of the nominations process: Council Vice-President (1), Stewardship (1), Finance (4) and Youth (1)
- Peggy Sorensen volunteered for the Youth Board. Bob Sorensen volunteered for the Finance Committee. Their names were added to the ballot.
- The Nominating Committee will continue to seek out individuals to serve in the remaining 5 positions with approvals to be made by the Council.

Action: On a motion by Bob Ihrig and a Second by Derek Brown, the 2024-25 amended ballot was approved unanimously on a voice vote of the congregation. See attached ballot.

B. Recognition of Outgoing & New Officers, Council & Board/Committee Members

President Bruns and Pastor Jay Dalvang thanked BLC members for their previous service to the congregation and welcomed new members of boards/committees for the next year.

C. BLC Strategic Plan Update

Pastor Jay Dalvang provided an update on the 2022-26 BLC strategic plan. He reviewed the 5 major goals and explained that 37 specific implementing objectives have been identified for each goal by the Council and congregation. We are currently half-way through the plan timeline. Some goals have been accomplished while others are still in progress.

This spring, the strategic planning committee will meet to review the plan and determine identify what goals and objectives have been completed, what additional steps are needed to fulfill other goals and objectives and which goals/objectives should be reconsidered. This assessment will be shared with the new Council, boards and committee at the annual summer leadership retreat scheduled for Monday, June 3. They will discuss and make plans for how the various BLC groups can contribute to action on the goals and objectives during 2024-26.

D. WELCOME Update

Pastor Jacie Richmond provided a background and update of the WELCOME initiative. 5 Mankato area congregations joined in the fall of 2022 to coordinate activities to support a family seeking U.S. asylum. Members of these congregations have provided significant volunteer and financial support to the 4-member Cruz family since their arrival in late December 2022.

The following news was reported as an update:

- The family's asylum application has been submitted and is pending approval by the government.
- Eligibility for adult work permits has been approved. The actual permit applications have been submitted and are pending government approval.
- Numerous church members have provided services such as driving family members to community locations and donations to provide needed financial support to the family.
- A BLC adult forum is scheduled for Sunday, May 5 at 10:45 am in Grounds for Joy. WELCOME representatives and a SE Minnesota Synod representative along with the Cruz family will share more updates.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pastor Jacie Richmond led the membership in the Lord's Prayer to close the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 11:18 am by Greg Nelson and second by Liz Paul. Approved on a voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Bob Ihrig, Congregation Secretary