

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

Title		Council Meeting		President	Jason Bruns		
Purpose		Monthly Business		Secretary	Bob Ihrig		
Date		August 15, 2023		Time	7:00 pm	Location	Grounds for Joy
Meeting Time		Start	Stop	Total Time		Council Members/Guests	
		7:00 pm	9:03 pm	2 hr 3 min			
Council Members		Terms of Office		Present	Absent	Position	
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.	Jessica Auel	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	
11.	Anna Wencl			X		Family Faith Formation Director	
TOPIC							PRESENTER
1.	Devotions						Marie Slotemaker
2.	Additions to & Approval of the Agenda Motion by B. Ihrig; Second by C. Zacharias to approve printed agenda with flexibility. Approved.						Jason Bruns
3.	Secretary's Report July 18, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes Motion by B. Ihrig; Second by M. Slotemaker to approve printed minutes. Approved.						Bob Ihrig
5.	Financial Report July 31, 2023 Report A. General Fund: June deficit reduced by \$2,000 to new total of -\$36,286.66 Significant expenses responsible for deficit. Member giving for the year is at 92% of budget. Expectation is for improved balances in future. B. Finance Committee: Scheduled to meet in September to address various issues. C. Mortgage: Current balance is \$681,381.07, down from \$1 million+ balance prior to capital campaign pledges. Plans to send a \$40,000 payment to further reduce principal balance.						Jeremy Carter
6.	Lead Pastor's Report A. LSS/REACH Leases: Signed by LSS. Copies sent to Molly, Elizabeth & B. Ihrig. Pastors met with REACH staff again in August. B. Staff Reviews: Completed with Personnel Committee. Positive reviews. C. Fall Catalog: Developing & planning to send professional fall activity catalog of BLC activities & schedules. See New Business for details. D. Capital Campaign: Touched base with campaign consultants. They encouraged thanks and reminders for payment of member pledges. E. Paul Peterson Interview: Met with him as community leader. Emphasized shared virtues & civic values. F. Pastoral Care & Acts: Made 42 care ministry visits in July.						Pastor Jay Dahlvang
7.	Associate Pastor's Report A. Children, Youth, Family: 11 children attended Green Lake Bible camp. VBS occurred July 24-27 with 60+ children from BLC, Centenary & neighborhood. Waiting to hear decision on ELCA Coop application. Working on updating FFF Comprehensive Plan.						Pastor Jacie Richmond

	<p>B. <u>Young Adults</u>: Future monthly meetings/events planned for post high school young adults. Endowment Board asked for financial support.</p> <p>C. <u>Welcome & Inclusion</u>: Board will be involved with Lincoln Neighborhood Block Party on 8/29 in BLC parking lot. BLC registered to join Mankato PRIDE parade and host booth. Ecumenical worship being planned for area churches.</p> <p>D. <u>Facilities</u>: Thefts & uninvited visitor issue have developed in past month. Various options being considered. See New Business for details.</p> <p>E. <u>Pastoral Care</u>: Presided at graveside service & made 6 pastoral care contacts in July.</p>	
<p>8. Old Business</p>	<p>A. <u>WELCOME Update</u>: Moon Dogs game fundraiser tickets sold out with ½ of proceeds to go to WELCOME. In good financial shape with less need for future planned fundraisers. Cruz family involved with community activities. Twin Cities lawyer secured & paid to process asylum application. Process could take 6 months to 2 years. Pr. Jacie thanked for leadership & work on this project.</p> <p>B. <u>BLC Financial Review Format Update</u>: This is a work in progress. B. Ihrig will connect with Wendy Keenan to identify priorities for future reviews & finalize review report form.</p> <p>C. <u>Personnel Committee Update</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Lay Staff Performance Reviews</u>: 7 annual reviews completed in July with pastors & Personnel Committee members. Positive experiences and outcomes in 1-hour meetings to review staff self-reviews, positive feedback, issues of concern & goals. Summary reports completed & shared with staff. We are fortunate to have a dedicated & talented staff. 2. <u>2024 Lay Staff Compensation Planning</u>: Committee started work on recommendations for next year's lay staff compensation. Information covering 6-year history of recommendations, inflation data, current salaries & benefits. ChurchSalary data to be analyzed, compared on national church salaries. Proposal to be formed at 9/12 meeting for presentation to Council for 2024 budget. <p>D. <u>Strategic Plan Updates</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Strategic Plan Goal #1 Progress Report</u>: A. Wencil provided an update on Family Faith Formation activities to address 8 of the objectives in Strategic Goal #1. These included: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) <u>Time & Talent Youth Survey</u>: FFF will hold conversations with BLC youth to ascertain interest in BLC activities. b) <u>Youth Mental Health Education & Advocacy</u>: Youth Board set this goal. Community resources being developed & shared with families. Conversations being planned for confirmation & Torchlight meetings. Anna reading faith-based books to assist parents. Mental Health First Aid training recommended for staff and parents. Planned October adult forum with United Way panel highlighted. c) <u>Youth Outreach</u>: Reaching out to other area churches on their activities to reach out to youth. Questions developed by Board. Unfortunately, BLC did not qualify for ELCA Coop program but hope to glean ideas from this initiative & pursue future involvement. Monthly youth and young adult events and meetings planned for fall/winter. Connecting this with mental health awareness was suggested. d) <u>Annual Youth Contacts</u>: Pastors & FFF staff are maintaining record of contacts with youth during the year. 	<p>Pastor Jacie Richmond</p> <p>Bob Ihrig</p> <p>Bob Ihrig</p> <p>Pr. Jay, Pr. Jacie, Anna Wencil</p>

	<p>e) <u>New Youth Member Orientation</u>: This will be done for new youth as they connect with BLC.</p> <p>f) <u>New Youth Initiatives</u>: Being planned for youth & young adults for fall/winter.</p> <p>g) <u>Intergenerational Activities</u>: Suggestions for future solicited. These included: “God’s Work, Our Hands” fall activity; Mental health activities, Hunger simulations, All Saints Day remembrance, Tanzania mission; Rake the Town, member attendance at confirmation sessions addressing other Islam, EID and Judaism, Visiting Twin Cities Houses of Worship.</p> <p>h) <u>Crossroads Campus Ministry Support</u>: Financial contributions provided. BLC student names provided for future connections.</p> <p>2. <u>Council Member Interviews of Community Leaders</u>: Pr. Jay met with District 77 superintendent Paul Peterson. C. Zacharias met with 2 Mankato Public Safety officers. They appreciated BLC’s interest in addressing & cooperating on community issues. Recommendations for a potential BLC role were discussed. Other Council members will conduct other leader interviews prior to the October meeting.</p> <p>3. <u>Personnel Committee Recommendation on Conflict Resolution Policy</u>: As a new strategic goal for Personnel & the Council, the committee reviewed & updated the current BLC policy in the Personnel Handbook to address conflicts involving BLC members & staff. Motion by B. Ihrig; Second by M. Slotemaker to approve revision. Approved.</p>	<p>Jason Bruns</p> <p>Bob Ihrig</p>
<p>9. New Business</p>	<p>A. <u>Fall Program Update & Preview</u>: Fall programs & activities are being organized starting with “God’s Work, Our Hands” churchwide activity on September 10. Youth and young adult events are being planned. Fall/winter adult forums will be listed. A special fall catalog has been designed with related information organized. This will be professionally printed for BLC members and distributed in the next several weeks.</p> <p>B. <u>Building Safety Concerns</u>: Discussion of recent theft issues during Sunday worship and uninvited visitors in the building and parking lot. How we should respond as a church was discussed. These included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The BLC Facilities Board is exploring purchase (\$12,000+) of security cameras. Cost is major concern. 2. Locking the back door #10 by the parking lot once worship starts. 3. Stationing a greeter by door #10 before worship. 4. Calling the Mankato Public Safety office when issues arise 5. Inviting Public Safety representatives to present tips on addressing building safety concerns. 6. Increasing vigilance and monitoring during worship by weekend janitors & ushers. <p>Pr. Jay will have follow-up conversation with BLC staff. This topic will remain on future Council agenda for follow-up.</p> <p>C. <u>2023 Pastoral Performance Reviews</u>: The 2 annual pastoral reviews were conducted in August. J. Bruns & B. Ihrig met with Pr. Jay for an hour on August 3 to discuss his self-review. A summary of the conversation and committee reflections on Pr. Jay’s performance was written and discussed. Overall, it was a very positive performance review for the past year. J. Bruns, M. Slotemaker and B. Ihrig met with Pr. Jacie on August 10 for an hour with the same process. A very positive review resulted. Motion by B. Ihrig; Second by A. Neubert to officially approve the 2 reports. Approved.</p>	<p>Pr. Jay, Pr. Jacie</p> <p>J. Bruns, Pr. Jay, Pr. Jacie</p> <p>J. Bruns, M. Slotemaker, B. Ihrig</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 7:00 pm Devotions: Matt Drewitz</p>	

11.	Adjournment Motion by C. Zacharias; Second by M. Slotemaker to adjourn at 9:03 pm. Approved.	
------------	--	--

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