



**Semi-Annual Meeting of the Congregation  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
Mankato, Minnesota  
April 23, 2023  
10:45 – 11:13 AM**

**MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE:** 58 (Quorum = 75)

**CALL TO ORDER:** President Mary Bliesmer

**OPENING PRAYER:** Pastor Jay Dahlvang

**MINUTES:** Action: Minutes of the last semi-annual meeting held on November 20, 2022, taken by secretary Bob Ihrig, were approved on a motion by Bob Ihrig and a second by Chuck Piehl with all in favor on a voice vote.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**REPORTS:** Available on BLC website and in print at this meeting for member review.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Election of 2023-24 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 2023-24.

- The ballot represents the names of members who agreed to continue service for additional 3-year terms to expire on May 31, 2023 and new members filling open positions on various boards and committees. A total of 94 such leadership positions exist to guide church activities.
- Starting with 29 open positions and 7 vacancies in February, the Nominating Committee was able to fill 26 of these positions by individuals willing to renew their terms for another 3 years and new members who were contacted or volunteered to serve.
- A total of 10 open positions remained after completion of the nominations process: Council Vice-President, Council Member at Large, Music & Worship (1), Stewardship (1), Finance (3) and Nominating Committee (3).
- Members were encouraged to volunteer to fill these positions. The Nominating Committee will continue to seek out individuals to serve in these positions with approvals to be made by the Council.

**Action:** Since a quorum did not exist for a vote on the 2023-24 ballot, no official action was taken. The Council will determine the next step to be taken. This could include the calling of a special congregational meeting or approval of the ballot by the Council in May.

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

President Bliesmer thanked BLC members for their previous service to the congregation and welcomed new prospective members of boards/committees for the next year.

## **C. BLC Strategic Plan Update**

Pr. Jay provided an update on the 2022-26 BLC strategic plan. He reviewed the 5 major goals and explained that specific implementing objectives have been identified for each goal by the Council and congregation. The members of the new Council and boards and committees will participate in the annual summer leadership retreat scheduled for June 5. They will discuss and make plans for how the various BLC groups can contribute to action on the goals and objectives in the years to come.

## **D. Capital Campaign Update**

President Bliesmer thanked BLC members for their support of the 2022 BLC capital campaign. Over \$850,000 was pledged by members to pay down the \$1 million mortgage. Thus far, \$250,000+ has been received in actual donations in 2023, thereby reducing the mortgage principal balance to \$744,000. The hope is that all pledges will be honored during the next 3 years and that we can generate additional contributions to completely pay off the mortgage.

## **E. WELCOME Update**

Pastor Jacie Richmond provided members with an update on the Mankato 5-church initiative to welcome the Cruz family to resettlement in Mankato. She noted that it has been 4 months (1 week before Christmas) since the family arrived. The following activities have occurred: Housing has been secured; family members are in school including ESL classes; financial sponsorship by community members is being set up; bicycles have been obtained and an immigration attorney is being explored to process future legal issues.

Pr. Jacie explained that the 5 churches have identified a need in the refugee/asylum seeker community and are working together to address this need with their support of the Cruz family.

Pr. Jacie thanked members of Bethlehem for their involvement with the WELCOME initiative. She will provide more updates in the future. Members interested in providing additional support to meet specific identified needs should contact Pr. Jacie.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

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

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion** to adjourn at 11:13 am by Marcia Nagel and second by Jessica Auel. Approved on a voice vote.

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Bob Ihrig*, Congregation Secretary