

Bethany Lutheran Church
Council Meeting (via Zoom) July 13, 2020

The meeting was called to order by President Hughes at 6:30 p.m.

Members present were Dave Bahnsen, Linda Black, Nancy Bruns, Anne Fetzer, Del Hughes, Amber Marsh, Kristin McElhinney, Alan Beyer, Curt Casper, and Pastor Whaley.

Pastor Chad led devotions based on Luke 2: 16 – 20 where Mary was given unexpected news and she pondered them in her heart. In light of this pandemic time, this may be a time for us to ponder and to glorify God for blessings that he has given us.

Pastor's Report:

Council Report – July 12, 2020

Grace and peace from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! God continues to reveal God's goodness amidst these unique times. While our doors to the building remain closed and positive cases of COVID-19 rise, the church has an opportunity to proclaim hope and the assurance we are not alone. We have been doing that and will continue to do that.

There is much to be joyful for in the last month. I am joyful that technology continues to work and hopeful we can make some improvements moving into the future to assist us in our worship of God and proclamation of God's living word. I am joyful for the opportunity to begin making some in-person outdoor visits. I am joyful for the opportunity to possibly gather for worship in-person outdoors.

Over the last month I have kept busy with the normal day-to-day activities of preparing worship, sermons, worship bulletins, setting up for worship, recording worship, downloading, uploading, editing, and posting worship to Facebook, Vimeo, etc. Additionally, I do my best to keep the website, Facebook and Twitter pages updated with the most recent news. Discussion groups on the ELCA Social Statement on race, ethnicity and culture have met twice and another is planned. This small group will then look at additional ways we can continue the conversation such as a book study. I started a Monday Noon Gospel Gathering to look at and discuss the upcoming Sunday reading. While I had hoped for more participation, I am grateful for those who have attended via Zoom and we welcome others to join us. I researched the possibility of transmitting sound via AM frequency to vehicles for an outdoor worship. After a survey of 20 or so individuals/families by Linda Black and me it was determined most people preferred a service in which they were gathered outside of their vehicles in chairs. Thus, our efforts will be directed toward this possibility moving forward. I brainstormed a couple new ways to plan worship incorporating others leading prayers of intercession and Jill singing. To do this, we must prerecord which takes additional time, but I think has been worth it and well received. I travelled to Grinnell to take part in an outdoor conversation with Bishop Burk and other rostered leaders. I attended 2 WBARC meeting via Zoom. I attended a Free Indeed outside council meeting via Zoom. I met outdoors with a couple

preparing to be married August 29 for one of three pre-marital sessions. I am reading a book *Open Secrets* (Richard Lischer) in preparation for my involvement in The Moses Project (<https://www.grandview.edu/the-moses-project>) which begins August 3. Presently, I am scheduled to gather at Grandview with other pastors August 3-5. This is a 10-month program. I am also reading the book *Dialogues on Race* which has various short essays from leading Christian thinkers. Del and I held 2 listening posts. I also continue to record a short weekly children's message. I am working with Tim Kakavas of White Dove Communications about upgrading the sanctuary with technology to improve our online worship capabilities moving into the future. This will allow us to provide better quality in our proclamation of the good news and will not entail utilizing my cell phone on a regular basis, which is not sustainable. In my opinion, this is a necessity and I do not envision a future in which we are not only gathering in-person but also streaming that online in some capacity whether it be live or a recorded option. We have witnessed how God's glory and word can be made known through this medium and lives can be reached, transformed, and opened to the good news of Jesus Christ.

Well, gathered by grace and sent by the Spirit, we are the people of God doing God's work in the world. Praise and thanks be to God!

Secretary's Report:

Linda moved to accept the regular June 8th meeting and Special June 28th meeting minutes as corrected. Amber seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

The General Fund Revenue and Expense report reflects \$12,468 in offerings for the month of June and \$11,411 in expenses, which allowed for an increase in the general fund of \$1,057. Special Funds disbursements include \$136 for graduation gifts from the Youth Fund and \$531 for trees from the Memorial Fund. Families that contributed to the Memorial Fund were L. Pedersen, K. Roth, J. Friis, M. Anderson, and Don and Fern Thompson.

Curt moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Al seconded. Motion passed.

Committee Reports

Building and Grounds:

There were several broken branches from the storm that need to be cleaned up before the outdoor service on Sunday. More mulch is still needed.

Education and Youth:

Amber and Kristin are organizing a VBS-at-Home kit which will be distributed soon. The 3 day kit includes stories, songs, crafts, and treats to be used by the kids.

Evangelism and Outreach:

The 125th Anniversary celebration (discussed later) was to include a float from Bethany in the Hoover's Hometown Days Parade. The parade was cancelled due to the pandemic, so we plan to do it next year.

In two months, God's Work Our Hands Sunday is scheduled. Certainly, we can't do it as normal, if at all. We are waiting for some guidance from the synod on this.

Fellowship:

Anne set up Zoom Fellowship following the June worship services. The number of people involved was not large, but those participating enjoyed it. She is planning to do this again, depending on the response of the outdoor service.

Worship and Music:

Cliff and Monica Hinkhouse are donating their piano to Bethany. A big thank you to them! Linda will work with Jill to decide where it would best be used.

Old Business:

- A \$100 check was sent to Bishop Burk's retirement fund.
- Update of Guidelines for in-person worship: It is now allowed to speak softly for prayers and other spoken parts as long as a mask is worn. Singing is still not allowed, but congregants may hum the music.
- Outdoor Service Guidelines: Bring your own chair. Face-masks or shield are required. Six-foot distancing. A list of attendees will be recorded. Dave moved and Anne seconded to have an outdoor service on July 19th. Motion passed.
- 125th Anniversary celebration: Due to the pandemic, Al moved and Linda seconded to postpone the event until next year. Motion passed. We are planning to acknowledge the event in October, possibly with a video which includes remembrances from members of the congregation and also something from previous ministers. Al will work with the 125th Anniversary Committee to organize this. Kristin offered to assist with editing the video.

New Business:

- COVID-19 Update: Al mentioned that Cedar County now has had 96 confirmed cases and adjoining counties total 4884 cases. This is about double from the previous month.
- In light of the pandemic, Anne questioned whether the council will need to reallocate budgetary items to reflect changes in needs and resources. The budget committee will visit this question later this fall.
- God's Work Our Hands: Anne had a suggestion of identifying special needs in the community and aiding them much like we do the Angel Tree. Council approved this and will research it also.

- The Hope Chest is rarely used now. It was mentioned that if someone has a need, they can contact the church and items could be put together for pickup.
- Confirmation: Auron Marsh and Chloe Klabo have finished their confirmation training and are waiting to be confirmed. Due to church closure, Pastor Chad is proposing that the ceremony could take place with family only, be recorded, and dubbed into the worship service. Anne moved and Kristin seconded the motion to open the church for this special service. Motion passed.
- Wedding: Pastor Chad has been doing pre-marriage sessions with a couple who would like to be married at Bethany on August 29th. Discussion ensued over whether to open the church for this service. General feeling of the council was that, since we haven't opened the church for regular services, we should probably not open it up for the wedding. Pastor Chad said that he is willing to work with the couple to do an outdoor service if they choose.
- Technology: Pastor Chad has been using his cell phone for online services up to this time, but this is not sustainable long-term. He has been working with Tim Kakavas on a more permanent solution, since we are planning to continue to broadcast our service online. There was some discussion about the cameras, computer, and the cost. Amber moved to use funds to enhance our church's technology. Anne seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- Wayne wondered whether or not Bethany could be used for a Blood Drive in November. With our church closed, the council was skeptical about this, but would continue to discuss the logistics with Wayne.

Next meeting is August 10th. A short council meeting will be held after July 19th to discuss the success of the outdoor service.

Dave moved to adjourn. Amber seconded. Motion passed.

Pastor Chad led closing with the Lord's Prayer.