

Bethany Lutheran Church
Council Meeting (via Zoom) December 14, 2020

The meeting was called to order by President Hughes at 6:36 p.m.

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

Pastor Chad opened the meeting with a prayer from Martin Luther.

Mike Fryauf approached the council about hosting a *Take Away Hunger* event at Bethany in January. This organization has replaced *Kids Against Hunger*, which Bethany has participated in previously. He said a normal packaging event would include 10 people, but could be modified to use 6 people at a time. Money would be raised ahead of time; the costs are 25 cents per package or \$54 per box.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor Report to Council December 14

Grace and peace! It has been a wonderful past month. There have been so many joys. The number of kids signed up for the at-home kits. The ability to teach faith formation to our kiddos in 4th-8th grade. A special thank you to Amber as she has been teaching weekly on Zoom to our 4-6th grade youth. While worship has had to move indoors with just a few of us present, it has still brought me life and energy and I am so proud of the quality of product we are putting out. While it may not be on par with much larger congregations who were in the online space prior to COVID, I have talked to many people and heard positive comments on the audio/visual quality and content of our worship service. A huge shout out to all who assist and the continued financial support from the people of God so we can do this. The Advent wreaths and devotion were a hit and over 30 were distributed. There continues to be great discussion in our class on racism. For the first time in 9 months, I met a colleague face-to-face as I had a short meeting with Pastor Ostrem, Assistant to the Bishop. The Angel Tree is up and running and has been supported faithfully just as in years past. Thanks to Jeni and Hannah for their help. New people continue to join us online, comment, and help support our ministry financially. Praise be to God! Curt put out the Nativity and JOY sign and it looks wonderful.

Pastor Mark Pries, retired pastor of Zion Lutheran in Iowa City, will lead worship and preach December 20th. Bishop Current and her staff will be providing an entire worship service on December 27th. That will also provide a day off, which means I used up all my Sunday vacation for 2020. I only took half of the vacation days. I am not exactly sure how the synod worship service will be made available. I think it was a great idea and will give people the opportunity to meet our new bishop, even if it is online. Plus, it is a new and exciting way for the church to come together.

Thanks to Anne who is assisting me in researching and helping figure out the best way to host our annual meeting virtually.

I am chairing the Synod Nominating Committee, which did take up a significant amount of time earlier this month. I am grateful for that time and opportunity. I had the idea to create a video as part of our seeking candidates for the 2022 Churchwide Assembly and that turned out very well.

Of course, there is always the day-to-day routine tasks that I do not need to reiterate. I just wish to close that while 2020 has been challenging in many ways, there have also been countless unforeseen blessings, joys, new ventures that have been life-giving, and I am so grateful and thankful for the Spirit's activity and continued revealing of Christ's presence to us over this year.

Howard and Terry Moss and Mary McGee have been attending Bethany for some time and would like to join as members. Curt moved and Amber seconded a motion to accept them as members. Motion passed.

Secretary's Report:

Linda moved to accept the Secretary's Report. Dave seconded. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

Nancy said in November Bethany received \$15,239 in offerings and had \$12,415 in expenses which allowed for a net increase in the General Fund of \$2,824 for the month.

The Budget Committee (Pastor Chad, John Black, Claudia Beyer, Del Hughes, Jill Taylor, and Nancy Bruns) met last week and are submitting a 2021 budget proposal for review.

Dave moved and Curt seconded to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Building and Grounds:

Pastor Chad thanked Curt for putting up the nativity scene at the church.

Education and Youth:

- Kristin made Faith at Home kits for December for 57 kids and 35 families. These have been very well received.
- Amber said the Wednesday evening classes are done by Zoom and are going well.
- Kristin and Amber have met with Pastor Chad to plan for next year.

Evangelism and Outreach:

Al participated in the HACAP food distribution on November 17th. About 70 families were served, 15% more than the previous month.

Fellowship:

- Anne is planning a Christmas storybook reading event with Del and Sue. This will be recorded in the sanctuary and be featured online.
- She is planning to reach out to members this winter with letters since we are unable to do fellowship as a group during the pandemic.

Stewardship: No report.

Worship and Music:

- Arlen Ottmar tuned the piano.
- The Lector List for 2021 is ready.
- Linda will deliver poinsettia plants that were purchased for Christmas.
- The Christmas Eve service will be broadcast at 5 p.m. but can be viewed anytime after that on Bethany's Facebook page.

Old Business:

- Bethany's Annual Meeting will be held on January 17, 2021 via Zoom.
- Nominating committee is working on candidates for open council positions.
- Due to continuing high COVID-19 infections, Bethany will continue to remain closed for now, except for special needs.

New Business:

- Blood Drive: Wayne Frauenholtz requested use of the Great Hall for a Mississippi Valley blood drive in January. He said that there is a shortage of blood supplies for the hospitals. Al moved to approve use of the Great Hall for this event. Amber seconded. Motion passed.
- 2021 Budget: Nancy presented the proposed budget to the council. Dave moved to accept the budget as proposed. Anne seconded. Motion passed.
- Continuing Education Expenses: Pastor said that, normally, unused budgeted expense for continuing education were put into a special fund to be used at a later time. Since most of his continuing education was done online and most was free, he recommended that, for this year, the unused amount be left in the general fund.
- Local Missions: Bethany's policy is to distribute 2.5% of regular offering to local missions. Eight local missions have been designated for several years. Al moved to continue to support these missions in the same percent as was done in the last year. He also moved to use the Cookie Walk Funds to be equally distributed between the UIHC Chaplaincy Program, Free Indeed Prison Ministry, and the Iowa City Shelter House. Curt seconded the motion. Motion passed. After discussion, it was decided to have Pastor Chad send out a letter listing these missions as an opportunity for members to make individual contributions.

- Bank and Credit Card Policies: Linda moved to approve a signature document for use by Fidelity Bank. Kristin seconded. Motion passed.
- Further discussion was held concerning Mike Fryauf's request to host a *Take Away Hunger* event in light of the pandemic. General feeling was that we should support it, if it could be done safely. Anne moved to give permission for this event in January. Amber seconded. Motion passed.
- Angel Tree Funds: Jeni Schiele said that money contributions were greater than was needed for the Angel Tree needs and she would like to roll unused money over to the school for the reduced lunch program. Dave moved to approve this. Amber seconded. Motion passed.
- Opening up the church: Pastor expressed a desire to very gradually open up the church beginning next year, if it could be done safely. It was decided to discuss this further at our January 11 meeting.
- At the request at a WBARC meeting, it was decided to have West Branch churches ring their church bells for one minute on Wednesday's at 6:00 p.m. in honor of all affected by the COVID pandemic.

Curt moved to adjourn the meeting. Kristin seconded. Motion passed.

Pastor Chad closed with the Lord's Prayer.