

**Bethel Lutheran Church Council  
Minutes, October 18, 2022**

**Attendees:** Randy Baskerville, Ros Demaree, Mark Heckman, Gary Helgemo, Jim Herr, Pastor Dave Hill, Sarah Manro, Steve Middleton, Mary Jo Mikulski, Jeff Reising, Linc Schneider, Harold Seamon; staff, Eddie Burks; guests Liz and Chris Camparelli. **Absent:** Steve Horton.

Mark Heckman called the meeting to order at 6:38. Pastor Dave led an opening prayer with each council member offering a petition.

**Administrative Business**

Pastor Dave moved, and Gary Helgemo seconded to approve the September 20, 2022, minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**Sunday School Discussion**

Liz Camparelli, mother of an 8- and 9-year-old and a 2021-22 Sunday school teacher, shared her family's concerns about the dropping numbers of students in the Bethel Sunday school program. She asked Council to consider

- (1) sending a letter to the entire congregation, urging people to enroll their children, grandchildren, nieces/nephews in Sunday school. She recognized there are software problems and updating needs that need to be fixed to enable a letter to be sent.
- (2) buy Facebook ads that geofence targeted areas
- (3) look at unused assets that could help grow the Sunday school. The preschool can be a feeder program to build the congregation. Working parents need safe, affordable, full-day daycare five days a week. Bethel has members such as Susan Adda who could advise on how to approach this. There may be someone in the area who wants to start a Christian daycare program but doesn't have a site; Bethel could offer them space at an affordable rental rate.
- (4) form a cooperative with other churches.

Chris Camparelli added that youth are the future of the church. That is where our long-term vision needs to look but it's hard to recruit families as members when families are not being seen in church. Once the congregation loses a family, it is difficult to get them back.

The Council agreed with the Camparellis' points, tasking Gary Helgemo, Jim Herr, Eddie Burks and the Youth Committee to determine what Bethel can do right away, develop an action plan and report its findings and plans to the Council.

**Treasurer's Report**

Giving was down significantly in September but expenses were not significantly different. October giving, however, is looking more positive. The September total was \$41,949; giving was almost \$41,000 the first two weekends in October.

Harold Seamon presented an updated draft for a 2023 budget that includes salaries for one pastor and one youth director. A benefits package for Holly Eldridge is still to be determined. Jim Herr moved, and Pastor Dave seconded, that the budget be approved as presented with the proviso that up to \$10,000 in benefits may need to be added. The motion passed unanimously.

**Partnerships and Outreach Update**

**Valor Academy:** Mark Heckman reported that Valor Academy determined the cost to retrofit Bethel for their needs was more than they could afford. While this initiative didn't work out, it did help Bethel leadership think about what we could do in the future to create an opportunity for a Christian school on the property.

**Marilyn's Place:** Getting a zoning variance for the farm property will take time, at least until February 2023. We cannot house Marilyn's Place without that variance in place. Sarah Manro suggested we offer the program unused space in the church as an interim location to distribute nonfood household essentials.

In days following the meeting, Jeff Reising discussed this idea with Glenn Conn at Marilyn's Place and apprised Laura Houser about the proposal, which is expected to have minimal impact on the preschool. Subsequently, a letter of agreement was drafted and, via an email vote, was approved with 10 members voting yes.

**Food Pantry:** A three-person team has made plans to reopen the pantry starting Nov. 8. Former volunteers have been asked to help sort food, and agencies that provide food have been contacted. Bethel tote bags with shopping lists will be available in the Narthex starting the weekend of Oct. 22-23.

### **Welcome Sheets**

Through various discussions, it has been determined that welcome sheets are not needed to track attendance but can be a useful tool for getting volunteers. Ros Demaree suggested doing something other churches have found as a successful alternative to paper signups. A QR code will be created that members and guests can access on their phones. A Google Document will open that describes current volunteer opportunities. Ministry leaders will be able to access the results of the Google Document on the Shared Drive.

### **NALC Disaster Relief Effort**

Randy Baskerville reported that Bethel made major contributions to the NALC's disaster relief measures in Florida by creating hygiene kits and 48 flood buckets, giving \$5,000 to stock the warehouse in Connersville at its dedication service, providing youth and adults to help load the truck going to Florida, and donating a generator. Another 50 flood buckets and more hygiene kits will be made in coming weeks. Mark Heckman will shoot video of the supplies being used on his next trip to Florida.

### **Stewardship Campaign 2022**

The campaign letter and commitment card were to be mailed the same week as the Council meeting. Sermons throughout October and November will talk about Being a Biblical Giver. A leaflet telling why Council members give is being assembled. Commitment cards will be blessed the weekend of Nov. 19-20.

### **Trunk or Treat**

This year's event will be 2-4 p.m. Oct. 29. A grill master is needed; a fire builder has been secured. Jeff Reising will provide hayrides. Youth will decorate the barn for a drive-through on the ride. Kim Forster is encouraging people to bring old vehicles to display. Scarecrows are being collected to display along the Peace Trail.

### **New Business**

**Vision Plan:** Pastor Dave presented his vision/ideas for Bethel's ministry, outlining immediate needs and introducing his dreams. Needs include finalization of the Missing in Attendance list, better support of the preschool ministry, expansion of ministries for senior congregations, support for the Craft Fair, improved use of social media, and building community through prayer gatherings/nights. He urged Council to help the congregation take a step doing something that we're really good at. His advice was to take one step at a time but to take the first step.

**Attendance Trends:** Discussion was tabled due to the length of the meeting.

**Other:** Vic Hansen has proposed dividing Bethel members into teams, such as was done 2-3 years ago. Each team would consider how we can better serve Christ. It was announced that Ben Black has been approved for ordination with the Orthodox Lutheran Church.

Mark Heckman adjourned the meeting at 9:34, when members joined to say the Lord's Prayer.

### **Evotes Following the Meeting**

Two urgent property issues arose in weeks immediately following the meeting that were considered in email discussions and votes among all Council members.

- Larry Gray suggested that Bethel investigate switching from Republic Trash to Manifold Refuse. The change would save the congregation nearly \$4,000 in 2023 compared to what was paid this year. Council voted unanimously to make this change in service provider.
- Nelson Alarm and The Flying Locksmith provided quotes to add the Narthex door to the Columbarium Garden area to the door-monitoring program, allowing the door to be locked/unlocked automatically based on need. This will cost \$840 to install the hardware and an additional \$57/month as part of the security system lease. Additionally, Nelson and the Noblesville Fire Department recommended installing a security camera in the Sanctuary, facing toward the Narthex as a way to monitor movement in the Narthex and better protect one of the most important parts of the church. An added benefit is the camera being used to verify attendance information. A snapshot can be taken to further identify who is in attendance, particularly when there are new attendees, that might not be recognizable by some. This would cost \$625 to install and \$8/month in additional lease fees. Council voted unanimously to add these security measures.

Respectively submitted  
Ros Demaree

## **MINISTRY REPORTS**

### **CARE MINISTRY**

This is an open seat on the Council

### **CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY, GARY HELGEMO**

Sunday School attendance is averaging 17 for pre-K through high school

- High school averages 6 (Laura and Jason Houser)
- Confirmation averages 3 (Pastor Dave)
- 4th -5th grade averages 4 (Gary and Risë Helgemo)
- K-3rd averages 4 (Liz Camparelli and Anna Marie Hill)
- Pre-K averages 1 (Gene Crawley and Lee Anne Burrow)

Because of the attendance in Pre-K, we consolidated that class into the K-3rd grade class. Gene and Lee Anne have become substitute teachers.

We currently have 7 teachers (2 in each class except confirmation, which only has Pastor Dave) and 5 active subs: Gene Crawly, Lee Anne Burrow, Susan Adda, Merri Everett and Rachel Carson.

Our major issue is that we need more students. To do that, we need office support to utilize the Realm program by ASC Technologies, which has not been updated in at least a year. We cannot retrieve the name of students and their ages/class from the program as we did in past years. Therefore, we do not know which families are attending Bethel but are not sending their child to Sunday school. If we had this information, we could directly contact the families, provide information about the Sunday school program and encourage them to bring their child to the appropriate class.

Some parents have discussed changing the Sunday school time to 8:45 to coincide with the church service. Here are the pros and cons:

Pros

- Parents would attend service and children would attend Sunday school at 8:45.
- Both would be occupied during this hour so that the family only spends one hour at church on Sunday morning

Cons

- Confirmation could not change to the 8:45 hour as Pastor Dave is the teacher and he needs to be at service during that time. That class would continue with the 10 am hour.
- High School teachers have expressed that they do not want to change their time so they would continue with the 10 am hour.
- Other teachers and subs have expressed that they will not teach at the 8:45 hour.
- There are at least 4 families that would have students in the 8:45 hour with pre-K through 5th grade, and also at the 10 am hour with confirmation/high school.
- The purpose of having an education hour was so parents could attend Bible studies while students attended Sunday school. Having 2 different times is confusing and is counterproductive.
- Children who attend an 8:45 Sunday school class may not be attending service and therefore would not learn about the Lutheran liturgy.

A children's church that runs during each service time also has been discussed.

Pros

- Parents would attend service and children would attend Children's church at either 8:45 or 11:11. Both children and parents would be attending separate services during this hour so that the family only spends one hour at church on Sunday morning.
- This children's service would include Sunday school lessons.

Cons

- Children would not be involved in the traditional liturgy.
- There would be no need for Sunday School at the 10 am education hour as the lesson is used during the children's service.
- There are concern whether teachers would be available since this occurs during service hours.

Upcoming events

Christmas Program - Susan Adda and Lee Anne Burrow are heading up the program. A different program suited to a small group will be used. A children's bell system will be used.

Easter Egg Hunt – We are looking for leaders. This could be a great way to invite more families to our church. Leaflets will be handed out in new neighborhoods. More to come.

VBS - While we value this program and want to continue it, there are some hurdles. If we continue to have only 8-10 children in pre-k through 5th grade, we may have to re-evaluate the program this year. We are looking into partnering with another group or church.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY, ROS DEMAREE**

To keep congregants better in touch with Council and make its actions more transparent, Holly Eldridge is making an announcement slide to show the weekend after each Council meeting with 3-4 highlights from the discussions and actions taken. The bullet points also are published in Bethel Happenings and posted on the members Facebook page.

Recruitment continues for greeters at all services.

#### **FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY, SARAH MANRO**

The Campout combined with the Ministry Fair and 4th Saturday service went pretty well. We were fortunate with fantastic weather. About 70 people attended the outdoor Saturday service including 20+ (maybe closer to 30) visitors for the baptism.

Not sure how well the Ministry Fair went over. It looked good with the tents and banner Mary Jo had made. But the wind was a problem as we couldn't set our displays upright. We moved the displays inside before the night was over, so the Ministry Fair was ready to go for Sunday morning.

We had a great dinner. Hamburgers were donated, and many people brought sides and desserts. The Moontown Pickle Stompers played live music for us on the farm property. About 30 people stayed for and enjoyed the music. I heard many positive comments about the music. There were a few people who came only for the music.

Not many people stayed for the campfire and s'mores and only 2 families camped overnight. My family had planned to camp but one of my kids got sick, so we decided it was best to go home for the night.

I also attended the 80s+ Luncheon. This falls under our Care Ministry but I took pictures and visited with our guests.

Next for Fellowship: we are helping with Trunk or Treat on October 29.

#### **MUSIC AND WORSHIP MINISTRY, LINC SCHNEIDER**

Received a new monitor for the singers who sing at the 11:11 service on stage. Piano mike can be heard much clearer now, too.

Still struggling to find a live alternative for Saturday instead of Linc each week. Other churches I spoke to at the NALC convocation also were struggling with attendance and finding musicians. Mike Musick is really having issues with health.

Organists for Sunday seem to be working out thanks to Trudy Kussow and her scheduling. We are narrowing options down to 2 or 3 for now. We continue to search for the position. God is providing.

The 11:11 service continues to click along. My biggest concern continues to be keeping and growing our families at Bethel. Saturday averaged 25-30 the last few weeks.

We are having scheduling meeting in another week for music/musician needs during the holidays.

#### **PROPERTY, JEFF REISING**

Received some quality help from Pastor Doug, Roger Kerry, Herb Buck, Gary Helgemo and Larry Gray to cut down two almost-dead trees from the front of the farmhouse. It already looks much better. Still have some debris to pick up this week. Finished power washing the garage and got most of the driveway done as well. Will be chipping away at the brick patio and the house itself as time and weather permit. We are nearly done with the east property line. too. Should have quite a pile to burn for Trunk or Treat. Investigating using one of the inherited bulk fuel tanks next year. Less taxes for off-road use could save some money.

Nelson should have a quote to us soon (John Patterson may already have it) for adding the Narthex door to the patio to our online control of the locks. We really need to do this.

Will be reaching out to the congregation for someone to take on the lead role for Hanging of the Greens. Hopeful someone will stand up for that.

Mowing is slowing down. Need to start looking at the inside of the building to do some painting during the winter.

#### **SMALL GROUPS, MARK HECKMAN**

Active Groups Include:

- Sausage and Scripture
- Circle of Sisters
- Women on Wednesday
- Monday Night Men's Group
- Sisters without Misters
- Creative Spirits

Groups continue to grow organically at Bethel. . .with a new group that has been gaining members and momentum called Garage Night. More details forthcoming from members of that group, who have a common interest in the maintenance and refurbishing of autos. Tom Hooper, Joe Rudy and Tom Foreman are among those who attend.

A second new group is called Above and Beyond, which is aimed at young adults out of high school and ready to grow in Christ together. This group is scheduled to have its initial meeting at 4 pm at the Bethel Shelter on October 23, 2022.

A group that remains in a bit of transition is Women's Health. Additionally, Rachel Carson is in the process of forming a Bible 365 Group, which would follow an approved online curriculum designed to read the entire Bible within a calendar year. More to come from Rachel on that.

Goals for Life Groups for 2022-23 remain focused on:

1. Establishing a periodic ministry presentation from each of these groups, which could manifest in a video or in person ministry moment during a worship service from a member of each group, providing a quick overview of the group's activities and offering invitations to new members.

2. Updating our website with interactivity that would enable online connection to each group for sign-ups and more information.
3. Re-thinking how we showcase these groups beyond the annual Ministry Fair. Early thinking is a video production that could be assembled and played on our website as well as during announcements.

#### **STEWARDSHIP, MARY JO MIKULSKI**

Here is the Plan for 2023 Stewardship Program. It will begin this weekend, October 22/23, and finish on the weekend of November 19/20. I still need testimony sentences for the booklet from some of you so please submit by Thursday.

October 20 /21- Mail Stewardship Campaign Letter to all members.

October 22/23 – Sermon titled “Being a Biblical Giver Using Your Treasure by Mary Jo Mikulski about Stewardship and Campaign letter and commitment card return.

October 29/30 Reformation Day and short reminder by Mary Jo Mikulski on returning Commitment Card, etc.

November 5/6 Talk by someone on returning and possible testimony Commitment Card.

November 13/14 Second Sunday – Eddie is preacher, ask him to include something on being a Biblical Giver.

November 19/20 – Sermon on Thankfulness by Mary Jo Mikulski as we turn in cards and pray and bless them and thank everyone for their gifts.

Each month of 2023 we have a 3- to 5-minute testimony talk or such.

#### **YOUTH MINISTRY, JIM HERR AND EDDIE BURKS**

Bethel Youth Ministry is on the move to become fully devoted disciples of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; we plan to do this through daily prayer, devotions and consistent fellowship with God and each other.

The youth are encouraged now more than ever to invite their friends and will be fully trained on how to share their faith with others. Bethel youth are also encouraged to serve and give back and will have opportunities to do so during the holiday months. In November we are planning to fellowship with the youth of St. John Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne for the Dare 2 Share conference. Dare 2 Share is a one-day livestream event to inspire teens and train them how to share their faith.

The focus for the youth ministry is Connections -- No. 1 Connecting to God, No. 2 Connecting to our Church and No. 3 Connecting to our community. Please continue to pray for the youth as well as our church family as we continue to grow together as ONE.