

**Bethel Lutheran Church Council**  
**Minutes, March 21, 2023**  
**Approved April 18, 2023**

**Attendees:** Randy Baskerville, Ros Demaree, Mark Heckman, Jim Herr, Pastor Dave Hill, Steve Horton, Sarah Manro, Steve Middleton, Jeff Reising, Linc Schneider, Harold Seamon. **Absent:** Gary Helgemo, Mary Jo Mikulski. **Staff:** Pastor Doug Gast, Eddie Burks

Mark Heckman called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. Pastor Dave read passages from Colossians 3 and led an opening prayer.

**Care Ministry**

Pastor Doug briefed the council on Bethel's Care Ministry, his new leadership role. He reminded all that care is not a one-person ministry, noting people have already started volunteering to be part of it and that he is open to flexibility in how to shape the job. He intends to raise the bar on caregiving, making it more a ministry of presence that includes ministering to the staff, easing worries and concerns we share as a church, and reaching members, shut-ins, those hospitalized, family and friends. He wants to offer a training session for care ministry volunteers. He urged the council to trust emergence: something will come up.

**Treasurer's Report**

February 2023 expenses were \$6,645 less than January 2023 and \$14,495 less than February 2022, largely attributable to a reduced salary, benefits and property expenses.

Harold Seamon advised that procedures for getting credit card charge information to the accountant need to improve so that complete financial information is available for the monthly treasurer's report and that some office training should be held in related credit card record-keeping.

Giving in February was \$10,160 less than giving in January 2023, which was a five-Sunday month, and \$17,451 less than giving in February 2022. The average giving in the first two months of this year was similar. While there are good ideas for the stewardship campaign, we need to get more people worshipping so we do not create giving fatigue.

Following a discussion of how to get those missing in attendance (MIAs) to return, it was agreed that Pastor Dave, Pastor Doug, Eddie Burks and Steve Middleton would review the MIA list and propose a plan of action at the April Council meeting.

**Bethel Spring Renewal Plan**

Mark Heckman challenged council members to use their ministries over the next couple months to host outdoor events that will excite and engage members and the public. When we make people feel good about Bethel, their gifts will grow.

Sarah would like to see a weekly discussion group form that centers on "The Chosen." Several people in the church who are avid fans of the series could be asked to lead the group. If the opportunity is promoted, the series' large following could bring new visitors into the building.

Jeff is working to get the last room of the farmhouse finished, as Marilyn's Place is eager to move in. There should be a grand opening that is well promoted in the community.

Small groups build big things. Send ideas for new groups to Mark.

Steve Horton wants dinner groups to return. Those proved to be successful ways to introduce and engage people from the other side of the aisle or a different service to meet and build kinship. Bibles and Bourbons could be one version. The dinners could build on the strong fellowship that's part of midweek Lent and Advent dinners.

Bethel is poised to see a large number of visitors in the coming months. We need to engage them and gear up on how to do this. Ros needs to schedule greeters.

Jim pointed out that until we find community, we will not find true growth. He suggests we look for what the community outside Bethel needs from us. What can we do to fundraise outside the congregation? As a first step, Jim will plant sweet corn that can be sold to the community-at-large. He is willing to till the ground for community gardens, too. Someone should look into the operations for the Bray Homestead community gardens for insight on how Bethel might start its own.

Eddie reminded everyone that the five functions of the church are worship, fellowship, evangelism, discipleship and outreach. If we work on fellowship -- being visible in the community -- then evangelism and outreach will follow.

Linc would like to support Sharon's strong desire to start a children's choir by working with/through LCS families, believing a sense of belonging creates accountability. Nothing fills a church like a bunch of preschoolers singing.

The 11:11 service may be our best base to create a younger vibe for families through incremental changes such as involving youth one service per month.

Easter gives us a day to introduce a Spring Renewal board that would be a visible menu of upcoming events.

Randy noted that he sees visitors looking in the pew racks for something to read before worship begins. They often read the missions booklet, which is fine, but making the Bethel info pamphlet available in the racks, not just in the visitor welcome packets, might be more productive. Harold will talk to Jane Nee about starting that this weekend.

It was moved, and Sarah Manro seconded, to give the first \$10,000 of proceeds from this year's rummage sale to outreach. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Preschool Update**

Work is moving forward to open the first floor of the Bethel Education wing to Legacy Christian School's preschool this fall. The agreement between Bethel and LCS is due back to us the week of March 21. Pastor Dave is working to solve concerns about the impact of this partnership on the office staff.

### **Office Structure/Transition**

The office transition is going well. A meeting with the staff will soon be held.

### **Nominating Committee**

As Vice President, Mary Jo Mikulski will lead the Nominating Committee. The status of each council member's term of service will be verified before nominees are sought.

### **Farmhouse Progress and Property**

The farmhouse needs a handicap-accessible ramp at the patio doors. Marilyn's Place is eager to get moved in and open the house as soon as possible. May 1 was the target date.

Jeff Reising has secured three quotes for the concrete work in front of the church -- \$5,900, \$8,300 and \$8,900. We have received \$2,400 in donations for this project, can use \$2,400 from the farmhouse garage rent revenue, and draw on the Building Fund for the remainder.

### **Missions**

Randy Baskerville reported that the Missions Committee will buy heavy-duty rakes, shovels and brooms to stock the Connersville warehouse.

### **Minutes**

Jim Herr moved, and Sarah Manro seconded, to approve the Feb. 21, 2023, minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

With the agenda business accomplished, Jim Herr shared a Max Lucado devotion, urging council members to Know the Heart of Christ.

Sarah moved, and it was seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed unanimously at 9:52 p.m.

### **Evote Following the Meeting**

In an April 1 email to the council, Jeff Reising moved, and Mark Heckman seconded, to allocate \$2,500 from the Building Fund to finish needed renovations in the farmhouse so Marilyn's Place can move in there by May 1. Needs include a handicap-accessible ramp, two new toilets, some additional paint and finishing touches. The Building Fund balance at the end of February was \$119,524. The motion passed, with 10 votes yes and 1 no response.

Respectively submitted  
Ros Demaree

## **MARCH 2023 MINISTRY REPORTS**

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

#### **Attendance:**

Our Sunday School classes for grades pre-K through high school are leveling at a total average of 18 students year to date. Below is a breakdown of each class. We are excited about the Legacy merger and feel that we can get some children and families into our church family.

- Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade averaged 6.1 students per week from January 8<sup>th</sup> through March 12<sup>th</sup>.
- 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade averaged 3.9 students per week from January 8<sup>th</sup> through March 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Confirmation averaged 3.6 students per week from January 8<sup>th</sup> through March 12<sup>th</sup>.
- High School averaged 4.5 students per week from January 8<sup>th</sup> through March 12<sup>th</sup>.

**First Communion Class:**

First Communion class is being offered this month to students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade and is being taught by Pastor Doug. Four students who are in the class will be ready to make their first communion on Maundy Thursday.

**Spring Break:**

We will not hold Sunday School classes on April 2<sup>nd</sup> due to spring break and April 9<sup>th</sup> which is Easter.

**Easter Egg Hunt:**

Our annual Easter Egg hunt will be on April 8<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 11:30am. The lead coordinators are Anna Marie Hill and Natosha Burks. There will be a bounce house for the children as well as the Easter Egg Hunt. We will serve hot dogs and chips. This is a great outreach event; we have fliers in the pre-school inviting children and their families and neighbors to the Easter Egg Hunt.

**Sunday School Recognition:**

Mark your calendars for May 21<sup>st</sup>, our last day of Sunday School before summer. We will recognize students and teachers during Sunday services. Students will receive a certificate for attending classes and teachers will receive a certificate of appreciation.

**COMMUNICATIONS MINISTRY, ROS DEMAREE**

Five people were asked to prayerfully consider succeeding Gay Hanson as FootPrints editor or co-editor. None felt they were called to do that, so the search continues. Gay plans to edit one more edition, creating a little more time to search for a replacement, and provide training. Some excellent work was done to upgrade Bethel's website. Material for the 2022 annual report continued to be requested.

**FELLOWSHIP MINISTRY, SARAH MANRO**

Midweek Lent dinners before the service are happening. Of the three so far, I've only been able to go to one and it was well attended. Sounds like the others have been as well.

After Easter I'd like to start a weekly group to view and discuss The Chosen. Not sure if this would be better as a Wednesday night or Sunday between services. I need a couple of people who have been watching the show to help lead discussions.

**MUSIC AND WORSHIP, LINC SCHNEIDER**

We continue to seek volunteers for AV and Saturday worship music. I am the only one at this point to lead the Saturday services. 8:45 and 11:11 are humming along with Sharon and the Praise Group.

The organ at some point will need repaired as we are on borrowed time. Working on the needed funding.

Anxious to see how we can work together with the Preschool and growth with their families. I believe there will be many opportunities forthcoming with participation in worship and other arts activities during the week.

**SMALL GROUPS, MARK HECKMAN**

Small Groups (Life Groups) continued to meet through the month of February. Active Groups as of February include Sausage and Scripture, Circle of Sisters, Women on Wednesday, Monday Night Men's Group, Sisters without Mistrs, Creative Spirits, and Garage Night.

With new group opportunities emerging as we approach Spring, Holly was outstanding in producing new graphics for each of the active groups and the Ministry Wall in the hallway towards the educational center has now been updated with current Life Group information and ability to sign up.

I will work with Holly (and perhaps Gay, based upon her availability) to use similar graphics and content. April and May will be a great time to encourage new groups to be formed. I will use my ministry moment time in the upcoming weeks to focus on some out-of-doors-oriented groups that may be inclined to start as the weather warms.

My goal remains connecting the group leaders of all the existing groups via a monthly email chat that will help to coordinate and share things between groups that are working especially well for individual groups.

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

Greetings my fellow Bethelites, I pray all is well; we wanted to give some updates on the youth ministry. I would first like to say that Bethel Youth are amazing, and I am truly blessed to be here to serve this group of young people. The youth here have endured some very difficult times and yet they persevere.

The youth band continues to practice and lead worship, the youth have been meeting for Trivia (Bible Study) on Thursday nights via Zoom. The youth have also been hosting events, that is allowing new people to visit our campus. Events such as the Bake-off competition, Marinara Party and Comedy Night to name a few.

Comedy Night was bigger than we expected: we had 105 people in attendance, and we raised over \$2,000, which we want to use for a Youth Retreat and Summer Camp. The youth will continue to host family friendly events to draw more people to Christ and our loving church; we will continue to look for opportunities to engage the curious. The youth ministry is in a rebuilding stage, and we will continue to fight until we have a thriving youth ministry that's impacting this generation for Jesus Christ.

In His Love, Eddie