

**Minutes of Bethel Lutheran Church Council  
August 16, 2011**

**Present:** Rae Carman, Dave Coe, Nate Czech, Christine Gessner, Craig Gjerde, Jan Helwig, Vern Leibbrandt, Ann Leon, Mike Thom, Cathie Trevallee, Manuel Vellon, Laura Vogel, Tim Semmann

**Staff representatives:** Peter Strommen, Alice Mowbray and Jamie Dubon

**Absent:** Ginny Hayes and Randall McLaury

- Ann Leon, Council President, called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m. and welcomed Pastor Jamie Dubon.
- **Devotion** – Cathie Trevallee

- **Secretary's Report** – Vern Leibbrandt, Secretary

*Dave Coe moved to approve minutes of the July 19, 2011 Church Council meeting and the August 2, 2011 Executive Committee meeting as corrected. Tim Semmann seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

- **Treasurer's Report** – Laura Vogel

- The number of pledges and amount pledged at the end of July was unchanged from June. Pledged income year to date (YTD) was \$1,031,688. Unpledged income YTD was \$144,715. Loose plate income was significantly greater than during the past four years.
- The end of July represents 58.3% of the budget year. Total YTD revenues and disbursements were 53.5% and 56.0% of the budget, respectively.
- Salary savings from an open associate pastor position and other personnel changes have meant that the Ministerial Program YTD expenses are less than the 58.3% budgeted amount. Salary savings are anticipated to continue through the end of the year.
- The month of July had a loss of \$85,000 and a YTD loss of \$62,000. Three pay periods in July and unanticipated real estate costs (unbudgeted maintenance and repair, increased costs for utilities and insurance premium) contributed to the loss.
- The 2011 budget contains a \$24,000 allocation in the "Miscellaneous" line for expenses associated with resurfacing of Carroll Street. Payment is due at project completion. Work on the project is behind schedule so the bill may arrive after the end of 2011. If Bethel isn't billed by the end of the year, the amount will accrue. Total project cost will be covered within the 2011 budget.
- A sheet summarizing costs for Pastor White's retirement gala was distributed. Costs exceeded ticket money collected by approximately \$30,000. At the July meeting, the Bethel Endowment Foundation agreed to cover 50% of the \$30,000. A restricted account was used to capture the event costs; BLC's share of the expenses (\$15,000) will be moved to the operating budget and will appear in the August financial report.

*Dave Coe moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Rae Carman seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

- **Interim Senior Pastor's Report** – Peter Strommen
  - Preaching and staff oversight have been primary focuses. Staff has had to flex to cover Care Ministries.
  - A Fall Bible study focuses on preparing the congregation for a new era. The format is like that used previously.
  - A Grief Group was not held during spring. Pastor Swanson and Norma-jean Strommen will offer a group this fall. Norma-jean has had experience working with those grieving loss of a loved one.
  - Divorced & Separated Group
    - A three-component program is envisioned. John Neupert will provide a session for individuals reacting to loss. Pastor Swanson will provide spiritual support to this group. Margaret Lambert will lead a course for divorced and separated individuals. The third component is a follow-up group. After a year the program can be evaluated and leadership needs determined at that time.
    - The Group benefits Bethel by demonstrating that the congregation cares about divorced people. Meaningful spiritual growth can occur in participants because of the pastoral support offered. Engaging people at a time of need not only can strengthen faith but foster personal growth.
    - Both John Neupert and Margaret Lambert are positive about the program and the support Bethel has provided.
  - Bethel remains strong as it is well prepared for fall programming: education, music, worship, preaching, youth programs and visitation. The Care Ministry has needs but the Grief Ministry is set for fall and lay leaders are stepping in to manage the food pantry. Despite a previous sense of uncertainty, a strong staff and the depth and breadth of lay leadership has lead to a sense of stability.
- **Interim Pastor for Latino Ministry** -- Jamie Dubon
  - Pastor Dubon thanked the Council for inviting him to the meeting.
  - Pr. Dubon has lead two worship services; attendance is acceptable. He will meet with approximately 25 Latino leaders that Pastor Suárez used to obtain input.
  - Fall ministries are being planned and will encourage unity between Spanish and English speaking members. Coordinating Latino youth programs with those for Anglos is a part of the effort.
- **Business Administrator's Report** – Alice Mowbray
  - Music secretary, Sharon Sumner and Alice have met three times with Chuck Sara, an attorney specializing in intellectual property law. There is continued concern about whether there are gaps in correct usage of copyright materials despite the great care Bethel takes to acknowledge usage. The conclusion has been drawn that Bethel is making a “good faith effort” regarding appropriate use of copyrighted materials. No problems have arisen so far and every effort is being made to use materials legally.
  - New flat panel monitors replace the old monitors used for *Today at Bethel* (the system that shows meeting locations and times). Music equipment storage cabinets will be sought for front of the sanctuary.

- Refurbishing of floors and relocating pews in the sanctuary will be finished on August 23. A \$60,000 Endowment Foundation grant funded the project. Modesty panels will go ahead of the pews on both sides of the aisle to complete the project.
- A new member class is planned for October 8; classes for English and Latino members will occur simultaneously.
- The “Ride the Drive” event will occur on Sunday, September 25 and could affect travel to Bethel.
- The Red Cross asked if Bethel could serve as a disaster shelter site. A consensus view was that Bethel could serve as a shelter during the day but not overnight.
- A summary of fundraising for the Bethel Horizons ArtVentures Retreat Center was distributed.
  - The fund drive goal is \$932,536 to complete Retreat Center Phase I. So far 107 donors have given or pledged \$204,649 most of which has been collected.
  - Fund drive mailings went to all members during late April. Postcards followed during June and July. Phone calls went to approximately 400 pre-interested supporters during late July.
  - Grant applications went to four foundations and two or three more are under consideration. Site visits by potential major donors continue.
- **Urban Site Committee Report** – Tim Semmann
  - The City of Madison has not yet established a meeting schedule for processing Bethel’s General Development Plan.
  - The buyer of the Steensland House is still considering details of the purchase agreement. The committee is waiting to hear from the buyer.
  - The Urban Site Committee is scheduled to meet again on August 19 and anticipates learning more information regarding status of the Steensland house project.
- **Committee Liaison Report** – Stewardship & Evangelism by Laura Vogel
  - Stewardship
    - Pastor Strommen will lead a fall stewardship campaign that will involve mailing letters to members, *Bethelite* articles and follow-up phone calls. Pledge commitment Sunday typically occurs during late October or early November. The 2012 budget will be prepared based on pledge commitments.
    - Simply Giving is an option when pledging. Members using this service can update their pledge via e-mail. The bank charges approximately \$50/month for processing Simply Giving offerings. Contributions given via Simply Giving have increased to approximately \$30,000/mo.
  - Evangelism
    - Pastor Sarah Harrold’s responsibility is outreach to Madison youth and young adults at the UW and downtown.
    - Student participation in Bridge the Gap, increased in 2011. Communication about the event improved. The Wisconsin State Journal and Channel 27 television covered the program. Bethel provided great support for Bridge the Gap.
    - A 20+30 steering committee meets monthly and provides vision, goal setting and event planning targeting people in their 20s and 30s. A new committee will take over next summer. The aim is for the group to be self-sustaining and provide ongoing support to Pr. Harrold.

- Social media is being utilized to reach young adults. Meetup.com helps people find events by others having a similar interest and has been used since June. Non-Bethel members are attending 20+30 events as a result.
- Pastor Harrold also began supervising the homeless ministry after Pr. Sutherland left.
- **President's Report** – Ann Leon
  - Ann read a letter from Luther Seminary thanking Bethel for providing tuition support for Lindsay Stolen and Andrew Twiton.
  - Call Committee update
    - Ann read note from Call Committee Chair, Al Schultz regarding interviewing of the next Sr. Pastor candidate.
    - An update on the call process will appear in an upcoming *Bethelite*. The article will explain procedure, the congregation's involvement and the time frame going forward.
  - Ann mentioned that Bethel needs a policy in the form of guidelines that makes Bethel a welcoming church and also a safe church. Plans are to form a study group that gathers facts and information through November. The new Senior Pastor will join the project when he arrives.
- **New Business**
  - Mike Thom distributed a letter from Arlen Christenson on behalf of the Homeless Ministry that summarized points Pastor Sutherland prepared to guide the Ministry. The letter is a precursor for forming a board to serve the Homeless Ministry.
    - The mission of the ministry is to:
      - Provide a safe and nurturing environment for men and women in Madison who are living without permanent housing.
      - Provide a place during the day where homeless individuals can gather and be treated with dignity, respect and can enter into caring relationships.
      - Support individual efforts to escape homelessness.
    - The letter also described areas of board responsibility, proposed terms and offered names of individuals for the initial board.
    - The Council raised a number of points while discussing the proposal and recommended several modifications.

*Dave Coe moved to accept the Homeless Board Proposal as modified. Jan Helwig seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

  - Mike Thom was asked to update the proposal to include the recommended modifications and to distribute the revised document with the meeting minutes.
  - The meeting concluded at 9:53 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Vern Leibbrandt  
Council Secretary