

**Minutes of Bethel Lutheran Church Council  
December 13, 2011**

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

**Absent:** Rae Carman

**Staff representatives:** Pastor Scot Sorensen and Alice Mowbray

- Ann Leon, Council President, opened the meeting with a prayer at 7:15 p.m.

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

*Craig Gjerde moved to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2011 Church Council and December 6, 2011 Executive Committee meetings. Dave Coe seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

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

- November is the last monthly financial report. The 2011 budget summary presented during the January 2012 Council meeting will show results totaled across all months including December.
- Income Financial Comparison
  - Budget information

The number of giving units (994) and pledges received has been updated and increased slightly from values in the October report. The process for tracking number of membership pledges has been revised so timely updates of pledge numbers can occur that accounts for new member class and other membership changes.
  - Pledged income

YTD pledged income for November is less than that for 2010 and 2009 but greater than during 2007 and 2008. However, when prepaid income is included the amount for 2011 is comparable to that of for the past four years.
  - Unpledged income

YTD unpledged income for 2011 is \$4,392 less than for 2010 but exceeds that for the years 2007-2009. The YTD unpledged income (\$232,652) is slightly less than the budgeted amount of \$373,000.
  - Loose plate income

YTD loose plate income exceeds that for the previous four years.
- Operating Budget Summary
  - The end of November is approximately 92% of the budget year, but actual revenue is only at 83% of budget and disbursements are about 87% of budget.
  - The November income statement showed a monthly income of \$15,555 and an YTD loss of \$105,634. During November 2010 monthly income was \$11,469 and a YTD

loss of approximately \$91,000. The YTD loss for 2011 approximates that for last year when the year ended with a balanced budget.

- Receipts of approximately \$300,000 are needed during December 2011 to breakeven for the year. During December 2010 receipts exceeded \$400,000. Experience from 2010 suggests that the 2011 budget will be met.
- Charges for reconstruction of Carroll Street will be included in expenses for 2011.
- Members are encouraged to meet their 2011 pledge commitments and submit pledges for 2012 if they have not already done so.

*Mike Thom moved to accept the Treasurer's Report. Ginny Hayes seconded the motion. The motion passed.*

- **Senior Pastor's Report** – Scot Sorensen

- Ann welcomed Pr. Scot Sorensen. Council members introduced themselves including giving a brief description of their family's Christmas traditions.
- Scot distributed a report that covered:
  - Initial priorities for the next three to six months:
    - Preaching and leading worship.
    - Meet with support and program staff to better understand their current duties, responsibilities and the current organizational structure.
    - Lead staff and the Council in community building exercises, Bible study, learning about missional church research and listening for God's presence. Starting in February, Council members will begin a chapter-a-month reading that focuses on church revitalization.
    - Prepare a Bible Study of the book of Romans for Lenten devotional.
    - Understand worship planning for the four English language worship services and defining core attributes of each.
    - Explore with the Urban Site Committee and the Council the hopes, passions, dreams and yearnings for the Bethel Idea; a process that may include Bible study and deep listening discernment.
    - Meet with groups at Bethel and make connections in the community.
  - Initial impressions: Bethel is well positioned to minister in the community and the wider world. It has a quality and dedicated staff and gifted, thoughtful and dedicated leaders.
- A process will begin in the near future to lay the groundwork for recruiting the next associate pastor.

- **Business Administrator's Report** – Alice Mowbray

- A total of 788 pledges representing \$1.66 million have been received so far for 2012. Of those who pledged during 2011, 252 have not pledged during 2012. This number is about the same as during the previous year.
- The Bethel Community Services board involving Jan Primus, Rachel Rodriguez, Pastor Jamie Dubon and Alice Mowbray recently met and plan to meet again in January.
- Baseline performance evaluations have been completed for 19 support staff.
- The staff held a “sendoff” for Pastor Strommen on Wednesday December 7.
- Approximately 160 people attended *Advent by Candlelight* on December 7 with Pr. Sorensen as the featured speaker.
- The Media Board met with Pr. Scot and is planning new openings and promos for *Worship at Bethel*. As of January 2012, Bethel will cease broadcasting Sunday worship services in the Dubuque area because of insufficient viewer response.
- The Bethel Endowment Foundation's Investment Committee met recently where Pr. Scot was introduced to the group.
- Alice has met with Laura Vogel, Pr. Scot and Ann Leon to review the 2012 budget. The budget for next year will be presented for approval during January Executive Committee and Council meetings.

- **Urban Site Committee Report** – Tim Semmann

The party who has an interest in the Steensland House is still in play. An update will be provided at the next Council meeting.

- **Committee Liaison Report** – Counseling & Care ministry; Ushers & Hospitality  
by Randy McLaury

- Hospitality
  - Annette Durkin, Director of Communication, has utilized a common design for signage and nametags to provide a unified appearance.
  - Utilizing Bethel's parking lot on Sundays primarily for guests and individuals with mobility issues is being promoted.
  - Moving coordination of Sunday service teams under the Hospitality area has aided communication.
  - An aim is to learn from other large churches how they handle hospitality and service support. Bringing additional service teams under the umbrella of “hospitality” is also an aim. The seeking of additional participants is desirable so fewer individuals have to perform multiple tasks.
  - The “Safe Church—Welcoming Church” taskforce will work with hospitality and service teams to provide a safe but welcoming environment.

- Counseling & Care Ministry
  - The Separated & Divorced group has been reorganized and is lead by John Neupert and Margaret Lambert.
  - Pastor Swanson and Normajeane Strommen lead a Grief Group during fall with approximately 15 participants.
  - The Stephen Ministry is doing fine and remains status quo awaiting a new lead pastor for Care Ministries.
- Homeless Ministry
  - The Ministry aims to build self-worth, dignity and a sense of belonging.
  - The Ministry involves a book club (meets weekly), a spiritual support group (meets weekly) and a support services office (operates 3 d/wk).
  - A recently formed Homeless Ministry Board makes decisions regarding the Ministry, monitors finances and works to strengthen communication within the congregation. The board is also pondering the Ministry's future direction and its focus.
- **President's Report** – Ann Leon
  - Ann welcomed Barb Armstrong of the Bethel Endowment Foundation who was present to observe a new process for prioritizing funding requests to the Foundation for 2012.
  - Ann thanked council members and staff for helping with the reception on December 4<sup>th</sup>.
  - Ann read a note from Bishop Bruce Burnside expressing appreciation for Bethel's support at the time of the passing of his wife Cynthia. Bishop Burnside thanked the Council for its donation to the Dar al Kalima Lutheran School, a ministry of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem.
- **New Business**
  - Council members prioritized funding proposals to the Bethel Endowment Foundation utilizing a new method. Members were asked to study all proposals before the meeting. Titles of all proposals were posted. Each member was asked to place dots of one color identifying the ten top priority proposals and another color the five lowest priority requests. Items receiving low or mixed priority designations were noted and discussed. Council members had an opportunity to question and debate the merits of proposals as needed. The process ended with each member identifying by ballot their top ten and bottom five priority proposals. Top priority proposals receive a value of 3 points, a low priority items a value of 1 point and all others a value of 2 points. Staff will use this system to calculate the total number of points that a proposal received and thereby the final ranking.
  - Grant proposal evaluation began at 8:20 p.m. and was finished at 9:17 p.m.
- The meeting concluded at 9:20 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

*Vern Leibbrandt*  
Council Secretary