

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes
December 17, 2009
APPROVED

Present: Pastor Rich, Jane H., Val B., Tim W., Roger K., Julie G., Bill N., Michelle A., Chuck B.

New member: Alex A.

Absent: Pastor Karen, Maggie D., Jody M., Jordan S., (Jean G.)

After a sumptuous feast of appetizers and socializing, the meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by President, Tim W.

Devotions

Pastor Rich opened by asking, "What is your most cherished Christmas belief?" Many council members shared theirs.

New Member

The council welcomed its newest member, Alex A., who will be representing the church's youth.

Approval of November Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Roger K. to approve the November meeting minutes. Second by Chuck B. Passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

November's print out was presented by Chuck B. He sees good trending of revenue and net income is up.

Jane H. explained to the council that E-Comm decided not to send an end-of-the-year letter to the congregation; they have, instead, decided to send one in January after the next E-Comm meeting.

Tim W. asked about the difference in budgeted vs. actual Pony Preschool rent. Chuck B. explained that the contract between PP and the church states that PP pays a fixed amount for rent and utilities; however, every three months, Hope presents PP with their actual utilities expense so that they can 'true up' and pay the difference owed.

Communications Coordinator's Report

In Jean G.'s absence, Chuck B. talked about the highlights: the main one is that BLC has joined the Stillwater Area Chamber of Commerce at a negotiated amount of \$135. Chuck B. is an ambassador there and Jean G. is the church's representative. Jane H. asked if anyone can attend regular chamber meetings and Chuck B. explained that yes, anyone can go. Pastor Rich stated that he is getting weekly emails from the chamber. He has asked that Jane H. be added to the email list.

Chuck B. explained that there is a Visitor's Guide that the chamber publishes and asked if BLC should advertise in it? Val B. asked what the distribution of that guide is currently and the council thought that if it went to new residents, it would be a good investment. Tim W. will check with Jean G. on getting this question answered and how to proceed.

Action Team Update

Pastor Rich reported that Jody M. would like to join the Worship & Music Action Team.

Val B. reported that her action team will be offering bowling starting in January. Any other ideas for social activities, please contact her.

Julie G. is interested in the Missions Action Team. She will report back on her decision at the next meeting.

Roger K. questioned the need for an Administration Committee as part of the Action Teams. Since there is now paid and volunteer staff to cover these areas the council may need to rethink this committee's existence at the Council Retreat.

Associate Pastor's Report

In Pastor Karen's absence, the council talked about an action item on her report regarding the little metal chairs in the furnace room. It had been brought to her attention that there is no longer a need nor space for them. Roger K. suggested that BLC sell them in the same manner with the same procedure as the larger chairs. Also, if they are unsellable, talk to Dennis Trendera about selling them for scrap.

Senior Pastor's Report

Council Retreat scheduled for January 10th from 11:30 to 3:30. - Pastor Rich stated that he sees items to be covered then:
Team-Building with Susan N. who is a life-coach from our congregation
Mission & Stewardship with Kristi M.
Action Team assignments finalized
Staffing Task Force – giving this group direction for the future

The council decided that it would provide its own food. Val. B. will bring 2 soups; Michelle A. will bring a cake. Jane H. will send email (done on 12/24) to all asking to sign up for bringing bread, cheeses, meats, chips. (BLC has leftover water from Pig Roast that could be used.)

Policy on Same-Sex Blessing

After much discussion, Bill N. asked that the council be educated first so that its members could help to educate the congregation about the biblical passages, the ELCA wording, etc. This could be done by October when the council could ask for a vote by the congregation at the Annual Meeting.

Pastor Rich suggested 'listening posts' where members of the council could informally listen to others' opinions during coffee time. This could help the council get a feel for the congregation's wishes on this subject. More will be discussed at the Council Retreat.

Sabbatical Request

Pastor Rich is asking the council to approve a 3-month sabbatical beginning in Sept 2010. A suggestion was made that perhaps the Staffing Task Force should consider this, as this will affect the current configuration of the staff. Roger K. stated that "we need a plan" to implement this idea. Pastor Rich stated that he would need an affirmative council vote by April in order to make the transition go smoothly.

Community Meal

Pastor Rich talked about establishing a Community Meal here at BLC and combining it with our second Saturday night service. He asked for council members to volunteer for a Steering Committee to get this idea rolling. Jane H. volunteered and Jody M. had expressed interest during the last meeting. The first step is for those interested to volunteer to help at an existing Community Meal. The next one is at Ascension on January 31st. Jane H. volunteered to go.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 8:45 pm by Bill N. Michelle A. seconded.

Next meeting: January 10th at 11:30 in the Forum Room. Please RSVP.

Respectfully submitted by Jane H., Church Council Secretary