

Bethesda Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

Date: May 18, 2016

Present: Pastor Cheryl, JoAnn Gustafson, Sue Frank, Jon Kolb, Sue Coady, Stacy Colich,
Duane Soukkala, Jen Kuras

Absent: Theresa Vermeersch, Jason Goad

Visitors: Mitch Haber - Thrivent, Debby Johnson, Sharon Bragge, Colleen Bernu, Alice Kloepfer, Linda Newlon

Meeting was called to order at 5:30 by Sue Frank

Devotions & opening prayer by Pastor Cheryl

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Jen MSC Jon

Mitch Haber from Thrivent was at the meeting to discuss what options we have for resources. He discussed the actions and how they work. Action teams now receive t-shirts, 250 visa cards which is seed money. This money can be used to help support activities within Bethesda and in the community. We need to make sure all members at Bethesda know about the money and utilize it. Should you use the money from Thrivent, all they ask is you send them something to show what you used the money for i.e., pictures, letters, etc. Also, an action team can use the money to sponsor an event, help pay for expenses and a variety of other uses. Thrivent is a non-profit organization so they do not have to pay federal taxes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Property – Duane called an organ company regarding the pipes. He has not heard back from them. Dave/Duane will sit down to discuss the electrical issues and get them resolved.

Worship – Jen Kuras appreciates everything they are doing as it is flowing very nicely.

APRIL MEETING NOTES - WORSHIP

I. Feedback & Review:

Worship services first communion; let parents know about seating, when to go up; practice with cup so they know to drink and to keep the cup. Easter: Probably best to use traditional setting and use familiar music. Record music if regular accompanist won't be playing.

On intinction Sunday print in bulletin the instructions for gluten-free. Try white grape juice to decrease confusion about which is wine and is which grape juice. Linda will notify Pat about grape juice and also trying different gluten-free crackers. Confirmation should be 2 weeks after to give the Pastor a break and not on Synod Assembly week-end.

Attendance – Mar 13 (69), Mar 20 (103), Mar 27-Easter (176) – March avg. 110

II. Worship Spaces & Liturgical Decor for the Season:

Joel and Linda will check on the decorations that we have for Pentecost. Will also trying to get something for the north entrance.

III. Seasonal Planning:

A. Services

May 1st - New Wine, Pastor at Synod

May 15 Pentecost - The children's sermon will be done by Pastor Cheryl's husband Paul using the paper airplanes that we made at an intergenerational Sunday. Narrative Lectionary was discussed.

Carlton days polka service Linda has left a message with Loren's niece Shirley and is waiting for a reply as to whether or not Loren will be able to play.

Park Services - Lynn will assign committees to each Sunday in August. Worship committee will be able take August 7 and that will also be the time for the entire congregation. This service will be at Oldenburg point. Joel will see if River of Grace will be able to play on Aug. 7th. The rest of the services will be at the first shelter. Lynn will check with the naturalist at the park to schedule the services.

B. Nursing Home / Assisted Living Services – Pastor will do Sunnyside and Interfaith care center on the first Tuesday of the month. The visitation team will do service at IFCC at 2:00 PM and Pine View at 3:00 PM the first Sunday of each month.

C. Worship Music planning

Cathy Dale subbing on April 24, July 24th, Aug. 14 & 21

Liz possibly gone on July 3rd

D. Planning Ahead

During hot weather it was decided that the clergy does not need to wear a robe during worship service.

E. Other

-Urn Pall - Lynn has some material and is ordering the rest of the material that she needs

-Altar Guild JD - Lynn presented the finished look, a copy will be in pastor's office and Jeanette will put the information in the master book for the church.

-Projector - Joel is waiting for an estimate from Steve. Sue is looking for a laptop that can be used with the free software that was found when researching information about what can be used for church and Sunday school.

Discussed suggestion of putting a physical calendar up in the fellowship hall. There will be a problem keeping it up to date as a number of activities and times of meetings get changed due to conflicts in schedules. Will try to keep the calendar on the website up-to-date

IV. Thank You notes to:

The Bethesda North entrance sign is now up and we would like to thank the worker(s).

Thank you to everyone who worked on getting the job description for the altar Guild completed April 29 I talked with Joel today and found out that Lynn will check on Park service so I corrected that. Let me know if other corrections are needed

Linda

WORSHIP MAY MEETING NOTES

I. Feedback & Review:

Worship services - positive comments re: songs being projected, will be using for all services in the future, discussed maybe having a monitor by the entrance door for the Pastor and others assisting in the service to view.

Attendance: Apr 3-confirmation (139), Apr 10 (72), Apr 17 (70), Apr 24 (71) Avg. for April (90)
May 2 (78) Synod Assembly - New Wine did part of service, May 8 (88)

II. Worship Spaces & Liturgical Decor for the Season: for the "green" of the church year maybe add leaves to the cross to signify growth. Joel will see if there is construction paper in the Sunday School supplies

Services:

May 15 - Pentecost Joel put up red material, Paper airplanes are ready.

May 22 Graduates - Quilt Sunday. Colleen will check to see if CYFM will pay for coffee treat.

Narrative Lectionary discussion - some preliminary results from survey about 70% would like an additional service, possibly on Wed or Sat. Colleen B. gave us written info about possible changes for Sunday School. This will be given to council. It involves using some of the info that

goes with the NL.

July 31 Carlton Daze - Loren Lindevig is planning on playing and his niece Shirley will help him. Park Service and Outdoor Worship on Aug 7th

Lynn will be checking on using Carlton City park for Aug 7th and maybe having a walk on the trail and encouraging families to have a picnic. May have the other parks services there also depending on what Lynn finds out about Jay Cooke.

Nursing Home / Assisted Living Services - started on May 1st went well.

Worship Music planning:

Cathy Dale subbing on April 24, July 24th, Aug. 14 & 21

Liz possibly gone on July 3rd

Planning Ahead: Leading worship for GHB Sunday now being done by Joel and Sue. Will need to get some more help.

Other: It has been suggested that we have some type of transportation fund to help non-drivers get to church. Lynn will bring this suggestion to Evangelism

Urn Pall - special material was very expensive so it was decided that a different material can be used.

Projector/sound In what rooms? Mike has been here and will give us an estimate soon.

Pastor's Sundays off June 19th. Linda will call for pulpit supply and June 26th will have lay person lead. Will do a video for the message. Pastor will find one that is appropriate. Gideons will not be coming to our church this year due to their policy of having only professional men as members, they are anti-Roman Catholic, and anti-LGBT.

CYFM – Colleen Bernu talked to Council regarding Sunday School and where we need to go. Asked if Council should be present for conversations regarding faith formation programs/modeling. Pastor Cheryl shared that their presence may present an image that Council is running CYFM and they are not confident in the committee.

The following facts were discussed:

- About 60% of the population work shift work – non-traditional schedules per Cloquet Workforce
- About One-half of our families dealing with at least one custodial order
- Sunday school down about 50% in enrollment from last year – down 40% weekly attendance overall. We've had 3 new families enroll this year with consistent attendance which account for the difference. Attendance is sporadic. For example, one grade has 7 kids enrolled but they do not attend at the same time – average 1-2 students every week. This class has had the fewest changes made to it. Same curriculum, same teachers, more classroom time and fewer Intergenerational events.
- It's been brought to our attention that 4-5 families left when Mike left – average 3 kids per family – we lost between 12-15 kids and time changed affected 3-4 additional families – we lost between 9-12 additional kids
- Pre-school class lost 70% of their kids
- One preschool family shared that the majority of them left to attend another local church which released the kids during service for Sunday School
- These #s account for over 50% of enrollment decrease. More families may have left for these same reasons or for reasons in which we are not aware. TTF surveys were reviewed with Pastor Cheryl to see if any further insight could be obtained. There wasn't any.
- Teachers could not be there every week and we had a lack of subs so we added intergenerational and mission Sundays. Discussed whether traditional Sunday School models were sustainable or not.

- Confirmation class for 2017 is anticipated to have 4 youth, 2016 had 6.

Parent/Teacher/Youth Feedback:

- Less sitting
- Project based
- Conversational
- Let kids role play (drama)
- Combine grades for older kids
- Move Sunday School to midweek time
- If on Sunday, release after children's sermon
- Decrease class time
- Focus on gospel discussion (topic)
- Extend message from children's sermon
- Less class time and more community work – mission time
- More community outreach
- Another day in addition to Sunday worship
- Antiquated program
- Teachers available on average 2 Sundays a month. Even with only 2 classroom Sundays, subs were kept busy.

Sunday School Brainstorming/Program/Model Ideas:

Note: the items listed below were obtained from submissions made by parents, teachers and youth.

Pre-K through 1st grade/2nd grade until after Christmas – children attend age appropriate class time in the basement for the first half of Sunday worship. Children who are younger than Pre-K would be welcome as long a parent/grandparent/etc. joins them. This would replace traditional nursery program.

Move children's time to after the sermon. Have the kids go down stairs before the service begins doing lessons, projects and singing then come up stairs for the children's time, then go to their parents (seat) while singing the hymn of the day. Second half of worship is a time of lots of movement: sharing of the peace, offertory, communion and benediction/sending song. Allows for more participation verses the first half which is more observation and reflection. Questioned need for crying room with a system like this. Would need sound system/speaker available down stairs. Need for fewer teachers. Less classroom time. More parent involvement. More sustainable program.

2nd grade and up: Midweek cross+gen faith formation (growth of faith with people who are not your own age) that include a basic or light meal for families who have come directly from work or school activity, family learning time and a midweek service with children's and a youth-based type sermons. Service would be free flowing with things like ushering/communion assistants/acolyting/greeters handled by those who attend (no scheduling would be expected). Confirmation program would include participation in planning of this service with pastoral guidance. Requires few or no teachers. Allows custodial parents who have their children during the week and not on weekends the opportunity to worship as a family. Provides opportunity for faith formation within biological and faith families. Less classroom time. Less sitting. More youth involvement. More sustainable program.

Continue to have special classes for 1st communion, confirmation etc. Add more as needed or as interest is expressed. Discussed hosting day retreats for families on topics such as worship, baptism, prayer, catechism.

Requested we be added to Council's May meeting agenda in order to inform council of our recommendations and answer questions that may result.

We had the following question/comments from a council member:

Clarification on age for pre-k.

They also wanted clarification on the layout, planning, manpower, target audience, etc. of the new Faith Formation vision.

This member pointed out that what we are doing aligns with challenges presented at Synod assembly to help with congregational growth and assessment of why we do what we do (tradition verses meeting needs)

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence – Received receipt from Wrenshall School and Community News for our sponsorship of \$75.00. Also received a letter from the Carlton School District stating they were issuing a refund of the wages for the Food Service employee that should have been present during the meatball supper but was not. They did advise on future use of the kitchen, we must have a Food Service employee present.

Approval of April 14th meeting minutes – approved by Duane MSC Jen.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Sue Coady discussed the Treasurer's report for April, 2016. Motion made by Jon MSC Jen.

PASTOR'S REPORT

(1) Pastoral Acts and Responsibilities

May 14th officiated funeral. Met with Executive, CYFM, visitation team and worship committee. During the weekend of April 29th – May 1st, Pastor Cheryl attended Synod Assembly with Jon Kolb and Jen Kuras. Jen/Jon will discuss the Synod Assembly at the next council meeting. Pastor Cheryl had a request from the Gideons to make a presentation at Bethesda. She denied the request for the following reasons: Gideon policy is anti-Roman Catholic and LGBT. In addition, only professional men can be in leadership, by which they exclude both women and tradesman. They also accept only the KJV or the NKJV of the Bible.

We have 3 families that have requested to be removed from the membership list.

(2) Contract Tasks

a. Constitution – Sue Frank, Jon Kolb and Pastor Cheryl have completed the proposed revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws, which will bring them put today with the ELCA's 2013 Model Constitution. Once the Council has approved these revisions, they must be presented to the congregation for their vote of approval. This may be done either a special congregation meeting, or at your next annual meeting. Keep in mind that Constitution changes require two congregation meetings: one to approve, the second to ratify. We have completed a draft of Bethesda's policy on Fundraising to be reviewed and approved by Council.

b. Visitation Team – Team members are visiting and reporting at our monthly meeting. Bethesda's pastor is now on the schedule for leading worship at Interfaith and Sunnyside on Tuesday's. The

Visitation Team is now scheduled to lead worship on the first Sunday of the month at Pine View and Interfaith.

(3) Interim Pastor – we are in phase 2 – Transition Task. The task force has now closed off the online survey. On April 26th they were trained to lead small group gatherings and one-on-one conversations; however, no one has signed up or called to date. If this trend continues and we do not have any interest in cottage meetings, the TTF will meet to begin analyzing the survey data before writing their report and recommendations.

(4) Other – Pastor Cheryl will be on vacation June 13-19 and she will be gone on continuing education from June 20-26. Linda Newlon will schedule an ordained clergy for pulpit fill on June 19th and Worship Committee will plan and lead worship on June 26th. Pastor Cheryl also read a letter from Colleen Bernu talking about her mission in life. Colleen is pursuing the role of Associate in Ministry. Please continue to keep Colleen in your prayers during this process.

Pastor Cheryl would like to plan a new member class for some time in the near future for visiting members who have asked about membership. This will be coordinated through the WEST committee.

OLD BUSINESS:

AED update – The company no longer sells the batter packs and adult pads. Battery is good for 5 years and sells for 187.00. Sue Coady and Jon checked out our battery and it is still good. We would need to purchase adult pads and child pads. Sue Frank will talk to Larry Beckstrom. A motion was made by Jen to talk to Memorial to make a donation for the AED seconded by Stacy – motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Synod Assembly Update by Jen and Jon – Theme Living Forgiveness

137 church's make-up the NE MN Synod

130 called pastors

110 retired pastors living in our area

8 Associate pastors

- 5 called

- 3 retired

Of the current called pastors, 52 are female

World Hunger funds raised at the Synod Assembly:

Quarters: \$8,300

Silent auction: \$3,100

Quilts: \$10,352

TOTAL \$21,752

Holy Cow Award – Gloria Dei for the most dollars raised/congregant

Financial Health of the Synod:

Met 97% of mission support projected

Ended year in black with \$6,656 remaining

All budgets came in below projected

Bishops Report:

Focus Worry or Wonder?

What is your sphere of control and how will you choose to handle?

Worrying is depleting and consists of thoughts and questions like:

- Will my children have faith?
- They're changing everything – where are our regulars?

To Wonder: I wonder what God is up to in this world? I wonder how the Spirit will work through me and my congregation?

- The body of Christ as earth as we follow Jesus into the future?

Bishops charge to each congregation:

- Mission Plan
- Re-root in the community
- Re-tool leaders
- Re-invest our resources into the community

Youth Ministry:

WHY do we do faith formation? Is nostalgia poisoning the church and there by zero reaching the needs of our youth

Before we can make faith stock with our youth, we need to be clear about WHY our youth are incredibly involved

- Are we clear on what they need
- Do we know what resonates with them

Keynote – Dr. Rev. Anna Madsen:

Living Forgiveness

- Repentance
- Unconditional grace

Thank you Jen and Jon for attending on behalf of Bethesda and for sharing the information.

We had a member of Bethesda express their concerns regarding communication between the Council and church members. We also had some discussion about fundraising.

Fundraising policy tabled until the next meeting.

Constitution tabled until the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING: June 9, 2016 at 5:30 – Executive meeting will be on Tuesday, May 31, 2106 at 5:00 PM

NEXT DEVOTION, PRAYER AND TREATS: Jason Goad

ADJOURNMENT: Motion to adjourn by Pastor Cheryl MSC Jen

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM

Respectively submitted,

JoAnn Gustafson
Secretary

