

**Bethany Lutheran Church**  
**Annual Meeting Minutes**  
**July 16, 2023**

**Present:** President-Jane Nelson, Treasurer-Ron Fischer, Secretary-Patty Fess, Trustees-Su Marotz, Randy Nelson, Barb Olson and Jim Schwengel

**Clergy:** Rev. Janel Kuester

**Past President:** Mike McCoy

**Music Director:** Lori Free

**Members:** Dick Christensen, Debbie Fischer, Nancy Jordon, Ron Litterst, Jim Marotz, Marge McCoy, Duska Pearson, Scott Pearson, Becky Roehl, Marc Roehl, Camilla Ross, Carol Stoelting, Paul Stoelting, Gail Szczepanski, Max Szczepanski and Holly Thomas

**Visitors:** Darlene Jondahl, Thor Jondahl, Beryl Kuester and Ray Kuester

**Meeting called to order by President Jane Nelson at 10:45 AM.** Rev. Janel Kuester opened with prayer.

**Amend the Agenda**

Item number 8 on the agenda, "Create a planning committee for a possible auxiliary building" was amended to, "Organize a meeting to explore the interest in a possible auxiliary building".

**Secretary Report**

Secretary-Patty Fess presented the Annual Meeting Minutes dated July 17, 2022. Ron Fischer moved to approve the minutes, Barb Olson seconded. The minutes were approved as presented.

**Treasurer Report**

Treasurer-Ron Fischer presented the financials for Bethany as of June 30th, 2023.

Bethany's total assets are \$476,114 with \$313,528 in the Endowment Fund and the remainder \$162,586 in checking, savings, money market and CD.

Our net income this year is \$21, 572 and our total expenses are \$18,353.

The general contributions for the year are \$23,570.

Total expenditures for the Boldt gift are \$115,313. The expenditures for the Boldt gift were itemized in the report and highlighted by Ron.

Bethany's benevolences for 2022 were \$11-12,000.

Dick Christensen asked about the 20% loss for the Endowment Fund in 2022.

Ron Litterst asked if there were any other types of investments Bethany could be in within the place we are invested.

Ron highlighted Bethany's diversification in various types of investments to get greater interest.

Mike McCoy moved to accept the Treasurer Report. Randy Nelson seconded and the motion passed.

**Presidents Report**

Jane reflected that Bethany has been an all volunteer church since 1966. She said it is an honor to work with people who love Bethany and are so dedicated. She thanked the following people.

Nancy Jordan-acts as our book keeper, retrieves the mail, distributes the bulletins and make creative and beautiful cards for Christmas and to give to visitors and members.

Mike McCoy-schedules and communicates with our visiting pastors.

Patty Fess-as secretary records the minutes and writes a member and friends email weekly to inform the congregation.

Barb Olson-dresses the altar, creates bouquets of flowers for the altar each Sunday, provides coffee for coffee fellowship and is our resident expert on Bethany history.

Ron Fischer-is our Treasurer and go between for the accountant. He also keeps track of all the tasks and responsibilities and the assignment.

Deb Fischer-creates the weekly bulletins and gets them to the printer.

Joann Kilgus-led the refurbishment of the parsonage.

Lori Free-took on the responsibility of the Music Director in addition to playing the organ every Sunday. She provides special music and occasionally comes out from behind the instruments to educate the congregation.

Randy Nelson-is in charge of the property and grounds for the three historic properties. There is always something in need of maintenance and repair. Since the last annual meeting Randy has contracted for a patio at the parsonage, a wider driveway at the cemetery and rebuilding of the stone wall in front of the church.

Visiting Pastors-come from near and far to lead us in inspiring worship.

There are many more who support the church by provide baked goods for coffee fellowship, usher, read and help to start the Livestream. Without everyone's prayers and offerings Bethany would not exist.

### **Membership Report**

Number of members-120

Number of addresses on Bethany Email-107

Sadly, five members have died since the last Annual Meeting. They are James S. Reeve, James P. Jordon, Suzanne L. Christensen, David R. Olson and Dr. Allen F. Schneider.

Received one new member through baptism-Allison Shirley Ross

### **Election of Trustees and Officers**

Patty Fess presented the slate.

President-Jane Nelson

Treasurer-Ron Fischer

Secretary-Su Marotz

Trustees-Patty Fess, Randy Nelson, Barb Olson, Jim Schwengel and Karen Stout

Ron moved to accept the slate by acclamation, Randy seconded. The slate was elected.

Jane thanked outgoing council trustee, Joann Kilgus for her 9 years of service to Bethany. She served four years as President and five years as a trustee. She organized a 135th year anniversary celebration and guided us through the refurbishment of the parsonage. We are presenting her with a Ukrainian candle along with a card from the council.

### **Building and Grounds**

Randy presented this report. Here are the accomplishments since the last annual meeting.

1. Lilacs removed between the schoolhouse and the church.
2. Contracted with Mike Chaliss to rebuild the stone wall with footings, project should begin soon.
3. Flagstone patio constructed at the parsonage.

Planned projects

1. Bead board ceiling for the parsonage porch.
2. Three loads of gravel spread to widen the driveway at the cemetery.

### **Cleaning of Headstones at Bethany Cemetery**

Jane attended a workshop put on by the Gibraltar Historical Society on how to clean headstones. Jane will purchase the simple necessary equipment and organize a workday in the fall to clean some headstones at the cemetery. There may be another workday in the spring to clean up after winter, weed and raise the stone markers that differentiate the blocks of plots.

### **Organizing a Meeting to Explore the Interest in a Possible Auxiliary Building**

Jane presented this report. This is the history of what has been done so far to explore the possibility of an auxiliary building. The council toured the auxiliary building built at the Church of the Atonement in Fish Creek. Keller did some planning for the sight of a building free of charge to Bethany. Christina Mooney, granddaughter of Rev. Hoover Grimsby donated her time as an architect to present concept plans and renderings of possibilities for an auxiliary building. Three of her visions have been enlarged and are on display in the Narthex. Jane thanked Christina for this work.

To date no Bethany money has been spent on this exploration for the auxiliary building. Jane presented a sign up sheet for those who would want to attend a meeting to explore further interest in a possible auxiliary building. She added that the building is too large a project for the

council to take on and there would need to be members of the congregation for any planning to go forward.

Mike McCoy wanted to go on record as not supporting this project. He requested a decision be made right now on whether to proceed or not.

A vigorous discussion ensued.

Ron Litterst moved to organize a meeting to explore the interest in a possible auxiliary building.

Randy seconded and the motion passed with a vote of hands, 15 for and 6 against.

Ron Fischer added that the council has not taken a position for or against the auxiliary building at this time.

### **Member Announcement**

Dick Christensen came forward to present the congregation with a bequest from his former wife Sue Christensen.

Patty Fess accepted the generous gift on behalf of the Bethany council and congregation.

Patty reminded the congregation of Sue's willingness to volunteer at Bethany for whatever needed to be done. Sue was a quiet person and a faithful worshipper at Bethany. Because of the kindness and thoughtfulness of Sue and Dick Bethany was gifted \$500,000 to be added to the Bethany Heritage Endowment Fund.

### **Adjournment**

As there was no further business Duska Pearson moved to adjourn. Becky Roehl seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Patty Fess, council secretary