

Bethany Lutheran Church
Annual Meeting Minutes
July 14, 2024

Present: President-Jane Nelson, Treasurer: Ron Fischer, Secretary: Karen Stout, Trustees: Patty Fess, Randy Nelson, Barbara Olson, Nancy Steinke.

Past Presidents: Joann Kilgus, Brian Blazer

Music Director: Lori Free

Members: Dick Christensen, Debbie Fischer, Heidi Free, Kevin Free, Lori Free, Nancy Jordan, Wally Kilgus, Jim Marotz, Duska Pearson, Elinor Pearson, Camilla Ross, Carol Stoelting, Paul Stoelting, Chris Stout, Holly Thomas, Luca Thomas

Visitors: Skyler Champeau, Marsella Fults, Tim Fults

Meeting called to order by President Jane Nelson at 10:47 with prayer. Jim Marotz asked us to pray for a dampening of differences in our nation as well as in the present moment and place.

Secretary's Report: Secretary Karen Stout presented the Annual Meeting Minutes dated July 16, 2023. Wally Kilgus made a motion to approve the minutes, Carol Stoelting seconded. The minutes were approved as presented.

Membership Report: Number of members - 122

Number of addresses on Bethany email - 113

Number of deaths since the last Annual Meeting - 3; Ron Litterest, Russell Sunstrom, Chuck Pearson

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Ron Fischer thanked Nancy Jordan for her work as bookkeeper, money counter, and for managing the mail. Ron reported a (second) gift was received this spring of \$1M from Sue Christensen - the people of Bethany are overwhelmed and grateful for Sue's generosity and dedication to Bethany and God. An overview of four buckets illustrates Bethany's current assets, including:

Bucket 1: Bethany Heritage Endowment Fund. This fund has a \$500,000 minimum, 3-7% of the 3 year average of the funds total assets must be withdrawn annually, and only earnings can be used to maintain Bethany's building and grounds (church, parsonage, cemetery). This includes Sue Christensen's (first) gift of \$.5M, and its current balance is \$872,107.

Bucket 2: Bethany Property Preservation Fund. This fund holds the \$1M bequest from Sue Christensen. This fund's earnings will preserve all buildings and grounds, including equipment, furnishings, and capital improvements.. An oversight committee of Treasurer Ron Fischer, Patty Fess and Brian Blazer will work with Dick Christensen to secure the principal to provide useful earnings; a legal document will be created.

Bucket 3: Unrestricted and Designated Gifts. This bucket holds designated gifts without restriction to earnings, including the Boldt gift. Current holdings are \$79,400.

Bucket 4: Operations. This bucket is from offerings, and covers expenses for ministry, benevolences, utilities, insurance, Music Director. This budget is \$45,000.

Brian Blazer moved to approve the Treasurer's Report: Chris Stout seconded, and the motion carried.

President's Report: President Jane Nelson reviewed our rich history that began in January, 1882, when 60 families consolidated to form a church. On April 4, 1882, they began

construction and today we are still a Lutheran congregation worshipping in that same structure. Our present is exciting with new trustees, members taking on a variety of roles, the new monthly Friday Fellowship gathering, and the bequest of two gifts from Sue Christensen totalling \$1.5M to preserve and maintain the properties and buildings. Jane thanked the Council members; Debbie Fischer for securing our visiting pastors; Nancy Jordan for bookkeeping; our music director Lori Free; parsonage manager Duska Pearson; Exploratory Committee Leaders Paul and Carol Stoelting and Exploratory Committee members Ron Litterest, Lori Free, Joann and Wally Kilgus, Tom Regan, and Jim Schwengel. She also thanked Chuck Pearson for pursuing the idea of expanding via a separate building vs. an addition, and Christina Mooney for donating her architectural expertise. We will continue the ministry of those initial 60 families into the future.

Buildings and Grounds: Randy Nelson reported on three major improvements since the last Annual Meeting:

1. The stone wall in front of the church was rebuilt.
2. The electrical service was upgraded.
3. The parsonage exterior was painted.

Future projects that are being considered:

1. New walkway by vestry.
2. Beadboard on ceiling of parsonage porch.
3. Repair sanctuary windows.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Update on Livestream/YouTube: We have moved from Livestream to YouTube which is easier and cheaper. A new laptop was purchased for the setup of Youtube. There was discussion that the website needs to be cleaned up and fixed so that it is easy to get the real-time YouTube link.

Constitutional changes: Two changes were proposed to bring Bethany Constitution into conformity with the signed documents with the Ephraim Historical Foundation in sections 5.05 and 5.07. Patty Fess made a motion to approve the changes, Jim Marotz seconded, and the motion carried.

Replacement Organ: Music Director Lori Free gave a report on the organ which has exceeded its 25 year life expectancy by almost 15 years but is becoming increasingly unreliable, very difficult to have serviced, and replacement parts are hard/impossible to find. A motion to approve to spend up to \$50,000 for a replacement organ was made by Joann Kilgus, seconded by Brian Blazer, and the motion carried.

Exploratory Committee Summary: The Exploratory Committee was thanked for their hours of time and work and the summary given to the members. Their work resulted in a next-step recommendation of a reconstruction of the vestry and expansion wraparound to our current building. A motion was made by Wally Kilgus to appoint a Building Committee to make a floorplan to meet our needs (e.g., one restroom, a utility room with sink, and a small room/vestry for pastors to work in) and seek out estimates from builders, and to further authorize this committee to spend up to \$2000 on needed expenses; it was seconded by Paul Stoelting, and the motion carried. People interested in serving on the Building Committee were asked to sign a paper that was circulated. Discussion followed on how this addition might be funded and when the congregation might be able to get information from the Building Committee in a timely

manner. A meeting was scheduled following the closing Sunday in October for a report, if available, to be made to the congregation from this new committee.

Any further business: Kevin Free acknowledged and thanked Patty Fess for her phenomenal job of involving and informing the membership and visitors with her weekly emails.

Adjournment: There being no further business, Duska Pearson moved to adjourn the meeting, Chris Stout seconded and the motion carried. The meeting was adjourned following the Lord's Prayer at 12:16pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Stout, Council Secretary