

## **Minutes from the Congregational Meeting at Bethel Lutheran Church on Sunday, August 29, 2010 (approved by council)**

Mary Thomas called the meeting to order at 12:06 pm. A quorum was present.

Pastor Randy opened the meeting in prayer.

The minutes from the February 2010 Congregational Meeting were approved as written.

### **Council Update**

**Mary Thomas**

Mary Thomas thanked all who serve at Bethel (council, ministry, & committee members and the church and school staff. She specifically thanked the Baldwins & Foxes for their work in beautifying the narthex.

Mary reported on council activities since February 2010.

### **Accomplishments:**

- The council is working on improving communications by posting the approved council minutes in the narthex and by publishing highlights from each council meeting in the weekly Bethel e-mails.
- The council also started working on updating ministry descriptions and developing council position descriptions.
- We are creating a new position for a director of adult ministries to coordinate volunteers, etc.
- We recruited a new member for the audit committee: Kelly Johnson.

**Opportunities to serve:** there are several open positions on the council and in the ministries.

### **Constitution Amendments**

The council discovered that we are not following various bylaws and resolutions. Therefore we are proposing the following amendments to the constitution. One major change is the “length of service” for positions. Many people are hesitant to commit to 3 year terms, and so we are shortening them to 2 years in order to recruit more people. They can serve a maximum of three consecutive terms (six years total). There was a question from the floor in regards to California Law AB1233, a new law for non-profit organizations and quorums. Mary said she would look into this.

A motion was made to accept the amendments to the constitution. Tony Stieber second. The motion was approved.

### **Good Shepherd/Stelling Site**

Unfortunately, the partnership with Good Shepherd has not worked out as had hoped. Pastor Chiu has neither been ordained by the Taiwanese Church nor the ELCA. There were multiple meetings and communications with Pastor Chiu regarding expectations from Bethel and the Synod. Mary Thomas and Pr. Randy Pabst met with Pr. Harvey Bloomberg and Dr. Pongsak Limthongviratn. They found out that there are major differences between Chinese-Evangelical churches and the ELCA in how the “church” is conceptualized and in how the information conveyed might still not be what was understood. Council voted to sever the formal partnership with Good Shepherd and we are working on a rental agreement for Good Shepherd to continue meeting at the Stelling site.

Learning from this experience, we are now seeking an ELCA-ordained minister for multi-cultural ministry and plan to follow Dr. Limthongviratn's advice for moving forward with an Asian ministry: the 4Ss: go **slow in establishing relationships**, start **small** in our expectations and in growth, **stabilize** the relationship and partnership, and realize that **stewardship/sustainability** will take a long time.

In the interim, we will continue to affirm the work of Good Shepherd Christian Community while we also affirm the importance of developing a multi-cultural ministry. When we find a new minister for this aspect of our ministry, Good Shepherd might have to move to a different time slot or move to a different location.

The challenge is a dual-site ministry and a multi-cultural gathering place.

Pr. Randy asked for a motion to support this direction to work on this challenge and to affirm this mission. The motion was seconded and passed.

### **Planned council activities**

Working on long-range planning.

Revising Bethel website, Vern Bollesen agreed to take the lead.

Somebody suggested to put a form for prayer requests on the website.

### **FY 2011 Budget and Financial Update**

**Dave Tribby**

Dave showed a graph of monthly giving trends in comparison to the budget over the last 2 years. September and October 2009 were behind in giving, but in December we caught up. January was low again (15.8% below budget)

As of July 31, Bethel's cash reserve is only \$0.5 K. Income averaged \$770K through July.

Donations to the General fund were down \$44K compared to budget at the end of July, but down by only \$37K at the end of August (96% of budget). Ongoing expenses were also under budget, by \$80K at the end of July. Net ordinary income was -9.8K; without depreciation and fee-based events it was +42K.

<b>Projection for FY2011:</b>	Base expectation	\$780K (FY09: 800K)
	Challenge	\$10K (FY09: 10K)
	Total expected income:	\$790K.

Dave gave an overview of the budget savings and anticipated increases for next Fiscal year. He showed the budget category totals. A new renter called "Sunflower Learning" is using our classroom facilities after school. This increases our income.

There was a motion to approve the budget as presented. The motion was seconded and approved.

### **New tithing policy**

In the past, the 10% of general fund income we give to external benevolences (the "tithe") was calculated including special offerings. That meant that we were donating about 6.5 to 7% from the general fund.

Our new long-term goal is to tithe 10% of the general fund, with special offerings above and beyond that amount. We will increase our general fund percentage over several years. The goal for FY2011 is to reach 7%.

## **Bethel Lutheran School**

**Joan Christensen**

Joan is the chair of the school board. She reported that they school has great staff and a new principal, Marion Abney. They are working on increasing enrollment this year after 3 declining years. They had a successful annual fund drive: \$52K. The preliminary budget for this year is \$1,137K, expected income is \$1.121K. They will work on a balanced budget. Church members receive 15% discount when they children go to BLS, but the church reimburses the school for this amount.

The school board is working on discovering new ways to connect to school families. Parents are looking for values.

## **Mission statement**

**Pr. Randy Pabst**

### **Affirmation of our mission statement:**

The background for our mission statement can be found in Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:7a+8.

Randy showed how our mission statement fits in with the vision of the UP-OUT-IN triangle.

UP= grow and equip

OUT= care for and serve

IN= invite and welcome

A motion was made to affirm our mission statement. The motion was second and approved.

Randy sees **4 key challenges** for the church in Silicon Valley:

1. cultural and spiritual/religious diversity
2. polarization of the culture
3. high pressure and demanding work environment
4. changing identity of the Christian Church

**The pastoral challenge** (Acts asks us to be witnesses) that BLC&S refocuses every aspect of its ministry and work to reach out and more effectively serve the multi-cultural community in which it is located in the name of Jesus Christ.

### **The approach for the Finch Site, School, and the Stelling Site:**

1. Get to know our neighbors better.
2. Work to discover the needs of our community.
3. Establish stronger relationships through service and welcome.
4. Discover ways to more effectively invite our neighbors to become participants in our ministry.

In order to be a faithful witness we need to know God's story, our own story, and the other person's story, so that they can then intersect.

## **Call Committee Update**

**Pastor Lori Eickmann**

The call committee organized two congregation-wide events where we defined our congregation's strengths and weaknesses and developed goals from them. The Committee conducted an online survey, had many meetings, and small group sessions. They found out what works at Bethel and what does not. They also asked Pr. Randy for his preferences and vision, and met with Bishop Nancy Nelson. They are currently finalizing the congregational profile that will soon be sent to the Synod. 90% of the profile is complete and is posted in the Narthex so that everybody can give input to the call committee. The congregation has two weeks to make suggestions for the final profile package. After that the council must adopt it, and then it can be sent on to the Synod.

Pastor Lori closed the meeting with a prayer.  
The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 pm.

San Jose, December 1, 2010  
Submitted by  
Hella Bluhm-Stieber