

## Bethel Lutheran Church

Congregational Meeting November, 3, 2013

Meeting called to order at 12:05PM by President Hella Bluhm-Stieber

Quorum achieved - 105 members present

### Opening prayer

Pr. Gabi Schroeder

Prayer for God's guidance in times of decision making, difficult choices

### Minutes from past congregational meeting (Feb. 3, 2013)

Hella

No corrections; motion to approve minutes made, motion seconded; minutes approved as written

### Associate Pastor Report

Pr. Gabi

- Focus on positive events, projects, ministries within Bethel
- Worship
  - Based on Lutheran tradition, excellence in music & technology, lay leader participation in service
- School
  - BLS functions as a teaching ministry that grows Christian children
- Youth
  - Meaningful opportunities for involvement and engagement
- Children & Families
  - Move to strengthen this ministry; Mom's movement to initiate fellowship
- Discipleship
  - Ongoing opportunity for Bible study/other learning; format continues to change
  - Success dependent on member participation
- Fellowship
  - Many successful events
- Stewardship
  - Bethel is alive and invested in our future
  - Increased number of faith promises returned; increased amount of giving promised

### School Board Chairperson Report

Minnie Sudarsanam

- Theme: "Bethel Builders InC" (in Christ); Bible verse Col. 2:6-7
- Enrollment down for preschool but steady for elementary school; 50% of students applications do not identify a faith affiliation
- Recovery from preschool room arson fire ongoing; depreciation of room's contents a factor

- Accreditation application in process to Western Association for Schools & Colleges (WASC)
- Fund-raising events successful, especially walkathon (\$24,000 raised)
- Many opportunities for church members to become involved in the school

### **Staffing & Budget Realignment Task Force**

Hella

- Challenges
  - 64% of our budget is utilized for staffing; 29% of that allotment is for pastoral support
  - Current budget deficit: \$94,500
    - Budget cannot support our current FTE (full-time equivalent) of 7.1 positions
      - Many staff members were part time with very limited hours
  - While budget does not support current staffing, membership strongly identified desire to not have a single called pastor
  - Having more than 1 FTE called pastor affords more diversity & potential for congregational growth
- Tasks
  - Budget must be sustainable
  - Staffing plan should not hinder our current efforts and should promote future growth
- Background of review process delineated
  - Careful review of financial documents, interviews/meetings with staff
  - Declined to use straight across-the-board cut
    - Many positions have so little hours assigned, it would eliminate the program
  - Establish priorities & values
    - Used extensively for budget deficit resolution/change in staffing
  - Worked hard to maintain objectivity, and to be as fair as possible
- Determined recommendations for realignment of roles between Lead and Associate Pastors
  - Current pastoral staff size (2.3 FTE) too large for current Bethel membership/giving patterns
  - Input from congregational small group meetings (convened during summer, 2013) used extensively
  - Realigning roles based on delineating priorities
    - Lead pastor position
    - Associate pastor position
    - Amount of time realistically affordable
- Changes to current staffing structure
  - Lead pastor 100%, Associate Pastor 75%, Visitation Pastor not salaried
  - Combination of Youth Director, Facilities Manager, AV Technician positions into 1 FTE
    - Possible only due to gifts of current Youth Director
  - Combine Media Shout & Publications Specialist positions into one Communications position
    - No change in FTE

- Most position changes would not take place until Lead Pastor position filled & Pastor acclimated (~ 3 months)
- Add revenue
  - Rent facility to other Christian church/group
  - Increase administrative fees for Stelling Site
- Fiscal Year 2015 – Develop a steady state Budget & staffing plan
- The above recommendations are felt to be important for growth as well as to correct current budget deficiency and to renew energy for ministry
- Questions from the floor answered
  - Will review budget; change staffing if budget improves

### **Financial Report**

Dave Tribby

- Congregational giving trend decreased from 2011 until July 2013
- Cutting expenses further is not sustainable
- FY 2014 – downward slope in giving stabilized
  - Current staffing expenditures will match that used in FY 2013
    - Due to many vacancies
    - Not sustainable approach long-term
  - \$650K seems to be realistic & feasible based on current giving and stewardship results
  - Requesting \$660K budget for general fund giving
    - Allows for \$10K challenge that permits covering unanticipated expenses

### **Budget Approval**

Hella

- Motion made to approve budget; motion seconded; vote carried (2 votes against)

### **Constitution Changes (Church & School Charter)**

Mary Thomas

- Congregation voted to approve changes at last meeting
- Changes again reviewed
- Motion made to ratify changes; motion seconded ; vote to ratify changes carried (1 vote against)
- Changes will now be submitted to Synod for review

### **New Business**

Hella

- Open positions within council and committees reviewed
  - Requests for nominations from floor – none made
  - Hella thanked Hannah Lutke, first Youth Member-at-Large for her service
- Audit Report
  - Committee members acknowledged (Kathy Arnold, Tony Stieber)
  - Council is working on addressing recommendations made by the committee

- No major issues noted in report
- Call Committee
  - Ministry profile developed
    - Will use information from task force (role delineations and budget) to complete ministry profile and submit to synod
  - Committee's hard work acknowledged
- New worship schedule will take place in January
  - Affords opportunity for Sunday morning Bible study (requested by many members)
- Final Bible Verse
  - 1 Peter 4:10
  - How might each of us use the gifts bestowed upon us by God?
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary Update Rich Pierson
  - Recent "Great Thanksgiving" meeting summarized
  - Rev. Phyllis Anderson is retiring as President
  - PLTS will merge with California Lutheran University

**Closing Prayer**

Tom Högel

- Hella's work and effort acknowledged
- This is a time of abundance, yet a time of being needed
- Each of us is called to serve
- Closing video – Mission to Mexico trip montage

Meeting adjourned at 1:10PM

Submitted by Mary L. Thomas,  
 Communications Officer  
 November 3, 2013