

**BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING
January 29, 2017**

The meeting was called to order at 10:47 AM in the sanctuary by Church Council President, Bev Ostroot.

Pastor Christopher Miller opened the meeting with devotion from Romans 5, and prayer, both with an emphasis on our sharing of the hope that has been brought to us in Christ.

Chris Miller reported that 45 members were present at the meeting, enough to satisfy the 23 needed for a quorum.

Approval of Minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting

A **motion was made and seconded to approve** the minutes as printed. There was no discussion, corrections, or additions. A vote was taken and the **motion to approve was carried**.

Audit Report

Dawn Jacobson, of *Keepin' Books* in Whitefish, conducted audits on January 11, 2017, with Ken Olson present, of the following accounts: General Accounts, Women of Bethany, Trust Fund, Sunday school, Good Samaritan Fund, and Youth Group. She found all accounts for the year 2016 to be in good standing. She noted that the record keeping of the Good Samaritan account was vastly improved and in good standing with all receipts in order. The auditor's report was **approved**.

Approval of General Budget for 2017

The congregation's Treasurer, Ken Olson, summarized the proposed budget. He thanked members for their faithful giving. Ken reported that members had contributed \$13,904.00 over a 10-month period to reduce the principle on our mortgage, which effectively shortened the loan length by 9 months. He also explained "Ken's Reality Budget", in which he regularly updates the budget with changes to keep the council informed.

The floor was opened for questions. Only one question was specifically asked about the budget, and that was to ask Ken to repeat the amount of debt reduction given in 2016 (\$13,904.00). Ken was complimented on, and thanked for, his work as Treasurer. Several comments were made regarding the decline in membership, and subsequent decline in financial support, of the church. We should find positive ways to increase our membership. A comment was made by one member and supported by another saying they thought lay people should not be involved in praying The Prayers of the Church during worship services, that this should be done by the pastor. In reference to increasing membership, Bev expressed that we have an obligation, and it should be an honor, to invite others to church. She then asked Pastor Christopher to explain why we have lay people doing the Prayers. The idea was to offer an opportunity for a more active, participatory worship experience for members willing to do this.

A **motion was made to approve** the budget as printed. **Motion seconded**. A vote was taken and the **motion to approve was carried**.

Elections

The Nominating Committee submitted three names to fill the council terms ending for Bev Ostroot, Kari Nelson, and Dale Jorgenson: Kelly Jorgenson, Jan Olson, and Mike Nelson. RobinLynn Stobart agreed to fill the remaining one year of Sharon Lorang's 3-year term after Sharon submitted her resignation from

council. A **motion was made and seconded to close nominations** from the floor. Bev declared a **vote by acclamation to accept** the nominees as our new Council members.

Sharon thanked the congregation for their support, and volunteered to stay on as Care Team coordinator.

Trust Fund Committee Member

The Trust Fund Committee is comprised of 3 members: currently Marge Bagley and Keith Kapelke, are the only two. Byron Whitney was a member but needed to step down. Because Byron is no longer a member of the committee, this position needs to be filled. Bev was asked to describe the Trust Fund. The Trust Fund was created with money from the sale of property donated to the church and has restrictions on how the money can be used. No one had been nominated to take Byron's place, therefore Bev asked if anyone would volunteer. Karyl Gopp volunteered to fill the position for 2017, and was accepted as a Trust Fund Committee member.

Old Business

There was no specific *Old Business*. A wide-ranging discussion occurred during this time. Concern with discontent in the congregation brought up the idea of creating a survey of those who have left to find out why they left. It was suggested that this might be something for the new council to consider.

One member had volunteered to create "Treat Bags" for the children at this past Christmas Eve worship service. A miscommunication created a shortage of bags, but the member would like to do this again next year with help of the church of donations for treats and help with filling and distributing the bags.

Several comments were made about our coffee hour after worship: being more intentional about inviting visitors to come downstairs by both members and the pastor; having coffee available in the narthex; space limitations; having a place to sit and visit without juggling coffee or standing for a long period of time; appreciating the fellowship of coffee hour for the family.

One member thanked the congregation, on behalf of his mother and himself, for the love and dedication shown to them this past year for painting the exterior of his mother's house, and helping him when he injured his knee. He reminded us: Don't forget to remember all the good things that happen at our church.

Another member thanked Ken Olson for his work as treasurer. To encourage members to contribute faithfully, the member referenced the Old Testament book of Malachi, where God says the whole nation of Israel is robbing him by not giving a full tithe. He also recalled the reasons for the original narthex design as it hosted coffee hours.

New Business

Selection of Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee meets in the fall to select candidates to fill openings for church council and Trust Fund Committee. Those who volunteered at the annual meeting to be on the Nominating Committee for 2017 are Rebecca Miller, Bev Ostroot, and Jan Wiedebush. Volunteers accepted.

Dale Jorgenson explained the need for tree and brush removal on church property. Some of those trees, particularly near the parsonage, pose a considerable safety issue. Removal of brush along Bridge Street may lower the number of incidents of damage to our parking lot by teenagers spinning brodies. Dale has been talking with Daron DeMars, owner of D&S Logworks, about what needs to be taken care of and how much it will cost. A detailed bid was presented for a total of \$13,535.00. Daron said because this job is for a church, he would reduce the bid to \$10,000. Someone wondered if we could get another bid. Dale said

he highly recommends D&S Logworks. One member spoke to recommend Daron DeMars, who did tree work for the member on his property, as very knowledgeable and honest. Another member testified to the high cost of tree removal on their family property; someone wondered if we can't afford to do all the recommended work at once, could we at least take care of the parsonage area. Suggestions for defraying the cost: using Trust Fund money; applying to Flathead Electric Coop for Roundup for Safety money; having a special fundraiser.

One member suggested painting the narthex and doing other improvements to make the area more welcoming and inviting.

Karen Bradstreet and Art Crane were each presented a *Thank You* and gift card as a token of appreciation for the wonderful musical talent they share so unselfishly with the congregation.

Bev thanked outgoing council members for their service: Dale Jorgenson, Kari Nelson, and Sharon Lorang. The congregation thanked Bev for her tenure as well.

All council members were reminded to remain after the annual meeting for the organizational meeting of the 2017 Council.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:52 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Dahlman
Council Secretary