

Bethlehem United Church of Christ
Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes

June 11, 2023

In-person, Fellowship Hall

- 1) Call to order – R. Dechert
 - Meeting called to order at approximately 11:30 a.m.
- 2) Verification of Quorum – R. Dechert – more than 25 members were in attendance, so quorum was confirmed.
- 3) Opening Prayer – Pastor Diane
- 4) Leadership Council Report – R. Dechert
 - Overview of FY22/23 – report included.
 - Update on Hewett Drive Parsonage
 - Considering renting the house until we call a senior pastor
 - Currently house costs \$15-17k annually
 - Needs to be inspected by the city to get rental certificate, some repairs will be required.
 - Cannot insure a vacant house, so we can't let it stay empty. Need to either rent it or sell it.
 - Motion was made to table the rental discussion pending further cost information, to be completed by the end of July. After discussion, motion was withdrawn.
 - New motion was made to proceed with gathering rental information and bring back to the congregation as necessary for expense approval. Motion was seconded and passed with 2 opposed and 1 abstained.
 - Grass cutting needs to be arranged – LC and facilities will get it set up.
 - Update on interim senior pastor, Dawn Christenson
 - Dawn is an intentional interim pastor. Her bio was shared through the weekly email to the congregation.
 - Her first Sunday preaching will be July 2nd.
- 5) Ministry Team Reports – enclosed in packet as submitted. Below people spoke at the meeting.
 - Welcome – Jane Schmerberg: committee is still functioning but with limited help, it's difficult.
 - Youth/Young Adult – Katie Rowan: 3 – 4 youth, low participation, wide age range makes it hard to find appropriate activities.
 - Education – Eileen Koprowski: Continue to offer one all-age Sunday School each week; Suggested partnering with Y/YA for game nights; Hosted Rally Day in September; Four scholarship applicants this year.
 - Stephen Ministry – Kurt Schmerberg: 4 ministers, 1 currently active. Program is self-funded through donations. Two care-receivers passed away in the the last year.
 - Cemetery Board – Sue Buday: They have learned and grown a lot over the past year and are optimistic about the future.
 - Outreach – Mary Jean Raab, on behalf of the Muirs: \$11,105 raised for Ukraine, exceeding goal of \$10,000

- Facilities – Steve Darr: Under budget for the year by \$20k. Linda Young donated a lawn mower for the parsonage. Elevator safety upgrade may be required, cost of \$30k. It was noted that grants may be available for such expenses.
- Worship – Jennifer Vasquez: Biggest concern is ongoing funding of the weekly video; No chair for the committee for the new year; Need more volunteers to support the livestream; Reviewing cheaper options to the weekly radio broadcast but no solution found so far; Estimate 10 – 15 regular listeners; 25-35 weekly livestream views plus replays.

6) Review of elected officer openings and nominations – R. Dechert

8 open positions currently – No volunteers

Leadership council – Treasurer, at-large

Fellowship – Chair

Outreach – Chair

Nominations – Chair

ONA – Chair

Finance – At-large

Worship – Chair

Nominees for positions as noted in packet:

Leadership – R. Dechert, President

Member Care – J. Coucouvanis, J. Foster

Cemetery – S. O'Reilly, S. Irwin

Facilities – S. Darr

Welcome – J. Schmerberg

Finance – Edgar Vasquez

Additional volunteers for openings during the meeting:

Finance – Greg Gotham

Welcome – Barb Schenk

Discussion re. openings – do we need to continue ONA or possibly morph to a DEI team?

7) Call for vote on elected officer nominations – **Nominees were approved as amended.**

8) Review of current and proposed budget

- Discussion of current year deficit and whether it is yet to be transferred from the investment account. \$60k was transferred in February. Cash in checking account spent plus the \$60k covered the \$152k deficit. No further reduction of investment account needed.
- Proposed budget was reviewed, result is a loss of \$92k.
 - We have only 58 pledging units for the proposed budget, amount per pledge slightly higher than last year.
 - Discussion re. non-pledge income budget of \$85k likely is too high, based on current results, so true loss could be higher.
 - Noted that personnel costs will be lower for interim pastor but that is not a permanent reduction.
 - Question re. whether we still owe Lombard \$12k – no, not unless we proceed with further facilitation. Interim pastor will review the reports and help us discern possible next steps.

- Discussion of deferred compensation for Pastor Diane and proper recording of the liability. To be reviewed by the finance team (balance sheet in general to be clarified.)

9) Call for vote on proposed FY23/24 budget – **Budget passed with 1 opposed and 0 abstained**

10) New Business from congregation

- Ron Dechert will be testing out a new free text program (REMIND) to help disseminate info to the congregation. He will be sending out an invitation text. Reply yes if you want to participate.
- Ron will send out the job description for the interim pastor.
- Pastor Diane asked if she was eligible to be the chair of worship, even temporarily, as she is already integral to the worship planning process and could take on the administration. LC will review.
- There was discussion as to how we will manage all the open positions. Ron stated that the leadership liaisons can assist and there are allowances in the by-laws for such circumstances. Noted not having a treasurer is an issue. It was stated that no one can hold two elected positions – need to confirm this. ** Review of by-laws after the meeting confirms that no member can hold two elected offices at the same time.

-

11) Prayer of adjournment – Pastor Diane

- Meeting adjourned at approximately 1:20 p.m.