

2021 Annual Meeting Minutes

Sunday, Jan. 31, 2021, 11:15 a.m. via Zoom

President Steve Christensen called the meeting to order. Pastor Paul Stumme-Diers gave an opening prayer. Office Administrator and Zoom-meeting Host Rachel Pritchett reported that 73 people were present. (A minimum of 50 is required.), President Steve Christensen determined that a quorum had been attained and that the meeting could go forward. Helen Stoll made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 26, 2020 annual meeting. The motion was seconded and the 2020 congregational meeting minutes were approved.

■ **President's report:** President Christensen pointed to the president's section in the annual report, which addresses the roof-moisture issue. He asked whether there were any questions. There were no questions. He thanked former President Dave Christensen for encouraging him to perform the duty of president. He told listeners that there would be time at the end of each segment for questions.

■ **Pastor's report:** The pastor said he was delighted with the number of people who came to the drive-in worship service before this annual meeting, even though it was pouring rain. Tearing up, he said that it's been a year since his mother, Dorothy Diers, passed away. He acknowledged an outpouring of love. He said his family was very fortunate to have her funeral the weekend before the COVID-19 pandemic closed everything down.

He thanked others for their service in the past year. They included Jeff Jensen, who "made the drive-in service work. For the last year, he has been deeply committed to making this happen." He thanked Allen Lang for building the stage for drive-in worship. He also thanked Christensen for leading the congregation as president for the past year, in his non-anxious and steady way. Sylvia Cauter was thanked for leading the choir during COVID, turning to Zoom for weekly rehearsals. Jennie Harris and all the drive-in ushers were thanked. Preschool Director Katie Drov Dahl was thanked, as was Pritchett, who will retire March 22. Pritchett has launched us into an online presence, and that will be part of the office-administrator position in the future, he said. Lastly, he thanked the Bethany community as a whole during this extraordinary year of the church shutdown, as it continued to demonstrate its centeredness in Christ.

■ **Treasurer's report:** Treasurer Jim Rohrscheib gave a summary of the proposed 2021 ministry budget plan. He restricted his comments to the ministry budget plan found on Pages 26 - 29 of the annual report. He promised the congregation a more detailed financial report covering pages 23 - 30 via e-mail in the coming week. On the income side, loose-plate offerings, other offerings and building-use income all were down about \$7,000, due to the church being closed since March. For budget reasons, he said he is anticipating the church reopening in July, and offerings going up then.

Rohrscheib read the motion associated with consideration of the 2021 ministry budget plan. It reads, "By motion, the Bethany Church Council recommends the Congregation approve a 2021 spending budget of \$417,543."

(Continued on next page.)

On the expenses side, Rohrscheib said that 12 to 13 line items in the budget were less than last year, due to the shutdown. Two new budget lines have been added to the proposed budget. The first, under buildings and grounds, is the roof-risk assessment budget line, for \$10,000. This is to help the Council more clearly decipher what should be done to fix the moisture problem at the least cost to the congregation. The second new budget line was for video production under office expenses. That amount was for \$8,790. That is for addressing expenses related to online filming of services and other web-associated expenses.

Bethany member Whitney Lane asked why the property tax was so much less than previously. Rohrscheib said that the stormwater assessment, previously packaged with the property-taxes statements coming from the county, now are coming directly from the city of Bainbridge Island. The financial impact is a wash, he said.

Christensen called for the vote. The 2021 ministry budget plan passed.

■ **Nominating Committee report/elections:** Christensen thanked David Mueller and Maimu Truitt for their work on the Council. They will join him in leaving the Council. He said that Harry Wetzler and Steve Chupik have agreed to stay on the Council. He thanked members of the Roof Committee. Besides himself, they included Steve Deines, Steve Chupik, Mike Bartunek, Allen Lang and Rachel Pritchett. We've had volunteers to stand as nominees for the Council, he said. They are Vicki Browning, Burton Shields and Stina Peña. Christensen then called for a vote to accept the nominees. The vote passed.

■ **New Business: Ceiling-roof update:** In addressing the problem of condensation on the sanctuary roof, Christensen gave a brief synopsis. He said that in 1963 when the sanctuary was constructed, its roof did not have a venting system in the ceiling. That didn't appear to present a problem when the roof had wood shingles. But when the metal roof was put on, it contained in impermeable membrane. When the presence of people and warm moisture in the sanctuary came in contact with the cold surface of the underside of the roof, it created condensation. The condensation resulted in droplets falling from the ceiling. Moisture also came down the walls and showed up on the beams. We noticed this last March, he said. Bethany hired an architectural firm that specializes in roof-moisture problems. The firm gave three options. The Roof Committee and the Council chose an option. The purpose of the new \$10,000 roof-risk budget line is to do a little more work to define the scope of the work and find the least costly way to fix it. A Zoom meeting at 7pm Feb. 22 will address all of this he said. He invited all who are interested to attend that meeting.

Bethany member Richard Solinsky asked whether the metal-roof installer had any culpability for not bringing up lack of venting as a problem. Christensen said he could not speak to the legality of that, but there was discussion of that at the time. He said Bethany accepted that the roofer did an appropriate job. Bethany did not know that there was no venting, Christensen said. Solinsky asked whether there was a guarantee. Christensen said there was a warrantee of the underlayment and a warrantee for the metal roofing. The warrantee for the underlayment excluded the warrantee if it was a non-vented roof.

■ **Affordable housing:** Christensen called on David Swartling to bring a motion to adopt the resolution included in the agenda. Swartling moved adoption of the resolution in the agenda. Tom Croker seconded the motion. The resolution reads as follows:

(Continued on next page.)

Resolution regarding Possible Path Forward for Affordable Housing

WHEREAS, for many years Bethany Lutheran Church has been considering creation of affordable housing on a portion of its property; and

WHEREAS, an effort was initiated in mid-2020 to chart a potential Path Forward for such an affordable housing project; and

WHEREAS, several donations have been received to create a fund to set the table for presenting a Path Forward proposal to the congregation; and

WHEREAS, the Congregation Council has concluded that consideration of a Path Forward proposal requires additional due diligence and a presentation to an in-person (not virtual) meeting of the congregation, and therefore has appointed a small Task Force to set the table for discussion of a Path Forward proposal at such a meeting, hopefully in the spring of 2021; now, therefore, it is hereby

RESOLVED, that the South 40 Affordable Housing Task Force is assigned the responsibility to conduct additional due diligence, engage in conversations with congregational members and others, and otherwise set the table for consideration of a proposed Path Forward on affordable housing on Bethany's property at a special in-person congregational meeting, hopefully in the spring of 2021; and, it is further

RESOLVED, that the South 40 Affordable Housing Task Force is authorized to make expenditures from the Affordable Housing Fund in amounts up to \$5,000, to bring requests to the Congregation Council for authorization of expenditures from the fund in amounts greater than \$5,000, and to make periodic reports to the Council in anticipation of the special in-person congregational meeting.

Swartling gave an overview of the affordable-housing effort. He thanked Christensen, the Council and members of a Bethany affordable-housing task force for allowing the effort to proceed this far. Swartling noted that the resolution is a response to resolutions passed by the congregation in 2017 encouraging early exploration of placing affordable housing on the undeveloped portion of the Bethany campus.

Swartling noted that two events happened in 2020 that helped the effort. The first was passage of a state statute that allows religious organizations density bonus points. At the city of Bainbridge Island level, the rules now are that Bethany could build up to the septic capacity without a zoning variance. "And that's a quantum change," he said.

Swartling said that the proposed resolution is not a substantive plan but an effort to move forward in the spring. Exploratory money will not come from the Bethany operating budget, but rather a fund that has been set up to accept seed money. It now has donations of about \$23,000, he said.

Sonja Selboe asked whether it would be possible for Bethany to collaborate with an ongoing housing effort in the Southwestern Washington Synod. Swartling said that the common agency between Bethany and the Synod is Compass Housing Alliance, part of Lutheran Community Services Northwest.

Christensen called for the question and Barbara Dienes seconded. The resolution passed.

The meeting concluded at 12:04 a.m. with Pastor Paul reciting the Lord's Prayer.

(Addendum on next page.)

■ **Addendum (sent as email and part of the official minutes):** Jim Rohrscheib limited his financial report to just a short presentation of the budget found on pages 26-29. At that time he promised a much more detailed report on pledging, giving and spending. The following is his effort to keep the congregation informed of our financial status. In some cases, he will be referring to pages 23-30 of the financial section of the Annual Report.

He noted on page 23 that we received 77 pledges during 2021. This is an increase of one pledge over 2020. A breakdown of those 77 pledges is as follows:

- 23 of the 77 pledgers increased their pledge by a total of \$25,520.
 - The highest single pledge increase was \$6,800.
 - Also included in the 23 were pledge increases of \$4,000, \$2,000 (from three pledgers) and \$1,800.
 - In all 12 of the 23 pledging units increased their pledge commitment by \$500 or more per year.
- 42 of the 77 pledged the same amount as in 2020.
- 5 pledging units reduced their pledge by a combined \$3,540.
- 4 first time ever pledgers made a combined pledge commitment of \$8,940.
- 3 givers made a 2021 pledge commitment after skipping the previous year(s).

The bottom line is that the 77 pledges totaled \$324,516. In 2020 the initial pledge amount was \$301,256 before we conducted a supplemental giving campaign which raised an additional \$25,262.

The median weekly pledge for 2021 is \$53 per week, the same amount as in 2020. The median pledge has declined by \$5 per week since 2019. The average weekly pledge reached the \$81 mark for the first time ever. The number of non-pledgers expected to give dropped from 42 in 2020 to 39 in 2021. The total number of contributors in 2021 is expected to be 116, a decrease of two over 2020 and a decrease of 51 since 2010.

Submitted by Rachel Pritchett, office administrator