

**Bethlehem Lutheran Church Council Minutes**  
**June 24, 2025**  
**6:30 pm**

*“God’s family working together to welcome all.”*

Attendance:

Kerry Melby- In person  
Jaimie Rudolph- In person  
Kory Anderson- Absent with notification  
Lisa Cook- Absent with notification  
Joe Jackowski- In person  
Amanda Bell- In person  
Mark Teslik- Absent with notification  
Pastor Jaime Benson- In person  
Geoff Gilbert- In person  
Don Bender- In person

1. Dwelling in the Word – Pr. Jaime—John 6:1-14
2. **Call to Order by Geoff Gilbert at 6:45 p.m.**
3. Prayer
4. Approval of the Agenda—**Motion made by Joe Jackowski to approve the proposed agenda, second by Kerry Melby. Motion carried.**
5. Approval of Last Month’s Minutes – **Motion by Kerry Melby to approve last month’s minutes with two name spelling edits, second by Amanda Bell to approve with edits. Motion carried.**
6. Pastor Report
7. Committee Reports
8. Approval of Committee Reports – **Motion by Joe Jackowski, second by Amanda Bell to approve committee reports. Motion carried.**
9. Old Business
  - a. Funding Forward by Steve McNeal
    - i. Steve discussed attached handout. Reserves are dropping, expenses are up and we are pulling from reserves to pay monthly bills more often than not. Need action, key message in the book is lack of action put churches in positions they could not recover from. For next time, Steve encouraged people to read the book, refer to the notes he highlighted. Council discussed further, and Pr Jaime highlighted assets that Steve raise last time and again this time. Do we have an inventory of our assets? Amanda to draft a letter to the congregation and share with council via email. Jaimie to provide a skills/talent piece of it for consideration to include and begin to inform the congregation and gather information from the congregation. Discussed desire to ensure communication is occurring beyond Chimes and occurring regularly and that we are seeking input from the congregation, with a focus on sustainable income, not one-time events.

Reminder—Four Asset Areas—financial, skills/talents (go beyond what is just useful for the church), time (ex from book, woman was 94 had time to call and spend time with people), network (how to meet the needs of the community—who in the congregation has ties to the community to help with options to meet community need and fill our need too). Steve will attend July meeting to provide final presentation of Funding Forward. Pr Jaime is out and will not be at this meeting.

- b. Council Vacancy – Don Bender--- **Kerry Melby made a motion to appoint Don Bender to fill our vacant council spot, Joe Jackowski made a second. Motion carried.**

#### 10. New Business

- a) Bethlehem road sign (Joe)—Joe shared options to update the road sign. Not for immediate decision, but for consideration. Kerry will share with Women’s group in Sept, they have some money in their account already that was started to help with a new sign.
- b) Archive List (See attachment for approval)—**Kerry Melby made a motion to archive the complete list of names that have not been active, see attached. Jaimie Rudolph made a second and the motion carried.**
- c) Funeral Policy (See attachment for approval) Currently, we do not have a policy. This is needed to set expectations with funeral homes and with families. **Don Bender made a motion to approve and adopt the attached Funeral Policy for Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Joe Jackowski made a second and the motion carried.**
- d) Prevent Suicide Donation Request (See attachment) **Kerry Melby made a motion to use Thrivent Choice dollars to donate \$150 to the Prevent Suicide Columbia County. Amanda Bell made a second, motion carried.**
- e) Assisting Portage Food Pantry with scheduling (Geoff)—Amy would like to assist with this and asked about use of church equipment. **Kerry Melby made a motion to approve Amy’s use of Bethlehem equipment to assist with scheduling Portage Food Pantry needs. Joe Jackowski made a second, and the motion carried.**
- f) Library Comfort Kits (Kerry) Kerry just wanted to let us know she will explore what timeframe to do a donation drive for items and may have confirmation kids put these together.
- g) Christian Nationalism Education (Pastor Jaime)—Mark your calendars as the Synod will host an education event, Sunday, Sept 14 and Monday Sept 15 for Pastors and lay leaders. We don’t have the exact times yet, but it will be held in person at Bethel Lutheran in Madison. Pastors will have an additional day of education on Tuesday, Sept 16.
- h) Amended- Email vote took place July 8, 2025 after parking lot bid was shared with council. Council voted to proceed with the \$7,188 bid from Directional Striping Co. to seal and stripe the church parking lot this year.

11. Adjourn— **Jaimie Rudolph made a motion to adjourn, Don Bender made a second, motion carried, and meeting ended at 8:19 p.m.**

12. Lord’s Prayer