

Bethel Lutheran Church
Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting February 1, 2026

Minutes		
Members Present: A quorum was confirmed with 70 members of the Bethel Congregation signed in.		
Topic	Discussion and Decisions	Vote
Meeting called to order:	12:02:00 PM	
Agenda and Opening Prayer	<p>Pastor Ben led the congregaton in prayer.</p> <p>Kristine introduced the Council Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pr. Ben Sandin – Pastor • Janice Martinson – Communications Officer • Dave Tribby – Fiscal Officer • Ellen Aist – President Elect • Kristine Lui – President • Tony Stieber- HR Advisor • Lisa Laxson- Ministry Liaison • Members at large- AJ Aist (Youth), Angela Brown, Veronica Lentfer <p>Kristine shared the agenda.</p>	
Affirm Bethel's Mission	<p>Kristine reviewed Bethel's Mission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To prayerfully invite and welcome people into a relationship with God • To grow and equip one another as devoted followers of Jesus Christ • To care for and serve others empowered by the Holy Spirit 	
Approve Meeting Minutes:	<p>Kristine asked for a motion to approve the August 24, 2025 Congregational Meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made and seconded. A vote was taken and the motion carried.</p>	<p>There was a motion to approve the August 24, 2025 Congregational Meeting minutes and second. A vote taken and the motion carried.</p>
Pastor's Report: Pr. Ben Sandin	<p>Widening the Circle of Inclusion</p> <p>Doing Life together is internal, but we want to be an invitational church and be out in the community meeting</p>	

	<p>needs.</p> <p>Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking to hire a part-time Community Engagement Lead (20 hours/week). • To get our name out we have Bethel logo-ed tote bags. • NAMI Certification - Amanda Video Update on becoming a stigma-free mental health faith community - Bethel has NAMI certification and Emily Lin a therapist is now on site. Emily is not an employee of Bethel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Bethel completed certification in October 2025 ◦ We are providing resources for mental health – kiosk in narthex (NAMI provides print material for free) and Emily Lin will provide enrichment programs starting in February. There is a listing of the courses. Please register for the courses: Compassion Advocacy, Care Givers (on zoom), Family Fuzz for parents, Finding Meaning for youth group, Care for You and Me for Caring Connection team. ◦ Questions: Reach out to Amanda or Emily Lin. • The Church Council hosted a Sunday morning forum (October 26, 2025) regarding becoming a more inclusive church. During the forum, the Council introduced the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program, a guided process to enhance the congregation’s welcome to the LGBTQ+ community. After the forum, a motion was made at the council meeting to proceed with the RIC process; the motion carried. An educational process for the congregation will begin shortly. A core team is currently forming. Angela Brown and Tony Stieber have volunteered to be on that team. Additional members are invited to join. 	
<p>Ministries Report: Lisa Laxson</p>	<p>Lisa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thanked everyone who supports Bethel’s Ministries! - Reported on New(ish) and Notable Ministry Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • San Jose Family Shelter Breakfasts - Volunteers needed, contact Mark Evashenk. • Supper Clubs - Contact Karen Polyak for sign-ups and more information. • Food Trucks-Starting soon-Certain Sundays and 3rd Fridays. Recommendations for food trucks welcome-speak to Robyn Winegardner. • Communion Home Delivery-Contact Robyn W. to volunteer or to request delivery. 	

	<p>Music Ministry: Melody Wright reviewed past and future music programming. She introduced a new project to install lighting on the organ pipes. She concluded by inviting congregants to participate in the Choir and to attend the Mardi Gras Party on Thursday, February 12.</p> <p>Ministry: The Council recently conducted a "Gifts and Interests" survey, based on the principle of "when your gifts meet the needs of the world." The goal was to identify the unique professions, skills, hobbies and visions of the Bethel membership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, 26 members have responded. Results will be shared through the eNewsletter, the Bethel website and a poster display in the narthex. • The survey remains open for those who have not yet participated. Member input is vital for fostering new connections, exploring new directions for Bethel's ministries and identifying potential benevolence partners. 	
<p>Facilities Report: Tom Hogel</p>	<p>Tom greeted the congregation via recorded video from St. Louis, MO, where he is attending the Extravaganza for Lutheran Youth and Family Workers. Bethel is also represented at the event by Adam, Brian, Harumy and Ohana.</p> <p>Building & Accessibility Updates (Torvend)</p> <p>Research is underway for a new Hearing Loop or FM system. A congregational survey will be distributed to determine which technology best meets the needs of our members.</p> <p>Sheetrock approval is expected shortly. The current phase focuses on ADA-compliant restrooms, followed by the kitchen and remaining areas.</p> <p>ADA adjustments for the parking lot are scheduled for April 2026. The number of accessible parking spots will increase from three to five. Due to updated regulations requiring bumps on ramps, project costs have increased.</p> <p>Western States Youth Gathering (June 2026): Titled "A Faith Odyssey," this formative experience is designed to be life-changing for our youth.</p> <p>Upcoming Trips: An all-ages Mexico mission trip is set for April, and the annual Labor Day Retreat.</p>	

	<p>Adult & Social Groups: The "Out N About" group (Youth Group for Adults) continues to foster connection; participation statistics are available in the Annual Report.</p> <p>Fellowship: Events like the Chili Cook-off emphasize the current need for personal connection and our core mission of offering personal relationships with Jesus. The RIC process was also noted as an upcoming priority.</p> <p>The Challenge</p> <p>The congregation is challenged to find new ways to serve and reach out. The focus is not on the specific task, but on the commitment to doing something that makes a tangible difference in the world.</p>	
<p>Endowment Committee: Dave Larsen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endowment Fund Directive: Fund Visionary Projects which meet needs in the areas of Outreach, Education or Charitable Work. (Ongoing activities should be funded from the operating budget.) • Endowment committee members in 2025: Dave Larsen (outgoing), Jim Lentfer, Melissa Janssen and Jamie Laughlin – the Nominating Committee is working to fill the two vacancies. • Endowment Fund balance is \$256K, up 14% in calendar year 2025 (was up 8% in 2024) • In 2024, fund had a total gain on principal (think dividends) of \$8,200 which was available for grant distribution in 2025. Any remaining balance will roll back into principal. <p>Granted in 2025: \$4,400 distributed to three specific programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacuum Cleaner for West Valley Community Services • Food Market – \$600 • OnSite Sexuality Seminar for Parents - Presenter fee and associated expenses – \$2,000 • Bethel Young Adult ministry - meeting food and offsite event for CY2025 – \$1,800 <p>2026 Grant Process - \$8,400 Available for Distribution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least five potential projects have been identified • A new grant application form will be distributed soon • Applications received will be evaluated and voted upon • Approved grants will be distributed to the requesting parties ASAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see a committee member for information 	

- regarding making Endowment Fund contributions or directives to help the fund grow
- Information regarding the ELCA Ministry Growth Fund in which our Endowment Monies are invested is available upon request
- Thanks for your support!

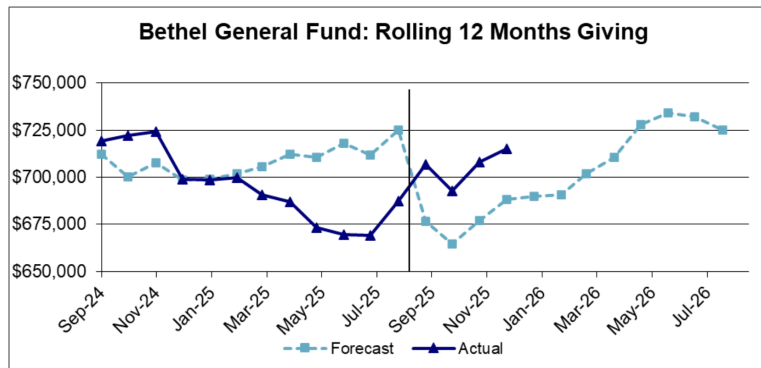
Financial Report:
Dave Tribby

FY'26 Financial Update
(September 1 - December 31, 2025)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>vs. Budget</u>
General Fund	\$319,754	+ \$26,754 (+9.1%)
Total Receipts	\$445,457	+ \$30,091 (+7.2%)
Total Expenses	\$405,889	+ \$1,197 (+0.3%)
Net Income Cash Basis*	\$63,702	+ \$13,370 (+26.6%)

* Excludes depreciation

Congregation Giving Trend



Capital Campaign Financial Update

Financing		\$2,270,077
Member contributions	\$2,070,641	
Set aside by Bethel	\$188,824	
Interest income	\$10,612	
Expenses (completed)		\$1,782,591
Parsonage	\$1,379,195	
Interest expense	\$15,792	
Torvend and related	\$387,604	
Remaining for Torvend		\$487,486

<p>New Business (vote)</p>	<p>Ralph Miller of the Nominating committee presented</p> <p>For Nominating committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee is 3-5 members to bring forth candidates for Council and Committee openings • Current nominating committee members are Ralph Miller, Brett Deutscher, Robyn Winegardner, Dianne Stauffer • Invitation for volunteers for nominating committee – no hands were raised <p>- Vote: Bethel Edowment Committee Members Alice Isaacson 3-year term Larry Polyak 3-year term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motion made and seconded. • Motion carried. <p>- Vote: Bethel Council Members Tony Steiber 2-year term HR Advisor Greg Steinke 2-year term Member at Large Angela Brown President Elect</p> <p>Ellen was our president elect and will become our president. Thanks to Kristine for her leadership and service.</p>	<p>Motion made and seconded to approve the nominees for the Endowment committee. Motion carried.</p> <p>Motion was made and seconded to approve the Council Member nominees. A vote taken and the motion carried.</p>
<p>Dorothy Meyer Award 2026</p>	<p>Dorothy Meyer Award for Joyful service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exhibits Christian ideals and principles in all aspects of their daily life • volunteers and participates in many Bethel ministries and duties • \$500 donation to a charity of that individual’s choice <p style="text-align: center;">Congratulations Robyn Winegardner!</p>	
<p>Closing Prayer: Kristine Lui</p>	<p>Kristine offered a prayer in closing.</p>	
<p>Meeting adjourned</p>	<p>12:55:00 PM</p>	

A recording of the meeting is available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCdEfqD0S7U>

Submitted by: Janice Martinson