

**Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren
Church Board Minutes**

Monday, October 9, 2023, 6:45 PM in Room 104 & via Zoom

In Attendance: Alyssa Cross (Clerk), Jeff Eisenbise (Chair), Lynne Hockley, Karen Ungemach, Sandy Brubaker, Sandy Garman, Lois Herr, Dave Leiter, Kevin Engle (Chair Elect), Don Ziegler, Pastor Jason Haldeman, Pastor Naomi Kraenbring, Kurt DeGoede, Kurt Sollenberger, Kendra Gotshall (Treasurer), Jim Hollinger, Joe Detrick (Moderator), Pastor Liz Bidgood Enders, Gina Strouse, Duane Hernley

I.	<p>Opening Devotions Alyssa Cross</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When I read Jeff’s pledge card letter to the congregation with his metaphors of long cold winters and spring planting, two things came to mind – resilience and hope. And so I’m borrowing a few of Krista Tippet’s words from “Becoming Wise” regarding these ideas: ● Hope Reimagined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hope is distinct, in my mind, from optimism or idealism. It has nothing to do with wishing. It references reality at every turn and reveres truth. It lives open-eyed and wholehearted with the darkness that is woven inelectuabally into the light of life. Hope, like every virtue, is a choice that becomes a practice that becomes spiritual muscle memory. It’s a renewable resource for moving through life as it is, not as we wish it to be. ○ Hope is not an emotion. Hope is a cognitive, behavioral process that we learn when we experience adversity, when we have relationships that are trustworthy, when people have faith in our ability to get out of a jam. ○ Resilience acknowledges from the outset that things will go wrong. All of our solutions will eventually outlive their usefulness. We will make messes, and disruptions that we do not cause or predict will land on us. This is the drama of being alive! ○ To nurture a resilient human being, or a resilient church, is to build an expectation of adversity, a capacity for inevitable vulnerability. Resilience honors the unromantic reality of who we are and how we are, and so it becomes a refreshingly practical compass for the systems and societies we can craft. It’s a shift from wish-based optimism to reality-based hope. It is akin to meaningful sustained happiness – not dependent on a state of perfection or permanent satisfaction, not an emotional response to the circumstances of the moment, but a way of being that can meet the range of emotions and experiences, light and dark, that add up to a life. Resilience is at once proactive, pragmatic, and humble. It knows it needs others. It doesn’t overcome failure so much as transmute it, integrating it into the reality that evolves. ● I look at what we’re attempting with the congregational assessment tool and the congregational endowment study. These are two distinct efforts at living open-eyed, facing our reality, and pivoting in response to our current circumstances. It’s how we are practicing hope for this congregation and how we will continue to be a resilient people.
II.	<p>Acceptance of Previous Minutes Board Chair</p> <p>Action: Approval of September 11 Minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Minutes accepted as presented.
III.	<p>Action Item Board Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Motion to approve a memo expressing affirmation of support for Desiree Weaver-Spidel’s pursuit of licensing for ministry by the church board of Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motion seconded by Don Ziegler. Approved unanimously.
IV.	<p>Action Item Board Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Motion to approve the authorization of pension contributions for Liz Bidgood Enders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motion seconded by Kevin Engle. Approved unanimously. ● Motion to approve disability insurance coverage backdated to September for Liz Bidgood Enders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motion seconded by Kurt DeGoede. Approved unanimously.
V.	<p>Discussion Board Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider and discuss ramifications of offering prorated pension benefits to non-pastoral employees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Topic postponed for future discussion.
VI.	<p>Action Item Board Chair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Motion to approve the formation of an ad-hoc Congregational Membership Committee. This committee will be charged with making a comprehensive study of all feasible ways of making our membership roll a

	<p>more reflective representation of our congregation. The leadership team will be responsible for appointing the committee members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Motion seconded by Karen Ungemach. Approved unanimously.
VII.	<p>Report from Congregational Endowment Study Committee Kevin Engle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The committee, consisting of Christina Bucher, Herb Hockley, Ray Leckrone and Kevin Engle has been quite busy since the Spring Council meeting, meeting a total of eight times, including meetings with invited guests and the Leadership Team of the church. It was decided to have an educational series, “Money Talks” in an effort to have an informed faith community. The 6-week series was launched September 10, and will conclude October 15. The curriculum that we’ve chosen was written by Everence, and is a study of Luke and what that book says about handling our “blessings”. Three teachers were selected to handle the Bible Study for three of the weeks, after the Week 1 Introduction, and the final two sessions will have panel discussions, Week 5 with the Teachers, and Week 6 with a variety of members interested in this topic. The purpose of the series is to equip the congregation to be able to make an informed decision. The goal of the committee for the series is to keep an open mind and not persuade one direction or the other, and to align our congregational financial practices to correspond to our theological and ethical values, however that is defined. So far, the series has been interesting and the attendees have been very engaged with questions and discussion. ● There is some concern that some voices are not speaking up in opposition. It’s important that we hear those voices. The committee will continue to meet after the series is completed, and it is planned to have more guests involved, so we can hear a larger cross section of the church. Next step is to have an update for the December Council with the ultimate goal of having a clear recommendation on how we handle our endowment for the Spring Council Meeting 2024.
VIII.	<p>Discussion Craig Coble</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A concern was raised regarding increasing reliance on web-based communication at the expense of non-web connected congregants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pastors to follow-up with Craig directly to hear more about this concern.
IX.	<p>Treasurer’s Report (Exhibit A) Treasurer</p> <p>Action: Approval of the Treasurer’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Report accepted as presented.
X.	<p>Presentation of Preliminary Budget Treasurer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resources to generate an itemized project list with estimated costs and prioritize the projects so we can have a better informed discussion regarding their budget. ● A revised budget proposal will be emailed for a board vote prior to the November 13 board meeting.
XI.	<p>Commission & Deacon Highlights & Concerns Commission Chairs</p> <p>**Each Commission should take this time to include any pertinent comments relating to their program/budgets.</p>
	<p>Christian Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No changes in budget.
	<p>Expressions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Budget proposal: The 2024 budget is 12% below the 2023 budget (\$12,475 vs. \$14,252). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have been frugal with our budget in 2023 as Kim, Rachel, and the Expressions Commission were all in new roles, and unsure how the year would play out. Looking to expand the use of funding in some areas and have eliminated/reduced outdated lines for 2024. ○ We plan to use the approximately \$17,000 from the O'Donnell fund to upgrade the video system for streaming in 2024. ○ The approximately \$3,400 from the Bucher Fund will be used for for special events (along with supplemental funding from the guest musician line as needed). ● November Walking Roots events: creativity workshop for children, all ages concert, faith formation hour, Sunday worship - watch for more announcements coming soon. ● Worship musicians - please invite and encourage individuals you know to talk to Rachel or Kim if they might be interested in participating in small ensembles or accompanying worship singing in small groups - we strive to increase participation in worship. Also considering, hiring college musicians to supplement congregational involvement.
	<p>Nurture</p>

- Pavlovitz event: We discussed plans for volunteering and supporting the event through book and blog discussions and encouraging others to do so via the QR codes.
- Faith Markers: We are planning for the presentation of Bibles to current third and fourth graders.
- Prime Time: We reviewed multiple events that are already planned and responded to ideas for new events.
- Budget: We reviewed and updated our line-item budget for next year.
- Christmas: We discussed the possibility of working with the deacons and other church members to provide a time during December for caroling and visitation to members not able to attend in person for a variety of reasons.
- Future Topics: We discussed tasks for next month's meeting and brainstormed how to build up membership in the Nurture Commission. In an unusual progression, all but one of our members will be exiting the Nurture Commission at the end of 2023.

Resources

- Anticipating 2023 expenses to exceed budget by approximately \$100,000 (boiler to be replaced before year end).
- Leases are completed and signed.
- Updating church usage rental guidelines.
- HVAC project update - feeling better about having remote access into the system.
- Increasing property insurance by \$2,000,000 per finance committee recommendation
- Kitchen/Fellowship Hall renovation: Jeff Mummau is getting involved. Hoping to still have access to portions of the space during the renovation. Working with child care and nursery school to figure out how to navigate the disruption. Planning to start at the beginning of January.

Witness

- 2024 Budget Notes:
 - Increased district giving by \$3,500. Cut from other areas to be able to increase this line item.
 - Understand that the Witness budget does not reflect all of the giving of our congregation. O&M distribution results in additional giving at the end of the year. Conduits are also available for extra giving.
- Recent expenses paid out of O&M funds:

Bethany Seminary	Tuition - Jason Haldeman	\$1,100.00
	Tuition - Desiree Weaver-Spidel	\$1,100.00
Jason Haldeman	Textbooks for Fall Semester	\$51.71
Desiree Weaver-Spidel	Textbooks for Fall Semester	\$73.13

- We are still waiting to hear about the Haitian family. The person from Florida who is supposedly sponsoring the wife and daughter, would like us to send her money if the wife and daughter come over. We are not comfortable with that so Paul is in discussion about that with her. There is some concern that this program for Haitian families will end, and then it will be more difficult to help them.
- Nigerian luncheon is scheduled for Sunday, 10/15.

Deacons

- The Deacons continue with weekly visitation. A nice addition is the weekly delivery of a bouquet of flowers from the garden of Jeff and Marcia Mummau to three households. Many thanks to Jeff and Marcia for the bouquets and to Barry and Sandy Garman for delivering them.
- In addition to our other weekly ministries of greeting at the doors, providing transportation when needed, and answering benevolence requests, we prepared and served a light meal for 200 following the service for Gene Ellis on September 23, and prepared and served a Love Feast with communion for 150 on October 8. Ninety were in attendance. We will be preparing for 75 and serving a meal following the service for Lucille Snowden on October 28.
- The Ministry Teams that were formed around two years ago are working well. We have decided it's time to reach out to all in the congregation again to determine if there are others who wish to have their names added to one or more of these teams. Watch for information. We met with Pastor Liz recently to discuss the question of deacon ministry/ministry teams. She and the rest of the staff will join the deacons to determine just how we want to move forward.

XII.

Reports from Pastors

- Pastor Liz

Pastors

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 6-weeks in and getting acquainted (with people, with how things work, etc.) ● Pastor Jason <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ M.Div review and graduation in the spring ○ Planning for sabbath rest ● Pastor Naomi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Word is “Connections”. Lots of great conversations recently. Finding unity in issues. ○ District conference took place this past week. Positive reception.
XIII.	<p>Next Meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board Meeting: Monday, November 13, 6:45 pm ● Fall Council Meeting: Sunday, December 3, 2023 (Reports due November 13)
XIV.	<p>Adjournment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting concluded at 8:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Alyssa Cross (Clerk)

October 9, 2023