

Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 12th / 6:00 / Large Conference Room

Present-Bruce Belseth, Pastor Megan Preston, Greg Tvrdik, Michelle Flaten, Gene Hartwig, Scott McDonald, Stephanie Heseltine, Cody Hammer, Pastor Karen Young Trenne, and Pastor Julé Ballinger.

Change in Council Membership

- **Motion to accept the resignation of Jed Burkey as the chair of the Finance and Facilities Board and to appoint Dave Holtz until the next Council Meeting - Scott (M); Stephanie (2nd); motion carried**

Opening Devotions / Prayer - Gene's Faith Story

Reports

Secretary's Report from December Meeting

- **Motion to approve the December Secretary's report - Gene (M); Cody (2nd); motion carried**

Treasurer's Report / Attendance Numbers

- **Motion to approve the December financial report - Cody (M); Stephanie (2nd); motion carried**

December 2025

YTD Income \$1,590,721

YTD Expense \$1,714,384

YTD Net Income (-\$123,663)

YTD Budgeted Expenses \$1,769,500

YTD Actual Expenses \$1,714,384

Expenses Under Budget (-\$123,663)

Financial Notes

All money that was borrowed with the line of credit has been paid back. The cash reserve amount has also been paid back. Currently the checking account has a negative balance of -\$43,277.

- **Motion to move the cash reserves back to the general fund in the amount of \$135,000 - Scott (M); Michelle (2nd); motion carried**

Attendance Notes

The average attendance in December of 2025 was 478 and the average yearly attendance was 535.

Board Reports

Serving

No meeting held since the last Council Meeting. The Serving Board will meet after the Annual Meeting and the budget is approved.

Worship

No meeting held since the last Council Meeting. The Worship Board will meet on January 19th, 2026.

Learning

No meeting held since the last Council Meeting.

Communications

No meeting held since the last Council Meeting. The Communications Board did look at their board's budget via email. All members were in agreement of the proposed Communications Board budget for 2026. They also made a decision to only print a small number of paper bulletins for the 8:30 am service as a cost saving measure. Bulletins will be available by request from an usher.

Finance & Facilities

The Finance and Facilities Board met to review year end financials and the budget. They added the cost of background checks for volunteers as part of the Finance and Facilities Board budget. They gave a budget recommendation for the Council.

There was some discussion about solar panels that was proposed by the Care for Creation Committee and possible changes to lawn mowing costs. They shared that final bills are being submitted to insurance in regards to the lighting strike now that the bell is operational again as of December 23rd, 2025. They reviewed where the church is at in regards to the Capital Campaign. The board made a motion to bring the Council about First Lutheran being a Temporary Evacuation Point for Douglas County Emergency Services in the case of a natural disaster or emergency.

Pastors Updates - Pastor Karen, Pastor Julé, and Pastor Megan

Pastor Karen's Report

Pastor Karen shared that the Interim Task Force finished their congregation meetings about the history of First Lutheran. A question was brought up at the directors meeting about communication to the congregation with the results of these meetings. Pastor Karen shared they will be meeting on Tuesday the 20th. The next steps will be to start working on the Ministry Site Profile (MSP) questions for the next lead pastor. She shared the Interim Task Force will seek information from the congregation and this will be done in February. In March the congregation will give input for the future of our congregation and what they feel called to do. Pastor Karen shared the goal is to have the MSP done by Easter which is the 1st week of April. Then the church will gather a call committee.

Pastor Julé's Report

Pastor Julé went on four home visits and did one hospital visit. She led two funerals and worked on the Lenten worship themes for both the Wednesday and Sunday services. Pastor Julé led prayers for the preschool program and participated in the family game day on Sunday. She taught confirmation and also had 11 days off for her wedding, honeymoon and vacation. She will miss the next Council meeting because she will be at a training in Philadelphia. This training is about Visioning and Strategic Planning and Staffing.

Pastor Megan's Report

Pastor Megan helped wrap up the parish nurse position as Ann Challes officially retired in December. Pastor Megan helped lead Christmas Eve services. The Worship Team did evaluations of the Advent season. Pastor Megan went on hospital visits, home visits and funeral visits as well. She is working on some Lenten planning and also took a few days off in December.

Jessica Paulsen Recent Updates

Pastor Megan celebrated that John Olson, John Olson is on the Synod staff person for candidacy, reached out and shared that Conference 7 has a rural internship fund of \$5,000 they will not be using this year. They are donating those funds to support Jessica Paulsen's internship. They are challenging Conference 8, which is First Lutherans conference, to match that donation. The church has asked the The Endowment Fund for \$10,000 to support Jessica Paulsen's internship. They meet on January 26th and we will know if that request will be granted after that meeting. So far members of the congregation have donated over \$2400 to support her internship.

Annual Meeting Planning

The Annual Meeting will be on February 8th, 2026 at 11:15 am. Greg T. will send notifications to the congregation. The ballot has been finalized for voting on Synod Assembly Voting Members and Luther Crest Voting Members. Michelle will take minutes at the Annual Meeting. All Council Members to be seated in the front row and help with Signatures, Quorum, and Ballots.

Care for Creation Official Membership

There will be a follow up report after their next meeting which is Sunday, January 18th.

Budget Updates

- **Motion to approve to accept the operational portion of the budget excluding personnel - Scott (M); Cody (2nd); motion carried**

Temporary Evacuation Site

Greg T. shared that Douglas County Emergency Management approached First Lutheran about becoming a temporary evacuation site for a natural disaster and/or emergency.

- **Motion to approve First Lutheran Church as a temporary emergency preparedness site as requested by Douglas County Emergency Management - Cody (M); Gene (2nd); motion carried**

Notes from the Last Council Forum

Cody and Scott shared that about 25 attend the meeting including Pastor Julé. They reviewed the minutes. Then people asked questions about the following: memorials and access to funds; Preschool financials (Melisa shared information about the Preschool); the seminary fund at First; if there was a way to get numbers about online viewership and/or giving; financial costs of bulletin. People shared ways to raise funds, fundraising through youth, increasing volunteers to help strengthen engagement, shared ways to give money throughout the year not just at the end and that special financial asks raise more money.

Pastor Karen's Contract Extension

- **Motion to extend Pastor Karen's interim contract from January 1st, 2026 through June 30th, 2026 - Michelle (M); Scott (2nd); motion carried**

Closing: Lord's Prayer

Reminders:

- **January 12th Meeting Forum Leaders Wednesday January 14th and Sunday January 18th are Scott, Stephanie, and Michelle.**
- **January 27th Meeting Forum Leaders Sunday, February 1st Only are Scott, Michelle, Cody and other Council Members able. This meeting will be part of the Financial Report Meeting.**
- **Next Council Meeting - Tuesday, January 27th at 6:00 in the Large Conference Room. Opening Devotions / Prayer - Cody's Faith Story**
- **Annual Meeting - Sunday, February 8th at 11:15 in the Sanctuary.**
- **Next Executive Meeting - Thursday, March 5th at Jalisco Mexican Restaurant at 11:15.**
- **March Council Meeting - Monday, March 9th in the Large Conference Room at 6:00.**

Submitted by:

Michelle Flaten, Secretary