

Agenda
Congregational Council
St. John's Lutheran Church
May 27th, 2025

1. Devotions (15 minutes) on Chapters 3-4 of *Strength to Love*

2. Approval of April Minutes

3. Financial Report

Update from Treasurer Judd Lohman (see addendum #2).

4. Discussion Items

a. Children's Education & Ministry Board requests that Council discuss how to include children with neurodiversity at St. John's. Julie Brehmer has provided the board some articles regarding what parents who have children with neurodiversity are looking for in a church.

b. Worship and Arts Board would like to discuss an idea about an outing to support the St. John's Softball team as an evangelism outreach to get people to come and be a part of something. Adult Ministry Board is reportedly looking at something similar. Are there other ideas for opportunities for summer fellowship?

c. Do we need to provide a congregation-wide communication informing congregants that issues surrounding immigration are on the radar of the church's leadership? Several members have asked about this.

5. Action Items

6. Pastors' Reports (see addendum #1)

a. Pastor Fickenscher

b. Pastor Davis

5. Old Business

6. New Business

7. Future Dates

Board Night: Tuesday, June 10th, 7 pm

Council Meeting: Tuesday, June 24th, 7 pm

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Addendum #1: Pastors' Report to Council for May 2025

Official Acts:

Memorial service for Jeanne Narum, May 3

Memorial service for Myrna Otte, May 9

Baptism for Valerie McGuire, May 4

Baptism of Addison Violet Monson, May 25

Worship life

It was a month of celebrations, including concluding services for each of our choirs for the season. Of particular note is how strong adult music participation has been this season, both with the St. Johns' Chorale and with Rejoice Ringers. We continually hear from newcomers how much music, and particularly our congregation's singing, is a draw for this congregation.

We have especially noted this program year that the early/late services are frequently lopsided, except in those instances when there is a 10:45 only event (like confirmation or a baptism). Bethel noted the same pattern this year and is experimenting with a schedule change going forward, moving their second service up by 15 minutes.

Children, Youth and Family programming wrapped up its year with the Sunday School festival atmosphere on Mother's Day, and field trips for the Wednesday programming on May 14. Attention now turns to "bridge" events, VBS and camp in the next two months. Participation in Confirmation and High School Youth group was the most consistent across the year that we have seen since at least pre-COVID. Our focus in Confirmation and High School Youth Group this year was on the varied of relationship you find in the Bible and how we can relate our own relationships to God and others with those stories.

Facilities

The new flooring for the lower level is nearly complete. It's remarkable to see what a difference it makes!

A small kitchen crew is gathering to talk about needed updates and planning for replacement of appliances that are reaching the end of their lifespan.

We continue to await Xcel's correction of our billing to account for our solar panel production. We filed a formal complaint with the CUP in April and have been assigned an advocate. They have acknowledged that we are not being credited yet, but have not given us a timeline for when we can expect to see the correction complete.

Social Concerns

Lighthouse, a new effort led by Isaiah, is working in southern Minnesota to gather faith leaders and faith-based communities around two primary concerns: 1) proposed cuts to our social safety net at the federal and state levels and 2) protection of due process for all Minnesotans. Todd Lippert, who attends St. John's, is the local organizer for this effort. A number of house gatherings will be happening through the summer for people to learn about this effort.

Stephen Ministry

Stephen Ministry leaders are preparing for a new group of people to be trained as Stephen Ministers, beginning in the fall of 2025. Invitations have been sent out to a number of people who have been seen as potential Stephen Ministers. If anyone knows of someone they think would be a good Stephen Minister, please reach out to Pastor Jonathan.

Addendum #2: Treasurer's Report to Council for May 2025

There are no significant issues or concerns at this time.

Total Operating Income is (\$5k) below budget for the month of April and (\$42) below budget YTD.

- Offering:
 - o April offering was (\$7k) below budget.
 - o YTD offering is (\$36k) below budget.
 - o 2025 YTD offering actuals through April are virtually identical to 2024 offering through April.
- Other Income
 - o YTD combined "Other Income" and "other Gifts" are \$16k higher than budget. (\$18k of interest from CDs was deposited in February. This amount was a bit higher than expected. (the principal amounts for these CDs were rolled over for another year). Also, due to the positive response of the Sustaining Grace Capital Campaign, funds have come in more heavily weighted in the first year. This has led to the checking account interest being higher than expected.)
 - o Very few Designated and Foundation Funds have been released so for this year, these items are (\$22k) below budget.

Total Operating Expense is (\$9k) below budget for the month of April, and (\$44k) below budget YTD.

- Personnel is (\$27k) below budget YTD through April. There has been a lag in the reporting for 2025 salary increases. This is expected to be brought up to date, retroactively, in May.
- All other Board expense categories are close to budget as we are just four months into the year.

Net Income/(loss)

- The Net Income YTD through April is \$2K above budget.

There are no particular areas of concern through April.