

Minutes
Congregational Council
St. John's Lutheran Church
April 28th, 2026

Members: Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Pastor Jonathan Davis, President Paul Beck, President Elect Pam Groves-Gaggioli, Treasurer Judd Lohmann, Secretary Steve Reece; Council Members Cheryl Buck, Beth Cox, Jill Enestvedt, Chris Engstrom, Brian Evenson, Dan Hanson, Andrea Hoff, Susan Lohmann, and Ruthie Neuger.

Present: Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Pastor Jonathan Davis, President Paul Beck, President Elect Pam Groves-Gaggioli, Treasurer Judd Lohmann, Secretary Steve Reece; Council Members Cheryl Buck, Beth Cox, Jill Enestvedt, Chris Engstrom, Brian Evenson, Susan Lohmann, and Ruthie Neuger; Susanne Smith (representing Property and Grounds Board).

Absent: Council Members Dan Hanson and Andrea Hoff.

President Paul Beck called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Devotions based on Walter Brueggemann's *The Prophetic Imagination*

Pastor Fickenscher led a discussion of pages 21-37 on the Solomonic vs. the Mosaic ethos of justice.

2. Approval of March Minutes

Cheryl Buck made a motion, seconded by Pam Groves-Gaggioli, for approval of the minutes of the March Council Budget Meeting. Motion carried.

3. Financial Report

See addendum #1 (below) for Treasurer's Report.

4. Action Items

Chris Engstrom made a motion, seconded by Jill Enestvedt, to offer a "synod-sponsored call" to Pastor Katie Fick to serve as a "bridge pastor" for the three months that Pastor Pam Fickenscher is on sabbatical (contract attached to Council email). Motion carried.

5. Discussion Items

Worship and Arts Board requested that Council discuss the following two matters:

The possible reinstallation of the Trinity Wheel that used to hang from the ceiling above the baptismal font but was removed when the lectern and baptismal font were moved during the most recent renovation. Council recommended that Worship and Arts Board determine: 1) if the Trinity Wheel would add positively to the visual appeal of the sanctuary (would it block or impede anything); 2) if it would need to be installed at the same place and in the same manner as it was originally; 3) if, given its great size and weight, it could be safely installed hanging from the ceiling. The Worship and Arts Board will deliberate further on how to proceed.

Possible support from St. John's for the Lutheran Summer Music Camp at St. Olaf. Council enthusiastically recommended that the Worship and Arts Board submit a formal request to the Foundation for \$3,000, after which the Foundation and Council will consider the request.

6. Pastors' Report

See addendum #2 (below) for Pastors' Report.

- a. Pastor Fickenscher
- b. Pastor Davis

7. Board Updates

8. Old Business

9. New Business

10. Future Dates

Board Meetings on May 12th, 7 pm

Council Meeting on May 26th, 7 pm

President Paul Beck adjourned the meeting at 8:05.

Minutes submitted by Secretary Steve Reece.

Addendum #1: Treasurer's Financial Report for March, 2026:

Total Operating Income is (\$26k) below budget for the month of March, and (\$93k) below budget YTD through March.

- Offering:
 - o March offering was (\$20k) below budget.
 - o March YTD offering is (\$70k) below budget.
 - o 2026 March YTD offering is about (\$32k) below 2025 YTD offering through March.
- Other Income
 - o March YTD combined "Other Income" and "other Gifts" on budget.
 - o March YTD Designated and Foundation Funds are (\$24k) below budget.

Total Operating Expense is (\$14k) below budget for March, and (\$47k) below budget YTD through March.

- Personnel was (\$4k) below budget for March and (\$18k) below budget YTD. Because of the timing of how salaries are paid, there will be one month where salaries are doubled up and this should be on target by year end.
- All other Board expense categories were (\$9k) below budget for March and (\$30k) below budget YTD.

- We are still waiting for the savings from the Solar Panels to show up on our utility bills.

Net Income/(loss)

- Net Income for March is (\$13K) below budget, and (\$46k) below budget YTD.

YTD offering is (\$70k) below budget through March. This is a concern. A communication to the congregation regarding the shortfall will be send in the first quarter giving statements and a brief status will be reported in the bulletin.

Addendum #2: Pastors’ Report for April, 2026:

Official acts:

Baptism of Tyson Gorg, April 12
 Baptism of Bailey Laabs April 12
 Baptism of Lila Kehret, April 19

Reception of new members, April 19

Funeral for Lynn Matta April 20

Staff:

We are midway through the interview process for our next Director for Ministry with Youth and Families. We hope to have a final candidate identified in the next month and ready to begin before Kristin Partlo leaves us at the end of July.

Katie Fick is ready to serve St. John’s during Pastor Fickenscher’s interim. Because of her call status as a bivocational pastor, she needs to have this position as Bridge Pastor affirmed with a synodical call. This does not change her compensation or term with the congregation, but it does make her an official employee of St. John’s for the three months she will serve.

Worship:

This year’s Easter was very robust – standing room only at the first service, 200 served in Easter breakfast, and a comfortably full second service. Big thank you’s are due to the St. John’s Chorale, who sang for both services.

Below are Holy Week attendances for the past three years. Some of these variations may be due to when Spring breaks fall, since each year Easter lands a little differently. Of note this year was that in addition to Palm Sunday morning, many St. John’s folks also attended the 2 hour public procession and service in Saint Paul at the Capitol.

| | 2024 | 2025 | 2026 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|
| Palm Sunday | 216 | 286 | 263 |
| Maundy Thursday | 145 | 106 | 121 |
| Good Friday | 150 | 189 | 177 |
| Easter Sunday | 533 | 630 | 671 |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|

CYE:

St. John's will be partnering with Bethel Lutheran Church again on VBS this year. VBS will be in early August, which is a little later than usual. This year we will be bringing in staff from Good Earth Village to help run the program.

Stephen Ministry:

Eight new Stephen Ministers will be commissioned on April 26th at second service. This brings our total number to 165 Stephen Ministers trained at St. John's since the 1980s.

Around the church:

St John's hosted the Cannon River Conference Assembly on April 16. We offered fellowship, worship, and a presentation by member and Minnesota State Economist Tony Becker.

The Alan Storey events have been well attended all week. This has included a gathering with nearly 50 clergy on Tuesday, around 100 youth on Wednesday, around 240 community members on Thursday, and about 140 people attending the Friday/Saturday *Manna and Mercy Retreat*. Many thanks to all the staff and people around St. John's who helped make these events possible.