

**Minutes**  
**Congregational Council**  
**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
**May 26th, 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, Secretary Steve Reece; Council Members Beth Cox, Jill Enestvedt, Chris Engstrom, Brian Evenson, and Ruthie Neuger; Vern Koester (representing Property and Grounds Board), Dave Zdenek (representing Evangelism and Communications).

**Absent:** Treasurer Judd Lohmann; Council Members Dan Hanson, Cheryl Buck, and Susan Lohmann.

President Paul Beck called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

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

Pastor Fickenscher led a discussion of pages 39-57 on the prophetic response to the Solomonic ethos of justice.

**2. Approval of April Minutes**

Dave Zdenek made a motion, seconded by Pam Groves-Gaggioli, for approval of the minutes of the April Council Budget Meeting. Motion carried.

**3. Financial Report**

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

**4. Action Items**

**5. Discussion Items**

The Evangelism and Communications Board had requested that Council discuss the possibility of offering some follow-up programs to Alan Storey's visit based on Daniel Erlander's book *Manna and Mercy*. One meeting for the broader community has already been scheduled. Council expressed enthusiastic support for the planning of further opportunities.

**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 June 9<sup>th</sup>, 7 pm

Council Meeting on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7 pm

President Paul Beck adjourned the meeting at 8:50.

Minutes submitted by Secretary Steve Reece.

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

Total Operating Income is (\$16k) below budget for the month of April, and (\$109k) below budget YTD through April.

- Offering:
  - o April offering was (\$11k) below budget.
  - o April YTD offering is (\$81k) below budget.
  - o 2026 April YTD offering is about (\$32k) below 2025 YTD offering through April.
  
- Other Income
  - o April YTD combined "Other Income" and "other Gifts" is \$3k above budget.
  - o April YTD Designated and Foundation Funds are (\$33k) below budget.

Total Operating Expense is (\$17k) below budget for April, and (\$64k) below budget YTD through April.

- Personnel is (\$6k) below budget for April and (\$24k) 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 (\$11k) below budget for April and (\$41k) below budget YTD.
  - o YTD Property and Grounds is (\$15k) below Budget
  - o YTD Benevolence, Youth are both about (\$6k) below budget
  - o No Boards are above budget YTD
- We received our long awaited bill From Xcel energy that was to reflect the combination of our energy usage and "credit" for the energy produced by the Solar Panels. Unfortunately, there looks to be issues with "credit" amount that Xcel needs to reconcile and explain.

Net Income/(loss)

- Net Income for April is \$1k above budget, and (\$45k) below budget YTD.

YTD offering is (\$81k) below budget through April. This is a concern. A communication to the congregation regarding the shortfall was sent out with the first quarter giving statements and a brief status was reported in the bulletin. We will see how the month of May looks.

**Addendum #2:** Pastors' Report for May, 2026:

**Official acts:**

Baptism of Eric Hahn, May 3

Baptism of Russell Johnson, May 10

Funeral for Joan Bell, May 21 (deceased in 2025)

**Staff:**

We are pleased that our preferred candidate for the Director of Ministry with Youth and Families has accepted our offer. We are giving him a few more days to inform his current congregation before we make a public announcement. We expect him to start work here in the second half of July.

The staff met for our annual retreat on Thursday May 14, meeting off-site at All Saints Episcopal. This annual time helps us re-set our communications with each other and look ahead to the coming program year.

**Worship:**

We moved to the single worship service program this past Sunday, May 24 and will continue having one service through the Defeat of Jesse James weekend. This is an especially long summer because of how the holidays fall, so we will be interested to see how attendance shapes up through the season.

**CYE:**

Confirmation and afterschool programming wrapped up in the first part of May. We are looking forward to the youth mission trip in June, and Vacation Bible school/ day camp opportunities in August.

**Around the church:**

Work began last week on a new security system. This will reduce the need to leave doors open for outside groups and increase our ability to monitor who is coming in and out of the building. There may be some bumps in the road as groups get used to the new system, but staff believe the new system will help reduce the incidents of doors being left open (intentionally or not).

Thanks to Deb Miller, Kristin Partlo and Dayle Matheny for representing St. John's along with Pastor Pam at the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Assembly on May 2.

St. John's will be participating again with a booth at Pride in the Park on Saturday June 6. Because protesters have harassed attendees in the past in the name of God, a call has gone out especially to local clergy to be a de-escalating and welcoming presence for the event.

Organizing is beginning for this fall's elections and efforts to protect every voter's rights. Isaiah is launching a multi-state initiative called Faith in Us, building a national network of clergy who will be ready to speak out for civil rights and voter protection in the fall. The League of Women Voters is also gathering leaders locally to discuss how our community organizations can work together to provide accurate information and protect polling places.