

Minutes
Congregational Council
St. John's Lutheran Church
December 16th, 2025

Members: Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Pastor Jonathan Davis, President Michelle Kramer-Prevost, President Elect Paul Beck, Treasurer Judd Lohmann, Secretary Steve Reece; Council Members Cheryl Buck, Jill Enestvedt, Dan Hanson, Andrea Hoff, Susan Lohmann, and Maggie Odell.

Present: Pastor Jonathan Davis, President Michelle Kramer-Prevost, President Elect Paul Beck, Treasurer Judd Lohmann, Secretary Steve Reece; Council Members Cheryl Buck, Jill Enestvedt, Andrea Hoff, Susan Lohmann, and Maggie Odell; Kristin Partlo (representing the Youth Education & Ministry Board), Rob Hebensperger (representing the Worship and Arts Board), and Adam Loy (representing the Children's Ministry and Education Board).

Absent: Pastor Pam Fickenscher, Dan Hanson

President Michelle Kramer-Prevost called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Devotions on Chapters 15 of Martin Luther King Jr's *Strength to Love*

Pastor Davis led a discussion on the final chapter of this collection of King's sermons and essays – “Pilgrimage to Nonviolence” – which attempts to offer a synthesis between liberalism and orthodoxy.

2. Approval of November Minutes

Paul Beck made a motion, seconded by Jill Enestvedt, to approve the November Council Minutes. Motion carried.

3. Financial Report

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

4. Action Items

Andrea Hoff made a motion, seconded by Cheryl Buck, to submit revisions of the Bylaws to the congregation at its annual meeting on January 25th, 2026 (most recent version of the Bylaws is in the Council Files). Motion carried.

Sue Lohmann made a motion, seconded by Paul Beck, to submit revisions to the Personnel Policy (especially section 16 regarding leaves) to the congregation at its annual meeting on January 25th, 2026 (most recent version is in the “Employee Handbook” in the Council Files). Motion carried.

Paul Beck made a motion, seconded by Maggie Odell, to submit revisions to the Constitution (as mandated by the Synod) to the congregation at its annual meeting on January 25th, 2026 (most recent version of the Constitution is in the Council Files). Motion carried.

Copies of these three documents must be sent out to the congregation at least thirty days before the 2026 Annual Meeting (i.e., by Christmas).

Council approved a Benevolence and Social Concerns Board request for disbursement of \$264 of pre-approved Foundation grant funds for World Mission to support the Thomas Musa Pharmacy of Iambi Lutheran Parish in Tanzania.

Council approved an Evangelism and Communication Board request for disbursement of \$1,287 of pre-approved Foundation grant funds for AV upgrades in the church choir loft.

5. Discussion Items

Pastor Davis updated Council on the progress of the Nominating Committee. All Boards now have potential chairs on the ballot, though a few empty slots remain for Board members.

Paul Beck clarified the membership and meeting date of the Budget Committee (January 7th at 6 pm).

6. Pastors' Report

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

7. Future Dates

Council budget meeting: January 13th, 7 pm.

Preview of the budget for interested congregational members: January 21st, 6:30, in the Sanctuary.

Annual congregational meeting: January 25th, after the 2nd service, in St. John's Hall.

Council retreat: February 7th, 9 am (Reece home at 1009 Freedom Court).

President Michelle Kramer-Prevost adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by Secretary Steve Reece

Addendum #1: St. John's Treasurer's Financial Report for November 2025:

Total Operating Income is (\$2k) below budget for the month of November and (\$71) below budget YTD.

- Offering:
 - o November offering was right on budget.
 - o YTD offering is (\$40k) below budget.
 - o 2025 YTD offering actuals through November are about \$30k greater than offering through November 2024.

- Other Income
 - o YTD combined "Other Income" and "Other Gifts" are \$20k higher than budget.
 - o YTD Released Designated and Foundation Funds are (\$51k) below budget.

Total Operating Expense is (\$9k) below budget for the month of November and (\$68k) lower than budget YTD.

- Personnel is (\$9k) below budget YTD through November.
- All other Board expense categories are collectively about (\$60k) under budget YTD through November

- o Property & Grounds are (\$23k) under budget YTD.
- o Worship, Music & Arts are (\$8k) under budget YTD
- o Youth Ministry & Education are (\$8k) under budget YTD.
- o Other Expense (Released from Foundation) is (\$8k) under budget YTD.
- We are still waiting for the savings from the Solar Panels to show up on our utility bills.

Net Income/(loss)

- The Net Income YTD through November is (\$3K) below budget.

Addendum #2: December 2025 Pastors' Report:

Worship

In addition to our regular Sundays, this season includes two Advent vespers, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services, and the children's Christmas program on December 14.

CYF

Advent Fair went really well this year – a very high number of people in attendance. Many thanks to Julie and all who help make that evening possible. By the time council will meet, the Children's program will have happened at second service on December 14th. Again, Julie and many other volunteers make this happen!

Confirmation finished up a Fall Series on the Parable of the Good Samaritan, where we welcomed in other organizations in Northfield that serve our community – CAC, Ruth's House, Laura Baker Services, and Northfield Union of Youth. Kristin is working closely with Jeff McLaughlin to help support the LOFTY (Lights Out for the Youth) Event on December 21st.

Sustaining Grace

Gifts to sustaining grace have been robust, and plans are proceeding for the next round of capital projects in 2026, including parking lot work, replacement of rooftop units, and updating our security system.

Advocacy

A Light in the Storm, a statewide convention of Isaiah is being held on Saturday December 13 to bring together Christians and Muslims around common concerns. Several congregations collaborated to fund buses to travel together.

Ongoing concerns about immigration enforcement and hate speech against the Somali-American community have led to opportunities to reach out to our neighbors. Lutheran clergy in the Twin cities have been speaking out publicly. This Saturday (12/20) clergy from Rice county will be visiting the Faribault mosque to voice our support for our immigrant neighbors in this time of heightened fear for them.