

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes – December 5, 2024

Called into community, gifted to serve.

Glorifying God through love in action.

Present: Pastor Aileen Robbins, Jeff Gerstenberger, Laurie Simonson, Mark Sutliff, Andy Mitchell, Brianna Dauphinee, Jan Pios, Jim Hartmann, Paul Williams, Amy Trichanh, and Sheri Treadwell. We met via Zoom.

Devotions and Opening Prayer – Laurie led devotions about the work of the Spirit in us and through us and started our meeting with prayer.

Jeff led the meeting.

Agenda Review – No additions made.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – No minutes approved.

Financial Reports – November financial reports were distributed earlier this afternoon. While both income and expenses are running under budget, our net income to expense was \$-6858 for November. This was influenced by \$7000 in “past due” local benevolence expenses being paid out in November. For the year to date, our net income to expense is \$-12,453.

A couple of months ago we delayed the budgeted transfer of \$3000 to the Food Pantry designated fund due to concerns about our finances. The current balance of the designated fund is \$13.0k, compared to \$21.7k at the start of the year. We decided to transfer \$1500 as a compromise.

Ministry Team Reports

- Property – The team is looking into our expenses for phones and ways to reduce it.

Other Business

- Application for Candidacy – Breanna would like to be considered for candidacy for seminary for ordination in the ELCA. She has felt nudges from God for many years. There is a congregational form to be filled out and other steps to kick off the process. There is an associated \$500 fee and we decided that Messiah will cover it (out of the 2025 budget). Sheri is willing to participate with Pastor Aileen, Jeff, and Breanna in filling out the form.
- Council Nominating Committee Report – The committee’s list of nominees for Outreach and Adult Faith Formation and was distributed prior to the meeting. We agreed to add another name to the Outreach list.

2025 Budget

- Income projection – Current pledge total is \$224k, of which \$216k is for the current fund. This is based on 62 giving units (compared to 78 pledges in 2024). After accounting for other estimated income, but no transfers from savings, it looks like income might be in the range of \$294k to \$324. We decided to target \$309k plus \$15K from the Concord Fund for a total of \$324k.

- Expense planning – Our starting point based on budget input prior to the meeting had total expenses of \$374k. We went through each section of the budget looking for opportunities to reduce spending and also reviewed (at a high level) the staff compensation recommendations from the Mutual Ministry team. After the review, we managed to reduce total planned expenses to \$359k, a \$15k reduction, but still far short of our \$324k target.
- Andy asked us to consider whether we thought more cutting was in order or if we should consider deficit spending.
- Note: Agenda topic regarding effective date for pay raises was not discussed.

Next Meetings

Council Holiday Gathering – December 7, 4PM @ Paul & Linda's house

Council Meeting – January 9, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Extended ministry report – Communications

Devotions and prayer – Jeff

Finance Forum – January 19

Annual Meeting – January 26

Closing Prayer – Laurie closed our meeting with prayer.

Submitted by Jeff Gerstenberger