

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes – January 9, 2025

Called into community, gifted to serve.

Glorifying God through love in action.

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

Devotions and Opening Prayer – Jeff led devotions with a focus on Hope. He read Psalm 33:22 and we shared examples of Hope. Jeff started our meeting with prayer.

Jeff led the meeting.

Agenda Review –

2025 Planning Calendar - Jeff sent out a preliminary Council Meeting Callendar and we all approved.

We added Paul's suggestion for a congregational planning meeting regarding social events and solicit input that would meet their needs; pancakes, outdoor events etc. We also talked about a long-term plan regarding Pastor Aileen's retirement and work with ecumenical partners having a five-year plan.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – Meeting minutes from November 7 and December 5 were approved unanimously.

Ministry Team Reports

- **Property Team** – Paul sent out a property team report with details. He said things look good. The issue with the large boiler has been resolved. Both boilers are working during the current cold weather. Cathy needs a new PC. We discussed salting the parking lot. It is only done if Cathy or Paul calls for service because of the \$250 cost per service. The front sidewalk area is salted manually. Paul will ask for a quote that includes only the handicapped parking spaces, rather than the entire parking lot to see if that would be less expensive.
Communications – Laurie discussed the proposed meeting of the Website team. We talked about having our Zoom service link on our website and on our Facebook page so more people could join the service. Jeff will check with the tech team regarding any security concern and he will let Laurie know if this change is approved.

Financial Reports – Jeff sent an appeal letter last month because our giving numbers were lower than expected. The appeal worked very well and we received over \$47,000 in additional pledges. December income was also very good, and now that all 2024 expenses have been paid, there is a \$22,500 "surplus". We agreed to allocate \$1500 to the Food Pantry Designated Fund since this amount was held back earlier in the year when we were concerned about our year-end financial position. We are in great shape for working on the 2025 budget.

Other Business

- Membership role update – Pastor Aileen will send the letters out after the January 26 Annual meeting.
- Council nominating status – Pastor is still contacting potential council members. Mark said he would stay for the interim if necessary.

- Annual Meeting Agenda – We reviewed the previous Annual Meeting Agenda and made a few additions/deletions. We added the Sunday Evening Worship issue. Only 5-6 people worship on in the evening. Pastor has talked to them about eliminating it, and they have no problem moving to the morning service. We will have this on the agenda for transparency in decision making. We will add input from the Endowment Fund team. We will also need to vote on Synod Assembly representatives. Brianna said she would attend the Zoom assembly; Pastor Aileen will check with Rhonda Eastland if she wants to attend again or open it to another congregation member.
- Finance-Related items –
 1. Update to Pastor Aileen’s housing allowance. A motion was made to change Pastor Aileen’s monthly housing allowance to \$2,875 effective February 1st. This change has no impact on her total compensation. Mark made the motion; Sheri seconded it and it passed unanimously.
 2. Dental Payment to Willie La Favor. We previously paid funds directly to his wife’s church for his dental coverage. The church is closed so the same dental funds will be sent directly to Willie. The change was approved unanimously.
- 2025 Budget – we reviewed the spreadsheets provided by Andy and the Finance Team. We have a projected 2025 income which is better than we expected when reviewed last. We spent a great deal of time discussing where to reverse some previous cuts that will better serve the needs of the Messiah community and the world. The spreadsheets included the staff raises which the Mutual Ministry team had proposed. The increases were discussed (Pastor Aileen removed herself from the salary discussion) and all were accepted. We took a 10-minute break while Jeff and Andy finalized the income estimate and developed a proposed allocation for the 2024 “surplus”.
- The budget balanced at \$368,500. We are able to return \$5,000 to the Concord Fund and allocate \$11,200 to the Greater Messiah Fund and \$4818 to the Carryover Fund. We made a motion to present the 2025 proposed budget to the congregation. Andy made the motion and Amy seconded it. It passed unanimously.

Next Meetings

Finance Forum – January 19, 11:30 AM

Annual Meeting – January 26 11:30 AM

Council Meeting – January 26, 12:30 PM (Officer Elections)

Council Meeting – February 6, 700-8:30 PM

Extended ministry report – Youth and Family

Devotions and prayer – Pastor Aileen

Closing Prayer – Jeff closed our meeting with prayer.

Submitted by Laurie Simonson