

**Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes**

February 6, 2025 | 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Attendance: Breanna Dauphinee; Jeff Gerstenberger; Jim Hartmann; Andy Mitchell; Pastor Aileen Robbins; Laurie Simonson; Mark Sutliff; Sheri Treadwell; Amy Trichanh; Paul Williams

Devotions and Prayer: **Leader:** Pastor Aileen Robbins
Themes: Comes from the book Black Liturgies, the chapter on Lament.

Agenda Review:

- We've been asked to provide guidance and support to the congregation in reaction and response to the press we've gotten as Lutherans ([Lutheran Social Services Money Laundering - Search News](#)). – Name goals, Possible community action through ROC UBUNTU, hanging Progressive Pride Flag on the building, "Know your rights when ICE comes" resources were provided during food distribution.
- In response to the concerns, we suggest adding in prayers during the prayers of the people seems to be a safe and helpful way to acknowledge everything, in addition to allowing space to let the congregation voice prayers/ needs.
- We should consider adding the phone numbers of our law makers in the bulletin. Pastor also plans to announce Lutheran Social Services.
- **Stewardship Team Update (Jim):** is making a Temple Talk regarding their upcoming event (Potluck and Treasure Hunt).
- Council has been invited to reach out to Pastor Aileen about working to create safe spaces/ conversation.
- **Communications Update (Laurie):** Livestream Link is on the website but is not regularly utilized.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Meeting Minutes for 1/9 have been approved as is.

Financial Reports: FEBRUARY 2025 REPORTS

- Grateful to everyone's generosity.
- Feedback was received in terms of the audit process which will be implemented in early 2026.

Ministry Team Reports: **Youth and Family (Amy Trichanh)**
Amy shared a document ahead of the meeting outlining a few points to be shared with council.

- Confirmation only has 1 student, Grace, who is attending classes twice a month with youths from Trinity Emmanuel. She will be confirmed this spring. For next year, as of right now, we do not have anybody old enough to start classes.
- Sunday School has unfortunately taken a backseat, for which I take complete responsibility. There are only so many volunteers willing to teach, and I have not been great at

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taking the initiative to create/deliver lessons. Hopefully the season of Lent will be able to re-spark my motivation.

- After the Youth Gathering this summer, our youths seemed sick of each other. There are a few upcoming events that some of them might be interested in, plus some camp opportunities for the summer.

Meeting Notes:

- Information regarding Grace in Confirmation (with 3 from Trinity Emmanuel).
- There is an interest to put some emphasis on Sunday School around Lent. Due to a shortage of Sunday School teachers. Connecting with Stewardship (Jim) as an invitation to share ones 'gifts'.
- Youth Group is looking forward to group events (ex- Laser Tron lock in)

Other Business:

Feedback from Finance Forum & Annual Meeting:

- There were a few comments made about the appreciation for the thoroughness put into the finance forum.
- Appreciation for Andy to make finance information so understandable for the congregation.
- Both meetings went well.

Response to Appeal Letter:

- Pledges went up significantly due to appeal letter. (roughly \$60,000)
- It is worth a discussion (Council / Stewardship Team) to discuss what we can/ have learn from the outcomes.
- It's important to note that it is **NOT** a bad thing to ask for money and share **WHY** we need support.
- It is beneficial to continue to improve communications surrounding pledges/ finances, specifically during pledge season (and not waiting for the end). There is not much time between pledge time and budget building, and it may be beneficial to move the pledge season to October. Jim plans to discuss with the Stewardship Team.
- Is it possible to move the staff evaluations to another time (Laurie/ Jeff/ Mutual Ministry) so we're not asking the congregation to be overloaded to do multiple things.

2025 Planning Calendar (updated):

- Mark offered to help with outreach for maximum 1 year. We need to consider who we can invite to fill the position.
- There is no Adult Faith Formation Candidate currently. Lisa Klima has agreed to take the position. She will join us in April, to allow her to complete Stephen Ministry Training.
- In the interest of improving the group dynamic, it has been suggested to have a few in- person meetings per year (May & October). Can we plan for snacks and drinks at in person meetings? Andy has offered to bring something in May, and Mark has offered to make brownies (also May). Will plan October closer to then.

- Adult Faith Formation and Stewardship will swap Extended ministry reports.
- There was a suggestion to having a congregational calendar for 2025 and will be discussed in March meeting. Council was invited to send Jeff thoughts for additions to the calendar (Black History Month / Pride).

Strategic Goals:

- Attachment was sent ahead of the meeting by Jeff.
- What do we think needs to be kept? What do we think needs to be tweaked? What do we think a good process may be?
- Number 5 – purely fun activities would be beneficial to keep.
- Goals are great, measurements should be tweaked (there is no “HUB”, dates need to be updated.
- The vision statement could be updated. (this differs from the inclusion statement).
- It can be hard to implement in more of a formal setting and may be helpful to implement. Addition of information of Advocacy and the creation of safe space.
- At the March meeting, Council picks a date to invite anyone interested in doing the work to create congregational goals. Taking insight from the congregation and flushing out as a council.
- It would be good to share the goals with the congregation to invite reflection on what we’ve done in the last 5 years and invites members to consider and share how they’d like to see growth.
- Bree, Sherri, and Jeff are interested in helping to plan.

Wheelchair purchase (Memorial Fund):

- We discovered on Christmas Eve that the Wheelchair we have is not in great condition.
- Unanimously approved to purchase a new wheelchair.

Additional Discussion:

- Hanging a Pride Flag to show support for the LGBTQIA+ community.
- If we get a flagpole, we may need to consider hanging an American Flag and a NYS flag. American flags and state flags are NOT required to be flown by a church.
- Hanging the flag ON the building seems to be the best option. There was a thought to hang the flag on the wall facing the parking lot facing the parking lot.
- Pastor Aileen was envisioning a flag holder attached to the wall (like a flag flying at a home)
- Could we consider using the parking lot lights?

Next Meeting: March 6, 2025 | 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Extended Report: Outreach | **Devotions and Prayer:** Jim

Closing Prayer: Pastor Aileen

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