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Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2026 | 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM | Zoom

Attendance: **Present:** Breanna Dauphinee; Jeff Gerstenberger; Jim Hartmann; Andy Mitchell; Laurie Simonson; Mark Sutliff; Amy Trichanh; Paul Williams; Ralph Jones

Absent: Sheri Treadwell; Lisa Klima

Devotions and Prayer: **Leader:** Jeff Gerstenberger
Theme(s): Hope, looking to the future

Agenda Review: No additions were made.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: December 4, 2025 minutes were accepted as written.

Financial Reports: **December 2025 Reports:**

- In addition to Julie's comments, he wanted to highlight that while December was an "off" month, overall, the year was good.
- It was highlighted that we have an AWESOME finance team, of highly qualified members.
- It was asked if anything came out of the audit team's look into our counting team. The audit team will continue to discuss this. They're working towards a written set of observations/recommendations.
- **A motion was made by Amy to increase Pastor Aileen's Monthly Housing allowance to $3132/ month, effective February 1st; it will not impact her total compensation. This seconded by Laurie. All of council voted in favor.**

Ministry Team Reports: **Communications:**

- A written year in review report was sent.
- There were a few ideas brought up for the team to consider for the upcoming year.
- Appreciation was shared for Cathy Coe and Matt Robbins for their support for the monthly Herald.

Property: **Hearing Assistive Technology:**

- Update was sent about that.
- It was asked about what the next step would be, and what our intention is for updating our hearing assistance technology. We don't want the conversation to end here, however would like more information or almost have a "test run" of sorts.
- A new system should provide a better worship experience for people with hearing aids.
- Paul will put a note in the bulletin to invite people to join Paul & Dan at some point for another demonstration/test. This would help us recognize the importance/ impact/ need for a new system. The demonstration should include

tech support on user's phones for configuring their hearing aids.
- Paul will connect with Dan about repeating the demonstration.

Boiler Pump:
- Large boiler room pump is leaking. There is currently a bucket there to monitor the leaking.
- The plan is to watch it for now; however, Paul is going to ask the cost of replacing the whole pump versus just the bearings.

2026 Budget Development:

Review 2026 Year – end income versus expense:
- Much of what we're seeing on the Totals tab is like what we discussed in December 2025.
- Staff compensation is down 10%. While we're saving a bit on Pastor Hans' retirement, some of this is being compensated for in Property's significant increase.
- Bottom line, our budget is a little over 3% lower than 2025.
- The maintenance needed this year for property will come from our operating budget instead of from Greater Messiah. It is noted that property team does a great job in getting things done within the limits of the budget.
- The question of local benevolence's flexibility was part of a conversation that Ralph asked about. Specifically, about Messiah's support of Campus Ministry at RIT. For now, it is suggested to stay with the amount budgeted for now, until the committee meets and discusses.

Projected Income:
- Reduction of about 1% from 2025. This is still consistent with our projected expenses for 2026.
- The $8,850 transferred from the Concord Fund in 2025 can be replenished from the year-end surplus.
- Council agrees to revisit the work that was happening with the merger before COVID with a goal of reviewing future use/allocation of the Concord Fund.

Allocation of unspent 2025 income:
- The excess income over expense in 2025 was $29,326.69
- We want to transfer $8,850 back to the Concord Fund to replenish what was transferred out during the year.
- We want to transfer $6935 to the Carryover Fund for use with the 2026 Operating Budget.
- We want to transfer the remaining $13541.69 to The Greater Messiah Fund.

- **Jim made a motion to move unspent 2025 Income as listed above, and Paul seconded. All of Council voted in favor.**
- **Ralph made a motion to present the budget as is to the congregation at the finance forum and annual meeting and Paul Second's the motion. All of council voted in favor.**

Other Business:

Pastoral Care during Aileen's trip: 1/29 – 2/10:

- It was noted there still is not an itinerary for the trip.
- Pastor Aileen has a good handle on what the visitation and bible study needs are.
- Next Sunday is Cheryl's last week at Greece Baptist moving into their Synod equivalents to Pastor's Role. Cheryl will still cover the two Sunday's of Aileen's absence for preaching (and communion?).
- Pastor will chat with John Macholtz to assist with any Pastoral Emergencies.
- The suggestion was to announce her trip this in worship and have something in the bulletin, because people haven't really read the Herald.

Pride Flag Status Update:

- Flag is down to protect it, due to the wind.
- We're looking to a more permanent way to mount the flag to the building while keeping it safe, while waiting for the appropriate weather.
- A congregation downtown has a framed and plexiglass enclosure secured it to the building. A congregation in Hilton had the flag protected by plexiglass near their sign.
- Another possible idea is to get a few banners to hang on the closest light post to the entrance (in addition to the current flag).
- Could we have a flag printed on a banner to also protect it from the sun.
- Messiah Pride Group to come up with a proposal to hang the flag and then work with Property team to execute in good weather. Bree will reach out to Sheri and Kacy to let them know!

Nominations:

- Carol Dunn – Youth and Family
- Joanne Neimi – Stewardship
- Kacy Treadwell- Collins – Communications

Annual Meeting:

- Confirming meeting on 1/25 after church.
- Coffee and snacks will be upstairs for both this and the finance forum.
- Childcare offered – thanks to Linda Williams.

Meeting Minutes Submitted By: Breanna Dauphinee
Date: 01/08/2025 **Time:** 08:40p.m.

- Clarification on the age to vote was asked. Anyone who is a confirmed member is eligible to vote.

Synod Assembly (5/26, 5/27):

- Bree is confirmed. Pastor Aileen still working on a second person!

Celebration of Ministry for Pastor Hans (2/15):

- Only 8 entries have been added so far to the online document. Council was encouraged again to fill it out.
- Paul is working with Carol about coordinating the Potluck.
- Hans does not want a big deal out of this. It was suggested to possibly donate to World Hunger in his name instead of making a gift, by sending an all-congregation email minus the Irmer's. Pastor Aileen will coordinate with Cathy.

Other Business:

- New members will be welcomed on 1/18. There will also be an adult baptism.
- Pastor Aileen mentioned that she's away for the next Council meeting and listed for devotions. Therefore, we're delaying the meeting to 2/12 @7PM
- Special thanks to Laurie, Amy, and Jim for their contributions to Council!

Next Meeting:

- 1/18 Finance Forum after Sunday Worship
- 1/25 Annual Meeting after Sunday Worship
- 1/25 Council Meeting after Annual Meeting to elect officers and appoint audit team.
- 2/12 Council Meeting 7-8:30 (Extended Report, Outreach; Devotions & Prayer, Pastor Aileen) **IN PERSON.**

Closing Prayer: Jeff Gerstenberger

Meeting Minutes Submitted By: Breanna Dauphinee
Date: 01/08/2025 **Time:** 08:40p.m.