

Council Minutes

September 15, 2025

Attending: Dan Strehlow, Maria Gathje, Natalie Carda, John Nye, Jen Klos, Dave Fry, Dolores Pemble, Alex Zuzek, Pastor Geier, and Lois Twedt

Call to Order by President Dan Strehlow at 6:00 p.m.

Secretary's Report, Lois Twedt

No changes were noted in the August Minutes. Dolores made a motion to approve the minutes of the August meeting as they were written. Jen seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Treasurer Dolores Pemble

No Council Action Required

Financial Ministry Team met on Monday, September 8. We approved the August, 2025 Financials. With the Council approval of the tithe increase we decided it will take effect on January 1, 2026 so it could be included in the budget. We discussed the upcoming budget timeline. Deborah will be sending out a spreadsheet to each ministry team with 2025 expenses. Budget requests will be due to FMT by October 27. Congregational budget meeting will be January 25, 2026 and the Annual meeting will be Sunday, February 1. A motion was made by Jen and seconded by Dave to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion passed.

Vice President Alex Zuzek

No Council Action Required

1. A building improvement about to be accomplished comes from the Communication/Tech Team who have secured bids for additional cameras, electrical outlets and security lighting. Their report will reference this as it's been totally in their hands. Alex will check with Glenda to get an update on this project.
2. The Adopt a Spot people have continued their vigilance in 10 areas.
3. No action has taken place on the Eagle Scout project which would have been done by fire pit. This project is voluntary.
4. The Columbarium addition is underway and will be done by next month.
5. Steve Wolverton prepared the water faucets for preschool use just before their year began. The lead count calls for continuing precautions by SPLC.
6. Fire Extinguishers were checked and Binder was at SPLC Sept 5, for the fall conversion of filters and other checks on all furnace and AC units.
7. The AC issue in the new wing was repaired by Binder, \$398 (?)

Serving Ministry Report—Dave Fry

No Council Action Required

Fellowship:

OLD BUSINESS:

1. LEDUC PIE AND CONCERT Aug 31: Glenda reported it was a huge success, with lots of spirit and comradery! Sold 19 pies, 1 pan brownies, (approximately 134 servings), 3 pails of ice cream, 40 cups of coffee (LeDuc pot). There was \$225 in monetary donations, with total of \$900 to go

towards LSS and general fund. Expenses of \$37 and containers not accounted for.

Recommendations: Be sure to have more spoons for those wanting ice cream, contact LeDuc ahead in order to be there early, line up trash container ahead

2. 2. BLOOD DRIVE AUGUST 21: Thanks to all who volunteered to help that day: Katy Lindberg for her organizing once again, Pam, Mary Charlson, Emily Preston, Geneva Weisser, Gerri Lundby, Brenda, Patty, Mary R, Jeannie Evans, Judy Werner, Becky Raimann, Darla. We had 45 donations of blood, above our goal. We have a tentative date of March 17, 2026 for the next blood drive.
3. NEW MEMBERS RECEPTION SEPT 14: We have 3 families joining: Brett Gjesme and daughter Brooke, Gary Afdahl, and Abigail and Kristian Sebion. Patty, Brenda, Mary C will make bars. Camille will make gluten free. Patty will make quick breads for gift bags along with note cards and membership certificate. Pam, Mary C will help plate and serve. Glenda will purchase paper products and dress the table.
4. PHILADAZZLE NOV. 30: We have a planning meeting for Sept. 16. It was advertised in Sept. newsletter and bulletins. We're hoping for additional members of congregation to help in the planning, so Camille will make announcement on Sept. 14. Brenda will join the group.
5. GARDEN SHARING: Every week there seems to be many items shared.
6. BROMMERS DRIVERS: Judy Hansen also offered to help Camille, Jennie Thomas, Arndtsons with driving Brommers.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. HALLOWEEN DOWNTOWN EVENT ON OCT. 26: We will participate again this year. Since candy is available from so many other tables, last year we decided that serving cocoa and marshmallows was probably enough. Talked to Lydia about help from youth groups, she said she is not available that day but would reach out to the youth. Pastor can help but not be in charge of organizing. Pam and Pastor thought the location in front of The Busted Nut was convenient for getting hot water. Suggestion to look into special cup that is easy to hold hot cocoa. Camille will ask Lista to make a sign up for volunteers and cocoa supplies.
2. MILITARY RECOGNITION: We'll ask Lista to request in the October newsletter and bulletins if there are any additions or changes to make on the military prayer list. Flatens have left town and Lydia Carda is no longer in service. We'll plan to send out Veterans Day cards in Nov.
3. DEVOTIONS: Are covered till the end of the year.
4. PRAYER CARDS: Mary C will check with Lista and Darla about who were on the prayer lists for August. There were some duplicate cards.
5. CLOSET ORGANIZED: Thanks, Brenda, for organizing the WELCA closet! With so many groups using the supplies in there, it easily gets messy. We appreciate when something needs to be done someone does it!
6. COFFEE: We're getting low on coffee, so we'll ask for donations of both decaf and regular coffee.

Stewardship:

SPLC giving status was reported on by Deborah Dreher and Pastor Geier.

Update on the QR code plan was explained.

Fall Stewardship Campaign details were reviewed for discussion.

1. Theme: "Rooted in Gratitude, Growing in Faith" A logo was presented by Al Todnem and approved with team input.
2. Campaign will be described in the Oct. Newsletter by Glenda with a forecast of when the Stewardship mailing will be coming.

Pledge Sunday will be November 9, followed by a complimentary and celebratory pancake breakfast. Members will be asked to sign up if coming.

Volunteers to cook and serve the breakfast will be recruited through personal contact by the ministry team. We will purposely look for new member involvement.

3. Temple Talks will begin Sept 28, with Kevin Eckstrom, recruited by Al Todnem
- Oct. 12, with Wes & Linda Ask, recruited by Jeannie Evans
- Nov. 2, with Patty Wilson, recruited by Glenda Schnirring

Each temple talk person will lift up the theme and its meaning to themselves.

“Keeping Connected “was reported on by Gerri Lundby. She has Michelle Carlson for Oct. Dates for Stewardship’s next meeting were adjusted to accommodate Pledge Sunday. Stewardship will meet Mon. Oct. 6, at 6 p.m. to review the draft of the all-member mailing. The all-member mailing will be assembled by the stewardship team on Thursday Oct. 23, at 6 p.m.

Jeannie Evans will submit a Stewardship piece for the Oct. Newsletter for the new “Stewardship Notes” feature.

Glenda will submit a Stewardship piece announcing the schedule and details of the fall stewardship campaign in the Oct. and Nov. newsletters.

HR Report—Natalie Carda

No Council Action Required

Prepared internal Job Posting for Director of Children’s Choir.

Continued work on annual Portico benefits renewal.

Worship Ministry Report— Maria Gathje

No Council Action Required

Service Debrief: Attendance has been good. Services have been going well. Children’s messages are good. The guest pastor was well-received. The lector will be asked to say at the end of the reading: “Please stand for the Gospel Acclamation”. Lista has been informed of this. The bread server for communion who serves on the piano side of the sanctuary is asked to serve the accompanist first.

Online Services: Problems with the sound and slide quality have been pretty much solved. John has been creating lower thirds with music and readings, when appropriate. John’s choice of slide background pictures is very nice. The song leader’s microphone is connected to two different sound systems: the one in the sanctuary and the one that goes out for the online production. The online song leader mic is, on occasion, too loud. John is going to work on that. The song leader is being asked to read at the microphone the Call to Worship responses, as well as sing the Kyrie and hymns.

Worship music: Pastor Geier chooses the hymns well in advance. Lista keeps a list of these and will send them to Becky to review, so that if there are any that have unfamiliar melodies, the song leader and Noreen can guide the congregation through it. A supplement to the current hymnal called “All Creation Sings” was reviewed. The decision was made to purchase 20 copies for the choir and Unity, and the accompaniment edition. The current publisher’s license covers songs used during worship. Cost will be covered with memorial money from the designated fund. A new liturgy called “Peace on the Prairie” is being reviewed.

Music planning:

- Sept 21: Unity
- Sept 28: Bells
- Oct 5: Praise Worship with Meg Rein
- Oct 12: Adult Choir
- Oct 19: Unity
- Oct 26: Bells

Council: The council would like all ministry teams to consider how they can continue connecting with new members.

Art Committee: Marjorie and Maria have volunteered to join Jan Kochendorfer and Pat Schultz on this committee. They meet as needed to review art donations and help with decisions regarding décor in the sanctuary and throughout the church. The ELCA guideline is used.

Christmas Flowers: Gerten's will be the supplier of poinsettias. There is a 3% discount if orders are in by Nov 3. There is a \$75 delivery fee. The price of plants will not be known until the end of September. Judy Liffreg will put an announcement in the October newsletter. A sign-up will be available in October that will list the price at that time.

Learning Ministries Report –Jen Klos

Council Action Required

Pre-School:

Nothing to report.

Faith Formation:

- There is an updated children, youth, and vulnerable individual safety policy that will need to be given to all volunteers to review in addition to the required background studies.
- Lydia and Becky are working on some policies to be put into place for emergency situations. In early planning stages this will include making sure teachers know evacuation routes and have an emergency bag to take if they need to leave that includes parent phone numbers.
- Spark House Digital has been purchased for both youth and children. This helps us be able to print off resources we were previously buying and save money on both children, confirmation, and middle/high school Sunday school.
- Summer middle school events had between 9/10 students. High school had 2 in July and 5 in August. Children and families ice cream social had five families attend.
- Middle school lock in and high school laser tag will be over this weekend.
- We reviewed the budget as a team and Lydia and Becky will be meeting with finance to go over some proposed increase on budget. Now that we have two people running youth events monthly some areas need more funding.

ASG:

Fall Tentative schedule:

September

9/7 Rally Day; Sunday School Kick-Off

9/14 Officer Rinowski

9/21 Lisa Bergert, Biblical sites in western Turkey—now Part one

9/28 Lisa Bergert, Part two

October

10/5 Jewish Community Relations Council speakers

10/12 Udai Singh, Hindu explanation [or 10/26]

He is available both days and is flexible

I promised Udai a \$100 honorarium, to go to a library in India

10/19 Paster Geier; MEA Weekend? Discussion of Luther exhibit on human origins??

10/26 Udai Singh, Hindu explanation

November

11/2 Buddhist or Islamic presentation (Jennie checking this week)

11/9 Stewardship Sunday pancake breakfast

11/16 Pastor Kathryn Tiede, LSS; Associate Vice President of Philanthropy, Lutheran Social Service of MN

11/23 Pastor Geier

11/30 [Thanksgiving weekend]

December
12/7 ? Shobi's table
12/14 ??
12/21 ?? Pastor?
12/28 Off - Christmas break
Possible Future Adult Forums
12 step program for treatment (??) by Lisa Bergert
A session brainstorming, new blood [This might fit Palm Sunday, ask for topics for next year]
Shobi's Table is a Pay-As-You-Can Community Café on wheels. Deacon Kari Alice Olsen is the director, mission developer and head chef, but there are other staff members that might come. An additional connection is that Linneah Ronning is serving a paid internship through the synod's Planting Hope campaign with Shobi's Table this summer. Jennie to check with Shobi's Table contact from the Synod Assembly

Communication/Marketing/Tech Report – John Nye

No Council Action Required

All the exit signs that require batteries are done. No other update on electrical.

Pastor Geier — August 2025 Council Report

- Participated in ministry team meetings, staff ministry team meetings and weekly contemplative prayer group meetings.
- Three pre-marriage counseling meetings
- Multiple pastoral care opportunities
- Visited nursing home and home bound members and celebrated Holy Communion.
- Led worship at Oak Ridge on August 27.
- Fellowship at LeDuc on August 31
- Confirmation started on September 3.
- Opening the Bible Class on September 6
- Welcomed new colleague, Chaplain Kate Kennedy from Cassia/Augustana.
- Middle School Lock-In on September 13.
- High School Laser Tag on September 14.
- I will be participating in a synod Boundaries Training tomorrow evening.

· Our Faith Formation Ministry Team is seeking to talk with the HPD about developing an active shooter plan for Sunday School/Confirmation. Is this something we should consider for our congregation as a whole?

Your Servant in Christ,
Gregory A. Geier, Pastor

Old Business:

Dolores explained that the \$40,000 difference in expenses from last year was due to the city requiring the assessment for street repairs to be paid in lump sum, rather than spread over several payments.

Jen and Natalie provided updated Council Member's Job Descriptions. They will add more details. Committee reps should ask their committees if there are any tasks that should be added to the descriptions as written.

Cement has been poured for the Columbarium sidewalk and the project should be completed by next Council meeting.

Sunday School children will continue to get treats as they have in the past.

Continued discussion on “What is our focus?”

*Sponsors should try to introduce their new members to at least 2 other households.

*Committees should make use of volunteers from Time and Talent Sheets.

*Find ways to connect couples/families—possibly 2 or 3 unfamiliar to each other to go out together

*Find ways to connect singles.

New Business:

Council is addressing developing an Emergency Response Plan—talking to school police resource personnel and asking Katie Nye to share some ideas as she has training in security emergency situations.

The Hastings Concert Association will be using our sanctuary for concerts. This action was approved via email. They will not be paying rent but will pay for services that need to be provided—custodial and audio visual.

The Synod is requesting updates to our constitution. Those updates will be made and copies of the updated constitution will be available at next month’s meeting.

Pastor was given a few names to contact regarding the Director of Children’s Music position.

A motion was made by Jen and seconded by John to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Submitted by Lois Twedt, Secretary