

## **Council Minutes**

**December 15, 2025**

Attending: Pastor Geier, Dan Strehlow, Alex Zuzek, John Nye, Dolores Pemble, Natalie Carda, Maria Gathje, Sammi Warnecke, Lois Twedt

### **Call to Order by President Dan Strehlow at 6:02 p.m.**

#### **Secretary's Report, Lois Twedt**

No changes were noted in the November minutes. Natalie made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Alex seconded the motion. The motion passed.

#### **Treasurer Dolores Pemble**

##### **No Council Action Required**

The Finance Ministry Team met on Monday, Dec. 8, 2025. November 2025. Financial Reports were approved. Budget concerns that were brought up at the November Council were discussed, and website line items will be combined. Team was reminded that the ELCA tithe amount will be increased to 10% in January as previously approved. Sunday, January 25 will be the congregational budget meeting and Sunday February 1 will be the annual meeting. Dolores is contacting the Audit team volunteers to get an audit scheduled prior to the annual meeting. In anticipation of Lista retiring, there is a Supply Order Request form being created to ease the transition of the new admin assistant and hopefully cut down on the number of manual check requests. It will be distributed to all ministry teams at its completion.

#### **Vice President Alex Zuzek-Buildings and Grounds**

##### **No Council Action Required**

No formal meeting was held in December. Behind the scenes repairs take place when needed. A recent repair was done on the small refrigerator in the sacristy, which is now running again. Steve Wolverton was able to get this good result.

Timely snow removal is in full swing. The first job needed a call to Precision. We have a plan to not put high deposits of snow south of the border curb of the parking lot. Spring thaw deposits too much water in the back yards of the homes behind the church. This agreement was made four years ago and will continue. We dedicate seven parking spots to hold the snow on the lot itself. Precision had also not plowed the sidewalks leading to the church front door. These corrections are expected to be made in the future.

Additional carpet cleaning is expected to happen in 2026.

#### **Serving Ministry Report—Dave Fry**

##### **No Council Action Required**

Fellowship:

OLD BUSINESS:

1. PHILADAZZLE NOV 30: "A Little Bit of Italy" Although numbers were down 25% from the past (60 tickets sold), it was a lovely evening of authentic Italian food and music. Lucas Ussatis performed on violin and piano Italian, movie themes, and Christmas music. We had a very energetic and dedicated 9 members on the planning committee who really helped the event run smoothly. Brenda Arndtson and

Lois Twedt oversaw the kitchen. Bruce Arndtson did a great job as emcee! We had 11 poinsettias and 6 gift cards for door prizes. New members, guests from outside, and a younger couple joined us. Need new marketing for next year? Maybe not be first Sunday, but during Advent? First Sunday of December? We decided to pay Lance Twedt \$50 for his board services during the concert.

2. EDUCATOR APPRECIATION: I talked to Marge Peterson about having a presentation the week they have thank you gifts for Educators in February. She submitted a bill for gifts. There will be more expenses later.

3. MILITARY REPLY: We received a lovely email from Korey Amundson, thanking us for the Veteran's Day card. I checked back with him, and he said it's fine for Glenda to include it in the January newsletter.

4. LADIES NIGHT: Ideas for coming months? Emily Preston will be invited to present her stained-glass project idea. We'll put a message in the January newsletter for other ideas congregation might like to see offered.

5. EMERGENCY FOOD NEEDS: Dave Fry said that Pastor made a donation from his discretionary funds to HFS to help with the need for food.

6. CHRISTMAS CARDS TO ADDRESS: We'll send out about 35 cards from Fellowship Ministry. If you think of someone we may have missed, please let me know. Can be addressed and sent when convenient.

#### NEW BUSINESS:

##### 1. RETIREMENT PARTY FOR LISTA KLOCOW TENTATIVE DATE JANUARY 25:

We discussed extensively possible plans to respectfully honor Lista for her 23 ½ years as our Office Manager. We shared some ideas with Pastor Geier, and we came up with tentative reception:

- Paragraph put in January newsletter notifying congregation; maybe ask for RSVP so have feeling for how much food to be ordered. include that a basket will be provided for cards
- Lista doesn't like being center of attention, Pastor said, so wouldn't expect her to talk in front of congregation, but people could chat with her during the reception
- Invite Klocow family
- Set up reception table by stained glass windows, extra tables and chairs down by office
- Have a decorated sheet cake
- Bouquet of flowers (on the altar then on the reception table?)
- Cheese & meat, cracker trays
- Fruit?
- Coffee & water
- Larger sized plates than usual
- Get pictures from family to include on screen? Other pictures or displays??
- Jay Raimann or Warren Thomas help with "Thank you, Lista" for screen
- Someone able to do power point?
- Pastor said council will provide appropriate gift
- It is the same Sunday as the budget presentation at Adult Ed, but can be worked around? The next week, Feb. 1 is the annual meeting.

#### Stewardship:

The Stewardship Team did not convene in December having followed the November activity of approving and sending the bulk mailing to 340 households and conducting Stewardship Sunday which provided the complimentary Pancake/Sausage Breakfast. Eighty members attended the breakfast. At present we are carefully watching the return of Pledge Cards and Time and Talent forms. To date we have recorded 100 pledge cards and 68 Time and Talent forms. It is known that more will come in. Cards coming in one year ago reached 113. The annual report will have the final number of cards returned for 2025.

## **HR Report—Natalie Carda**

### **No Council Action Required**

Completed requirements of the Minnesota Paid Leave Law, effective January 1, 2026, by posting required poster and notifying each employee of the law. Signed acknowledgements are located in Employee Personnel files. Our payroll provider is ready for processing 2026 deductions.

After receiving written termination letter, Lista Klocow informed St. Philip's of her intent to retire, effective January 30, 2026. After meeting with Lista, the Office Administrator Job Description was updated. Internal Job Posting was drafted, approved by Pastor Geier and included in the weekly worship bulletin.

## **Worship Ministry Report— Maria Gathje**

### **No Council Action Required**

Service Debrief: Attendance for November ranged from 163-181. Services continue to go well. Music from all groups is appreciated for their enhancement of worship. Christ the King sermon was especially meaningful. There is appreciation expressed for singing during communion distribution. The camera work for the on-line services is better recently after some glitches have been responded to.

Future Planning:

- December 21, 3 PM Blue Christmas service (not live-streamed). Becky will set up candles if Kelsey is unavailable.
- December 22, 9 AM: Flower set-up, pew cleaning, candle set-up, fill communion cups. LuAnn, Marge, and Becky will be there. Others are welcome to help.
- Worship Leader sign-up is available for Christmas Eve services.
- John is working on December soundboard assignments, with some difficulty in getting coverage. New assistants would be welcome.
- Lucas Ussatis, violinist, is a possible contact for future special music.
- Altar flowers will no longer be arranged by Cub, as they will not have a florist, beginning January 1. Until further notice, anyone wishing to donate altar flowers can provide their own arrangements and use any vases at church.

Music planning:

- Dec 24, 3 PM: Unity (Prelude), Bells& Unity (Anthem), Bells (Communion distribution) , song leader and offering music: Julia Ronning
- Dec 24: 5 PM: Strings (Mary Ellen and Brin). Not live-streamed.
- Dec 28: Lessons and Carols, Bells, song leader: Maria Gathje
- Jan 4: Praise Band
- Jan 11: Choir
- Jan 18: Unity
- Jan 25: Bells, song leader: Maria Gathje

## **Learning Ministries Report –Jen Klos**

### **No Council Action Required**

Pre-School:

No meeting. No report.

Faith Formation:

No meeting. No report.

ASG:

Budget--Remaining is \$182.00 [Oct 22, 2025] but \$18 added in Nov and check to \$100 LSS done, so \$100 left, possibly for Shobi's Table.

Updating sound system

1. Add remote, wireless clip-on microphones - Chuck to work with his daughter, Katie, to get specs to the right people to keep moving on this

a. Dual system 2-person mic, RODE Wireless GO II; \$278

b. Submitted \$300 to CMT/IT Team

c. Jay R indicated there might be funds currently available in 2025

d. Have not heard back from committee

Broadcasting, recording, live streaming Adult Forums

Do we want to do this?? [email from Jen Klos, Oct 28, 2025; John Nye, Nov 5, 2025]

Would have to be acceptable to the speaker and not a sensitive subject for the in-person audience. Adult Forum needs to be a safe place, committee questioning if recording would be a violation of that? Could record on Go Pro so people could ask for it later rather than putting it out on the Web might somewhat mitigate that. Maybe try, but only after we have the new microphones.

Winter Tentative schedule:

December

12/7 Community discussion; following up from presentations from Isiah & LSS - Jennie to get someone else to help lead. Cindy Toppin has declined. changed to how do we make decisions about giving]

12/14 Shobi's Table—Kari A. Olsen & Linnea Ronning [Jennie to introduce]---Christmas program

12/21 Lament Scripture — Pastor Geier

12/28 No program

January, 2026 Jennie write blurb for 4th, chuck 11th and 18th and Jennie 1/25

01/4 Look for the ones that will up for the building fund tithe, some have recently talked to us, but see who hasn't. Jennie can contact Lois Twedt, council secretary. [This list will not be available until after the January newsletter deadline, so will canvas the group about whether another topic needed]

1/11 Krishona Martinson, Navigating unexpected losses [Chuck] (U of M Extension)

1/18 Maybe another one of the things being voted on for Building Fund tithe or Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate

1/25 Financial / budget meeting

February, 2026

2/1 Annual meeting

2/8 Possible start of Tanzania series

2/15-3/8 Tanzania series??

3/15 Pastor's 3rd Sunday topic of his choice

Mar 16-20 ISD200 Spring Break

3/22 ?? The Wired Word, since still the end of spring break?/

3/29 Palm Sunday

April and May--undecided

Next meeting December 29, 2025 at 6:00 pm via Zoom.

Continuing list of Possible Future Adult Forums

- 12 step program for treatment (??) by Lisa Bergert

- A session brain storming, new blood [This might fit Palm Sunday, ask for topics for next year]

- Jewish Community Relations Community—Part 2

Topics?

- ISIAH - continued discussion based on Adult Forum—Part 2-suggested to not be continued] Action items & does St Philip's want to participate - see Dec 4, to be broader than Isaiah.

- Federal Government shutdown, The Wired Word from Nov 9, 2025 [Nov 6 from Lista]

- 2nd Putting Food on the Table, SNAP

- COMET training (Changing Our Mental & Emotional Trajectory) U of M extension 90-120 min training on befriending people with minor mental health issues before they become crises

Tanzania, east central Africa

Have a Tanzania month? Like the idea, just starting to look at:

1. Tanzania presentation from Sally S. Harris, PhD, in conjunction with the Lutheran Dioceses of Iringa, per Pastor Geier email of Sep 16.
2. Synod Bega Qwa Bega?? Maybe beginning and end - passionate volunteers that have companion congregations.
3. Stacy Carlson?? Jennie to talk to
4. Jennie Thomas to try to reach medical group Shoulder to Shoulder
5. Jim Dontje & Laura Lindell missionary; see reply [Chuck] "we'll work out something"

Well & water quality

6. Medtronic building clinics [Chuck] [Assumed no since no personal connection]

Medtronic LABS is one of the leading health systems innovators that develops community-based, tech-enabled solutions for underserved patients, families, and communities across the world. By bridging hyper-local services with cutting-edge technology, we provide sustainable and localized healthcare solutions that produce measurable patient outcomes for all.

Headquarters: Nairobi , KE  
<https://ke.linkedin.com/company/medtronic-labs>  
 Programs and clinics in Tanzania <https://www.medtroniclabs.org/programs/tanzania/>

7. University of Minnesota, Student Engineers without Borders projects [Chuck] [Assumed no since no personal connection]

End of Life; death

Sarah Wise Schwieger, Starkson Family, funeral preplanning seminar [email from P Greg on Sep 30, 2025]

Mary S Carlsen [St Olaf, Northfield] local group on end of Life Choices Collective / Advance Care Planning (Oct 9, 2025 email to Chuck)

Also working with students [maybe] [St Olaf spring break, March 28-April 6]

Cremation Society presentation

"Who gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3NNNoVRQpI8>

Univ of Minn Extension; 38 minutes

Workbook: A Guide to Passing on Personal Possessions Paperback – November 1, 2011; 104 pages; \$24 (Liss direct from U of M in quantity)

Two questions for the committee with responses needed within the next week:

1. Sarah from Starkson is not available Jan 18. Is Chuck doing "Who Gets Grandma's Yellow Pie Plate" or do we need another topic there?
2. Maybe find out about one or more of the options for the building fund tithe" on Jan 4 (and possibly Jan 18) for the January newsletter [or can Jen get me the results on Dec 15th after the meeting and I have grace from Lista to get the meeting title(s) to her on the 16th or 17th after talking to the groups voted on]?

Since the meeting I have also participated in COMET (Changing Our Mental & Emotional Trajectory) training. It's about how to be more intentional and effective in supporting people who aren't in crisis but in less than a good place mental health wise and is presented by U of M Extension. They have a grant, so the training is free, and they would be willing to come to St Philips to present it, over 90 to 120 minutes, ideally for a group of 10 to 30 people. More information about the program can be found at: <https://extension.umn.edu/mental-wellbeing/comet-changing-our-mental-and-emotional-trajectory>. I added that to the list of possible future topics.

## **Communication/Marketing/Tech Report – John Nye**

### **No Council Action Required**

No meeting. No Report

## **Pastor Geier – December 2025 Council Report**

- Participated in ministry team meetings, staff ministry team meetings and weekly contemplative prayer group meetings.
- Multiple pastoral care opportunities
- Visited nursing home and home bound members and celebrated Holy Communion.
- 5th & 6th grade band concerts on November 20.
- Community Ecumenical Thanksgiving Worship on November 23. (\$546 offering split between HFS and United Way Food 4 kids.)
- Led worship at Oak Ridge on November 26.
- Hastings Ministerial Association on November 26.
- Synod Candidacy Meeting on December 4.
- 5th/6th and 7th/8th grade Orchestra concerts on December 4
- Led worship at Benedictine on December 8
- HS Band and Orchestra concert on December 9.
- Preschool chapel on December 10 and 11.
- 7th & 8th grade vocal concerts on December 11.
- Sunday School Christmas program rehearsal on December 12
- High School vocal concert on December 12

Your Servant in Christ,  
Gregory A. Geier, Pastor

### **Old Business:**

Communication with young adults. Currently there are 200 adult children included in our membership that no longer attend or live with their parents. Pastor is sending emails to determine if they wish to maintain their membership at St. Philip's.

There has been no activity with Director of Children's Music.

'What is our focus' will fall under CMT. Council members are asked to come to next meeting with ideas for our demographic group that we would be willing to participate in.

### **New Business:**

Council determined the 4 local organizations to be considered for receiving Tithing funds—Hastings Family Service, DART, Rise Up, Feed My Starving Children.

The 4 outreach organizations to be considered are Water's Edge Ministry Campaign (Green Lake), Food Group Mobil Market, Shobi's Table, LSS-Youth Homelessness.

These will be voted on at the Annual Meeting. The two in each category will receive the funds.

Notice of the St. Paul Synod Conference Assemblies will be included in the Sunday bulletins—Feb. 14—2026 Conference Assemblies and May 15-16—2026 Synod Assembly.

Natalie made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dolores seconded the motion. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 7:25.

Submitted by Lois Twedt, Secretary