

## **Trinity Congregation Council Minutes**

### **August 18, 2026**

**Present:** Lynn Buske, Robin Drout, Karla Halloin, Greg Helgeson, Dawn Marcott, Mary Schoenknecht, John Schroedl, Gail Schulner, Jacqueline Strayer, Craig Olsen, Pastor Patrick Patterson

**Absent:** Henry Butler, Erik Dovre, Heather Kapanke, Denyse Schroeder, Michelle Zumwalt, Pastor Tom Westcott (on sabbatical)

- 1. Call to Order:** President Karla Halloin called the meeting to order at 5.02 p.m.
- 2. Devotion:** Gail Schulner provided a devotion based on 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:9-11.
- 3. Approval of June Council Minutes:** Robin Drout recommended that the minutes be amended to revise a typographic error for a date: Under Item 5. Pastors Reports, the date for Patrick and Jacqueline Bencke's visit should be "Sunday, August 16". The June Council minutes were approved as amended.
- 4. Approval of June and July Financial Reports:** Craig Olsen reviewed the June and July financial results. The June results were surprising. While expenses for the month were normal at \$95,764, the income of \$48,596 was significantly lower than expected. Despite this, we ended the 2025-26 fiscal year with a small surplus of \$1551. Income for July was \$62,148 and expenses were \$86,957 for a monthly deficit of \$24,810. Both income and expenses were typical for a July. Income typically picks-up again once fall activities resume in September. In answer to a question, Craig and Pastor Patrick estimated that slightly less than half of the number of donations received are via online giving, which should be less affected by summer attendance patterns. The June and July financial reports were approved as presented.
- 5. Pastors Reports:** Pastor Patrick supplemented his written report with the following:
  - He has been spending a significant amount of time of late on pastoral care, including funerals.
  - Pastor Tom will return from his sabbatical tomorrow.There were no other questions or comments on the written pastor reports for the month.
- 6. Staff and Committee Reports:** With regard to Katie Conner's report on CYF activities over summer, several Council members added their agreement on the success of the youth trip to Colorado and VBS. There were no other questions or comments on the written staff and committee reports for the month.

## 7. Old Business

- a. **FriendFest Planning:** Each FriendFest committee was asked to give a short summary on the status of their planning and any questions they still have:
1. **Food:** All arrangements are in good shape. Don Peterson will make sure that the grill is set up. Jeff Halloin and Erik Dovre have volunteered to be the grill masters. Waste for composting will be collected with guidance from the Caring for Creation committee.
  2. **Games and Activates:** Arrangements are complete for a tent, tables, chairs, and games similar to last year. Paul Bonstrom will provide music under the tent. Greg Helgeson has volunteered to act as auctioneer/emcee for the dessert auction.
  3. **Publicity:** Publicity is in full swing for the event, including (but not limited to) Friday e-mail items, Sunday bulletin announcements, worship center slides, building posters, and a Trinity website page ([trinity-ec.org/friendfest](http://trinity-ec.org/friendfest)). The FriendFest webpage includes a link to online sign-up for the dessert auction and FriendFest volunteers.
  4. **Volunteers:** Sign-up is available now for the dessert auction and to help at FriendFest. This can be done online or on paper sign-up sheets in the Worship Center lobby on Sunday mornings.

Additional items discussed:

- We will have nametags for people to use. Karla Halloin will make arrangements as needed.
- A jar will be set out near the food for freewill donations (Mary Schoenknecht). We will include a QR code for donations for those who wish to use it (Jacque Strayer).

## 8. New Business

- a. **Budget Forum Feedback:** There was a good turnout at the budget forum on Sunday, August 9 (Robin Drout estimated 23 people). Several questions were asked by those at the forum.
- b. **Annual Meeting Agenda – August 23:** All is ready for the Annual Meeting on August 23, at 10:30 a.m. Robin Drout reminded Jacque Strayer (who will preside at the meeting) and Pastor Patrick that he will want an attendance count to include in the minutes. Paper copies of the annual reports are available in the Worship Center lobby and as a PDF file on Trinity's website.
- c. **Worship Center Technology Capital Campaign:** Pastor Patrick reported that sound, video, and camera systems in the Worship Center are nearing their useful life and need to be replaced. The expected cost of around \$175,000 is high enough that a capital campaign will be needed to raise the required funds. It is proposed that such a campaign be conducted this fall so that we can move ahead with the project as soon as possible. Pastor Patrick would like to form a 4-to-6-person committee to work with him and Sue Jensen, our Worship and Music Coordinator, on the project. The Council should

be represented on the committee, but non-Council members should be part of it as well. We will plan to discuss this project in more detail at next month's Council meeting.

- d. **Wisconsin's New Anti-Grooming Laws:** Jacque Strayer reported on two new child anti-grooming laws in Wisconsin that were enacted last March. The first (Act 88) criminalizes child grooming and provides examples of grooming behaviors, including verbal communication of a sexual nature and written or digital communication intended to lure or entice a child. The second (Act 89) requires public and private primary and secondary schools to adopt a policy on appropriate communications with students by September 1, 2026, and training for staff beginning with the 2026-2027 school year. While Act 89 does not specifically apply to Trinity, we have staff and volunteers that need to be aware of Act 88. As a public school teacher, Jacque will be receiving more information and training on the new laws in the near future. There may be things that she learns that we can make use of. She will plan to report more information to the Council next month.

- e. **Vision Statement: A Movement to Converge Systems and Leadership Around Baptismal Promises:** Pastor Patrick reported on the fifth and final movement of Trinity's Vision Statement, which focuses on organizing our activities and leadership around the five baptismal promises. The plan envisions the creation of five committees. A good start was made in implementing these committees, but the effort is incomplete:

- Live: Active early on, but less so now.
- Listen: Not implemented.
- Proclaim: Not implemented.
- Serve: Very active.
- Strive: Active.

At last week's Executive Committee meeting, it was suggested that the proposed mission of the Listen Committee to consider both education (CYF) and worship activities might be too large, and that moving the worship activities to the Proclaim Committee might be workable. In addition, it was suggested that the five committees might benefit by having a member of the Council as a liaison. Both these ideas seemed generally acceptable to the Council. Pastor Patrick will draft a revision to this movement of the Vision Statement and present it to the Council for approval.

- f. **Outgoing Council Members:** Karla Halloin and John Schroedl are rotating off of the Council after 6-1/2 and 3-1/2 years of service, respectively. The Council members thanked them for their service. Each, however, will still be involved in other Trinity committee activities.

- g. **Other Reports:**

- Palm Sunday Path: Lynn Buske reported that the organizing committee for the Palm Sunday Path (held last Palm Sunday at Trinity) has not developed any formal next steps for their committee. They are planning to have a table set up at a planned campus and community event scheduled for September 15 (National Voter Registration Day).

- Greg Helgeson reported that he represented Trinity at the Pride Festival at Phoenix Park this last June. We shared a table with a couple of other area churches and it was a good experience.

**9. Closing Prayer:** Pastor Patrick provided a closing prayer.

**10. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Robin Drout  
Secretary