

Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church

Church Congregation Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 19, 2025 – 7:00 PM

Attendees

Present: Mike Dunavant (President), Rob Boyle (Vice-President), Markus Groener (Secretary), Jennifer Edwards (Treasurer), Joseph Bollick, Missy Hill, Jim Huddle, Phillip Martin, Leigh Pickels, David Schiller

Present (via video conference): Sarah Lang, Gwen Newman

Guest (via video conference): Steve Collins (AC Replacement)

Absent: Cindy McClintock

1. Call to Order

Council President Mike Dunavant called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

2. Devotions / Opening Prayer

Leigh Pickels led the devotion, reading from Hebrews 11:1 (“faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen”) and reflected on trusting God amid uncertainty, sharing a story about “unanswered” prayers later proving protective from the 9/11 tragedy from what first seemed like a nuisance. Council members offered brief faith reflections about their children starting new school years and life transitions.

Leigh then led an opening prayer for wisdom, unity, and openness in discernment.

3. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes from July 14, 2025

B. Receipt of Reports from Pastors, Staff, and Ministry Teams

C. Receipt of Treasurer’s Report and BOL Update

Treasurer Jennifer Edwards summarized July's financials. July net income was unfavorable to the budget by \$26,270, driven by contributions under plan (\$27,914 below budget). Expenses were \$1,644 favorable to the budget on timing (audit and Moments of Hope paid in July) and corrections (AMEX credit; IT reclass). In August, a \$35k general-fund gift was received, and December typically remains a strong month for giving.

Year-to-date (YTD), income is \$16,568 unfavorable, and expenses are \$12,694 unfavorable; YTD expenses exceed YTD income by \$86,714. To meet the financial plan, an average monthly income of ~\$90,000 is needed for the remainder of the year.

Mortgage Reserve stands at \$324,917—about 26.8 months of principal/interest at \$12,124 per month;

- **Motion:** Jim Huddle moved to approve the consent agenda.
- **Second:** Rob Boyle seconded.
- **Vote:** ☒ Unanimous approval

4. Receipt of Communications

- **Open Requests for Communications Received**
 - **Thank-You Letter:** Habitat for Humanity (Hanover and King William) acknowledged Epiphany's \$250 gift and highlighted its impact on affordable housing.
- **Sympathy and Support Cards**
 - **Get Well**
 - Sharon Bertelsen
 - Chris Holloway (custodial supervisor)
 - Ben Droste
 - Bev Kelley
 - **Sympathy**
 - Laura Dietrick at the death of her father
 - Patrick Kacani at the death of his father
 - Mike Vozar at the death of his mother
 - Alexandra Griffin at the death of her mother
 - Richard Ashpole at the death of his son
 - Pastor Sarah Menke at the death of her mother
 - Kitty Osmun at the death of her sister

5. Old Business

- **AC Replacement Update**

Phillip introduced guest Steve Collins to help answer questions regarding the AC replacement and received bids.

 - Two comparable “package-unit outside” solutions are in hand: James River (\$90k) and ACI/Atlantic (\$176k).
 - A third vendor (Capital) is working on a bid (likely a “split” system with an indoor air handler).
 - Discussion covered:
 - Why new **hot-water heating coils** are included (the new air handler requires a smaller replacement coil using the existing boiler loop)
 - Differences between **package vs. split** approaches (replacement/maintenance trade-offs, insulated exterior ducting upkeep)
 - Typical **90-day bid validity**
 - The need for a **10–20% contingency** to cover potential ductwork/fire-alarm integration items (e.g., Virginia Speaker) or other unforeseen conditions.
 - Council affirmed the value of an **independent review** by member Will Click (mechanical engineer/HVAC-certified) before final selection, noting James River's past under-scoping (an early \$45k estimate later doubled).


Next steps (consensus):

- Ask Capital to submit its bid by week's end (Friday, August 21, 2025).
- Send the two existing bids to Will Click now; request his written feedback within a few days.
- Authorize a **Zoom or email vote next week** to select a contractor, rather than waiting for the September council meeting.

- Finance will subsequently bring a **funding recommendation** (drawing on reserves/endowment distribution/special allocation as needed), with awareness that overall cash exists. Still, it may be temporarily “borrowed” from designated buckets and repaid.

- **Proposed Endowment bylaws changes**

Rob recapped the proposal (previously discussed):

- Increase the annual distribution from **5%** → **6%** and adjust provisions for **extraordinary** and **capital** distributions to responsibly unlock more support for current needs while preserving the endowment’s long-term value.
- Clarification of extraordinary/capital distributions (once every 5 years, each, possibly concurrent if needed).
- After brief Q&A (process steps: Council → congregation at annual meeting → Endowment Board alignment; effective 2026 for budgeting), Council acted.
- **Motion:** Rob Boyle moved to approve the endowment by-law changes.
- **Second:** Jim Huddle seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved: Yay (11), Nay (1)

- **Update on “Epiphany Shines” campaign**

Missy reported early recruiting conversations for steering-committee leads (Lead Gifts; Information & Inspiration; Commitments; Special Events). A few “not now” responses reflect real-life capacity constraints; however, asking still **builds momentum** and honors gifts even when the answer is “no.” Phillip recommended continuing targeted asks, using language such as “assuming congregational approval,” to line up willing leaders; names suggested by decliners will help widen the net. The team will sketch a **modest campaign budget** (e.g., printing, food for events) to include in 2026 planning. Broader invitations/Temple Talks may follow—timed to avoid presuming congregational action before the annual meeting.

- **Kneeling pads for the communion rail**

Per Kevin they have looked at what varieties and styles exist. Two companies have been looked at so far. Markus provided Kevin with a link to Amazon to consider as an option. The Amazon vendor has fully customizable kneeling pads which are in-expensive.


6. New Business

A. **Budget 2026 - first pass will be presented to Council in September**

Debbie and Jennifer will present a first-pass budget next month, including a dedicated line for **Epiphany Shines** administrative costs. Council will finalize and adopt the 2026 budget in October.

B. **Nominating Team (Council)**

Per precedent and constitution, the three third-year members (terms ending) —**Rob Boyle, Jim Huddle, and David Schiller**—will serve as the Nominating Team to prepare a slate for the annual meeting.

- **Motion:** Mike Dunavant moved to approve the nominating committee.
- **Second:** Missy Hill seconded.
- **Vote:**  Unanimous approval

7. Anything for Hanne?

- Markus Groener will provide Hanne and Turner with the approved council minutes from the July meeting for posting to Epiphany’s website.

- Brief discussion considered using the newsletter to recruit for “Epiphany Shines”; consensus to **hold** on generalized recruiting language until the steering structure and messaging are a bit more formed (targeting a follow-up Temple Talk closer to the annual meeting).

8. Next Meetings

- The next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 9th, 2025, at 7:00 pm.
- Joseph Bollick will lead devotions and the prayers.

9. Closing Prayer

Leigh Pickels offered a closing prayer of thanks for God’s presence, for faithful stewardship, and for trust in “things hoped for—seen and unseen.”

10. Adjournment

Mike Dunavant adjourned the meeting at 8:26 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Markus K. Groener
Church Council Secretary