

Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church

Church Congregation Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 9, 2025 – 7:02 PM

Attendees

Present: Mike Dunavant (President), Rob Boyle (Vice-President), Markus Groener (Secretary), Jennifer Edwards (Treasurer), Jim Huddle, Sarah Lang, Phillip Martin, Cindy McClintock, Leigh Pickels, David Schiller

Present (via video conference): Joseph Bollick, Missy Hill, Gwen Newman

Guests: Matt Greenshields, Susan, Ramona Schaeffer

Guests (via video conference): Steve Collins, Debbie Sexton

1. Call to Order

Council President Mike Dunavant called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

2. Devotions / Opening Prayer

Joseph Bollick led the devotion, reading from Deuteronomy 30, where Moses exhorts Israel to “choose life.” He asked council members to reflect on decisions made by others that had brought them blessings. Members shared personal stories about family decisions that enabled education, mentorship, and faith formation. Joseph emphasized that while Israel often failed to choose wisely, God’s grace prevailed, and Christ redeems even missteps. He concluded with a prayer of thanksgiving for those who came before and for the Spirit’s guidance in the council’s work.

3. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes from August 19, 2025

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

C. Receipt of Treasurer’s Report and BOL Update

- **Monthly:** Net income was favorable to the budget by \$39,656, with contributions \$27,985 above budget. Expenses were favorable by \$11,671, primarily due to the timing of audit bills, annual donations, and the ramp-up of Christian education in the fall.
- **YTD:** Income is favorable to the budget by \$11,416, while expenses are unfavorable by \$1,024. Overall, YTD expenses exceed YTD income by \$49,900, but the net result remains favorable to the budget by \$10,392.
- **Mortgage Reserve:** The balance stands at \$318,705, covering approximately 26.3 months of payments, which will sustain through October 2027.
- **Motion:** Markus Groener moved to approve the consent agenda.
- **Second:** Leigh Pickels seconded.
- **Vote:** ☒ Approved unanimously

4. Receipt of Communications

A. Open Requests for Communications Received

None received this month.

B. Sympathy and Support Cards

- **Get Well**
 - Abigail Lauder
 - Jasper Martin

5. Old Business

A. AC Replacement Decision

Steve Collins reported on the HVAC bids. James River's proposal for a 20-ton package unit offered reliability, long-term serviceability, and cost advantages over other bids. Will Click (mechanical engineer) reviewed and supported the plan. Council discussed contingencies and service agreements.

- **Motion:** Rob Boyle moved to authorize the execution of the contract with James River to replace the sanctuary AC unit at a cost not to exceed \$102k (\$93k + \$9k [10% contingency]).
- **Second:** Jim Huddle seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

B. Update on "Epiphany Shines" campaign

Phillip Martin shared that recruiting for steering team leaders continues to be challenging, with many thoughtful declines. Momentum is slow, and council members may be asked to step into leadership roles. Missy Hill was unable to report but will provide updates at the next meeting.

C. First Pass of 2026 Budget

Debbie Sexton presented the preliminary 2026 budget. Highlights included:

- Contributions trend for 2025 shows a strong August giving (~\$108k), but forecasts a ~\$15k shortfall from the revenue budget by year-end.
- Proposed 2026 revenue budget: \$977k, a ~2–3% increase.
- Expense adjustments: modest increases in utilities, insurance, and IT (considering the PC leasing model); reallocation of Micah Initiative funds to Easter/Thanksgiving baskets; a \$1,500 allocation for funeral receptions; 3.5% merit raises; and higher benefit costs from Portico.
- To balance, the BOL mortgage reserve contribution was reduced by ~\$20k.
Council will finalize in October.

D. Nominating Team (Council)

Per precedent, Rob Boyle, Jim Huddle, and David Schiller (third-year members) are serving as the Nominating Team. They have met with Pastor Phillip and Linda, collected suggestions via pew slips, and begun outreach. About four to five names have been submitted so far.

E. Kneeling pads for the communion rail

No updates, Kevin said he needs to check with the worship committee..

6. New Business

A. Faith Formation Committee Presentation regarding space from Epiphany Lutheran Nursery School (ELNS)

Members of the Children and Youth Faith Formation Team shared questions regarding space in the Faith Formation wing and requested a team look at space usage. Council formed an ad hoc team.

B. Resolution Proposal from Finance Committee

To remove the old check signing signatories except for Debbie, and add new signatories for Jennifer and Jim.

- **Motion:** Cindy McClintock moved to remove all old check-signing signatories (except Debbie Sexton) and add Jennifer Edwards (Treasurer) and Jim Huddle (Council member) as new signatories.
- **Second:** Leigh Pickels seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

7. Anything for Hanne?

- Markus Groener will provide Hanne and Turner with the approved council minutes from the August meeting for posting to Epiphany's website.
- Council agreed that communication about the AC replacement decision should be included in the October newsletter.

8. Next Meetings

- The next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14th, 2025, at 7:00 pm.
- Missy Hill will lead devotions and the prayers.

9. Closing Prayer

Joseph Bollick offered a closing prayer, asking God's Spirit to guide the council in choosing life, prosperity, and grace in service to Christ.

10. Adjournment

Mike Dunavant adjourned the meeting at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Markus K. Groener
Church Council Secretary