

Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church

Church Congregation Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, October 14, 2025 – 7:00 PM

Attendees

Present: Mike Dunavant (President), Rob Boyle (Vice-President), Markus Groener (Secretary), Jennifer Edwards (Treasurer), Joseph Bollick, Missy Hill, Phillip Martin, Cindy McClintock, Leigh Pickels, David Schiller
Present (via video conference): Sarah Lang, Gwen Newman
Guests (via video conference): Debbie Sexton
Absent: Jim Huddle

1. Call to Order

Council President Mike Dunavant called the meeting to order at **7:01 PM** and confirmed a quorum

2. Devotions / Opening Prayer

Missy Hill led the devotion, reflecting on **Luke 17:11–19**, the story of **Jesus healing the ten lepers**, emphasizing **gratitude and faithfulness**. She encouraged council members to consider how often we, like the nine healed lepers, forget to return to give thanks when blessings come our way. The discussion centered on cultivating **thankfulness as a daily spiritual practice** and recognizing God's presence in ordinary moments of grace. Several members shared short reflections on ways they've recently experienced gratitude within the church community and their personal lives. Missy closed the devotion with a **prayer of thanksgiving**, asking God to strengthen the council's hearts for service and awareness of His ongoing blessings.

3. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes from September 9, 2025

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

C. Receipt of Treasurer's Report and BOL Update

- **Monthly:** Net income favorable by **\$28,520**; expenses essentially flat to budget (about **\$78**).
- **YTD:** Total income favorable by **\$39,858**; expenses unfavorable by **\$946** (technology support timing), offset by small personnel savings. Offerings are up ~10% YoY.
- **Operating position:** YTD expenses exceed YTD income by **\$55,886**, but net is favorable to plan by **\$38,912**.
- **Mortgage Reserve:** Balance **\$312,492**, covering ~**25.8 months** of P&I at ~\$12,124/mo (through **October 2027**).
- **Motion:** Rob Boyle moved to approve the consent agenda.
- **Second:** Missy Hill 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** - No cards received due to a printer issue; signing deferred. The following list was provided on 10/16/2025, with cards ready for signing in the church office.

5. Old Business

A. Proposed 2026 Budget - Final Pass

2026 Budget

Debbie Sexton summarized the final budget to present at the Annual Meeting: **\$977,100** balanced plan; revenues ~1% above 2025 budget (and ~3% over current-year forecast); property/auto insurance increased ~8%; discussion on **Bastion Point** IT costs and a potential PC leasing program (about **\$4,400/yr** if added) with further analysis to be led by **Gwen Newman and Markus Groener** (transition plan, servicing, replacement cadence). For 2026, line allocations can flex between office-equipment reserve and tech expenses as needed; budget impact is intended to be a wash.

2026 Budget Approval

- **Motion:** Cindy McClintock moved to approve the proposed **2026 Budget** for presentation to the congregation.
- **Second:** Markus Groener seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

Merit and Insurance Plans

The Executive Committee recommended offering staff the highest ELCA Portico plan option (Select Copay 2000) with employee choice among alternatives, and a 3.5% merit increase for full-time staff. Council discussed affordability (roughly +\$25–26k over 2025 forecast, driven mainly by healthcare and merit), concluding this year is not the time to cut staff compensation.

- **Motion:** David Schiller moved to approve a **3.5%** merit increase for ordained and full-time staff and to fund health coverage up to the **Select Copay 2000** plan
- **Second:** Missy Hill seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

B. Acceptance of 2025 Endowment Fund Distribution

- **Motion:** Rob Boyle moved to accept the full 5% (**\$53,528.05**) 2025 Endowment Fund distribution.
- **Second:** Cindy McClintock seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

C. Nominating Team Report (Council)

Slate of three to stand for Council (to be elected at the Annual Meeting): **Matt Greenshields, Carl Erickson, and Jane Huddle.**

D. Update on Epiphany Shines Campaign

Steering structure forming; **John Stapleton** (communications/commitment role TBD) and **Cheryl Ham** (special events) have agreed to serve; lead-gifts chair still in discernment. A short “teaser” presentation is planned for the Annual Meeting; a larger kickoff is envisioned for early **2026**.

E. Set Date for Annual Meeting - Sunday, November 9th at 12:00 pm

- a. Business Meeting - budget and council election
- b. Epiphany Shines presentation
- c. Change to Epiphany Endowment allocation
- d. Surplus Allocation Resolution (2025)

Council will ask the congregation to authorize Council to allocate **any 2025 operating surplus** by **March 1, 2026** (rather than defaulting to unrestricted surplus).

- **Motion:** Leigh Pickels moved to **seek congregational authorization** for Council to allocate any 2025 surplus by March 1, 2026
- **Second:** Cindy McClintock seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

F. New Signature on Accounts

Update pending; need to coordinate **Town Bank** visit among Jim Huddle, Jennifer Edwards, and Debbie Sexton.

G. Update on Space Allocation Meeting (Faith Formation/ELNS/Quilters)

Ad hoc team recommended dedicating **Room 201** for ELNS students starting **2026-27**; ELNS will purchase adjustable tables (approx. **\$1,000 each**) from their reserves. Quilters are supportive of relocating to **Price Hall** with added storage (to be explored).

H. Kneeling pads for the communion rail

Update from Kevin - Worship team is proceeding with custom foam and sewn covers to match the sanctuary (prefer over off-the-shelf pads).

6. New Business

A. GraceInside Funding Requests (Rob McClintock)

To be considered with **Advent/Christmas** special offerings at the **November** meeting (percentage allocations).

7. Anything for Hanne?

- Prepare and mail **Annual Meeting letter** (target postmark no later than **October 28, 2025**); link budget via congregational email.
- Markus Groener will provide Hanne and Turner with the approved council minutes from the September meeting for posting to Epiphany’s website.

8. Next Meetings

- The next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 11th, 2025, at 7:00 pm.
- Cindy McClintock will lead devotions and the prayers.

9. Closing Prayer

Missy Hill offered a closing prayer, thanking God for His guidance and presence during the meeting and for the spirit of unity among council members. She prayed for continued wisdom as the council prepares for the Annual Meeting and the upcoming season of stewardship, asking that all decisions made serve to strengthen Epiphany's mission and bless the congregation. Missy concluded by lifting up the church's ministries, staff, and members in prayer, seeking God's peace and encouragement for the weeks ahead.

10. Adjournment

Mike Dunavant adjourned the meeting at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Markus K. Groener
Church Council Secretary