

# Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Church Congregational Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 9, 2025 – 7:00 PM

### Attendees

**Present (via video conference):** Mike Dunavant (President), Rob Boyle (Vice-President), Markus Groener (Secretary), Jennifer Edwards (Treasurer), Joseph Bollick, Carl Erickson, Matt Greenshields, Jane Huddle, Jim Huddle, Sarah Lang, Phillip Martin, Gwen Newman, Leigh Pickels, David Schiller

**Absent:** Missy Hill, Cindy McClintock

### 1. Call to Order

Council President Mike Dunavant called the meeting to order at **7:04 PM**.

### 2. Devotions / Opening Prayer

Pastor Phillip Martin led devotion, with a reading from Philippians 2, reflecting on Christ's humility and self-emptying ("kenosis") in the incarnation—God taking on human form. He invited council members to consider how nativity scenes help us imagine and remember that mystery, and prompted members to share meaningful nativity sets and Christmas ornaments. They also shared personal stories about family traditions and treasured pieces, including inherited, well-worn sets and unique international pieces. Pastor Phillip briefly defined kenosis and shared a short poem highlighting Christ's full participation in ordinary human life and suffering. He concluded with a liturgical prayer of thanksgiving and a petition that Epiphany be a tangible expression of God's love and healing in a broken world.

### 3. Consent Agenda

#### A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes from November 11, 2025, and Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes from November 9, 2025

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

Written reports were received from staff and ministry teams.

#### C. Receipt of Treasurer's Report and BOL Update

- **Monthly:** Net income for November 2025 was unfavorable to the budget by \$41,190, driven primarily by a deficit in contributions for the month. Total expenses were unfavorable to the budget by \$5,302, with notable deviations including curriculum purchases and Trunk-or-Treat; reclassified PC purchases/equipment; processed annual service donations planned for December; and continuing education for pastors.
- **YTD:** Total income is unfavorable to the budget by \$35,250. Offerings are behind plan by \$40,290 (approximately 10% ahead of last year, though), partially offset by favorable interest income. Total expenses are unfavorable by \$8,271, primarily due to higher-than-planned building maintenance, electricity, janitorial supplies, mileage, and IT expense. As of November month-end, YTD expenses exceed YTD income by \$78,786, and net income is unfavorable to the budget by \$43,521.
- **Outlook:** Approximately \$160,000 in income is needed in December to make the plan; last December's income was \$152,000.

- **Mortgage Reserve:** As of November 30, 2025, the mortgage reserve balance was \$300,068, covering approximately 24.74 months of principal and interest payments at \$12,124 per month (sustaining payments through November 2027).
- **Motion:** Jim Huddle moved to approve the consent agenda.
- **Second:** Rob Boyle seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

#### 4. Receipt of Communications

##### A. Open Requests for Communications Received

None received this month.

##### B. Sympathy and Support Cards

Sympathy and support cards were postponed; the church office was closed due to winter weather, and cards will be prepared/circulated at the front office for signatures.

#### 5. Old Business

##### A. Letter to Endowment Committee Update

Mike Dunavant reported that the letter to the Endowment Committee is in progress and will be shared with Council before it is sent. Council reiterated its request that the Endowment Committee provide quarterly financial statements/updates, in accordance with the bylaws, to support more transparent communication with the congregation. Jim Huddle noted that the bylaws describe ex officio membership for the pastors and the Finance Committee chair.

##### B. Epiphany Shines to 75 - Update and Next Steps

Council reviewed the proposed campaign timeline and preparation steps. Key elements discussed included preparing FAQ/Q&A materials, establishing a clear channel for congregational questions, and sequencing campaign phases leading to a congregational vote (targeted for Sunday, March 1, 2026). Council emphasized careful handling of giving data and congregational privacy, and the importance of clear, consistent messaging.

##### C. Addition of Jennifer Edwards to the Vanguard Account

Vanguard requires Council authorization to add Treasurer Jennifer Edwards as an authorized signer.

- **Motion:** Jim Huddle moved to add Jennifer Edwards as an authorized signer on the Vanguard accounts.
- **Second:** Gwen Newman seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

##### D. AC Replacement Update

Pastor Phillip shared an update: the new sanctuary air conditioning unit has been installed, and the heat has been reconnected. A final walkthrough/testing will close out remaining items.

##### E. Kneeling pads for the communion rail

The kneeling pads have been ordered and are expected to be available in early January.

## 6. New Business

### A. Christmas Bonus for non-called staff

Council reviewed the annual Christmas bonus/gift practice for non-called staff and key contributors. The 2025 budgeted amount for Christmas bonuses was noted. The Council discussed adjustments for new roles and additional workload for 2025 and approved the bonus/gift allocations.

- **Motion:** Markus Groener moved to approve the year-end Christmas bonus/gift allocations for non-called staff as discussed.
- **Second:** Jennifer Edwards seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

### B. Council Elections

Pastor Phillip Martin facilitated officer elections. The Council elected the following officers for the coming year:

- Mike Dunavant - President
- Jane Huddle - Vice-President
- Markus Groener - Secretary

### C. Council Installation - January 18th or 25th

Council installation will be held on Sunday, January 25, 2026, during both worship services.

### D. Council Devotions Schedule for 2026

| Month (Date)    | Council Member    | Month (Date)     | Council Member   |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| January (1/13)  | Gwen Newman       | July (7/14)      | Markus Groener   |
| February (2/10) | Matt Greenshields | August (8/11)    | Leigh Pickels    |
| March (3/10)    | Jane Huddle       | September (9/08) | Missy Hill       |
| April (4/14)    | Joseph Bolick     | October (10/13)  | Jennifer Edwards |
| May (5/12)      | Carl Erickson     | November (11/10) | Phillip Martin   |
| June (6/09)     | Mike Dunavant     | December (12/08) | Cindy McClintock |

## 7. Anything for Hanne?

- Markus Groener will provide Hanne and Turner with the approved minutes from the November council and congregational meetings for posting on Epiphany's website.
- Markus Groener will send the newly elected council officer information to Hannah for communication to the congregation.
- Markus Groener will send the approved non-called staff bonus/gift list to Debbie for processing.

## 8. Next Meetings

- The next council meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 13th, 2026, at 7:00 pm.**
- Gwen Newman will lead devotions and the prayers.

## 9. Closing Prayer

**Pastor Phillip Martin** offered the closing prayer. He asked God to be with the council as they drew the day to a close. He gave thanks for the day God had given, for opportunities to serve neighbors, and for the ways

the group had encountered Christ through one another. He prayed for rest and renewal and expressed gratitude for the faith and service shared among those present.

## **10. Adjournment**

Mike Dunavant adjourned the meeting at **9:04 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

Markus K. Groener  
Church Council Secretary