

# Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Church Congregational Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 10, 2026 – 7:00 PM

### Attendees

**Present:** Mike Dunavant (President), Jane Huddle (Vice-President), Markus Groener (Secretary), Joseph Bollick, Missy Hill, Phillip Martin, Leigh Pickels

**Present (via video conference):** Jennifer Edwards (Treasurer), Sarah Lang, Gwen Newman

**Guest(s):** Cathy DeLesDernier (Quilting Ministry)

**Absent:** Carl Erickson, Matt Greenshields, Cindy McClintock

### 1. Call to Order

Council President Mike Dunavant called the meeting to order at **7:08 PM**.

### 2. Devotions / Opening Prayer

Pastor **Phillip Martin** led devotions centered on **joy** (Philippians 4) and invited members to share what brings them joy. Pastor Phillip also informed Council that **Matt Greenshields** has been diagnosed with **stage 4 pancreatic cancer**, and the group held him and his family in prayer. Devotions concluded with a prayer (Prayer of St. Francis).

### 3. Consent Agenda

#### A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes from December 9, 2025, and January 13, 2026

Council received the January minutes; minor corrections had been circulated by Markus Groener. No additional corrections were raised in the meeting.

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

Written reports were received. Council briefly discussed the inconsistency in how ministries provide written reports; members noted that some roles are highly visible week to week, while others are behind the scenes.

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

- **Monthly:** Net income was **unfavorable to the budget by \$23,057**; total income was **unfavorable by \$22,825**, largely due to the church being closed for **two Sundays** because of snow/ice. Expenses were **slightly unfavorable by \$232**.
- YTD: As of January month-end, **expenses exceed income by \$48,054**, and net income is **unfavorable to the budget by \$24,097**.
- **Mortgage Reserve:** Balance as of **January 31, 2026**, is **\$311,943**, covering approximately **25.73 months** of principal and interest payments at **\$12,124/month**, sustaining payments through **February 2028**. Council also noted that the previously approved **\$25,000 transfer** to the Mortgage Reserve has been completed.
- **Discussion highlights:** Members noted giving rebounds typically after weather interruptions; Pastor Phillip mentioned a recent Sunday collection that was close to **\$40,000**, suggesting some "catch-up" giving may already be underway. Council also clarified how certain line items can appear negative (e.g., when revenue is recorded in a category typically associated with expenses).

#### D. Approval of Consent Agenda for January and February

- **Motion:** Jane Huddle moved to approve the consent agenda for December and January
- **Second:** Missy Hill seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

### 4. Receipt of Communications

#### A. Open Requests for Communications Received

Council received and acknowledged thank-you communications, including:

- **Grace Inside** - Thanks for your contribution in December, and appreciation for Epiphany's support of chaplaincy work.
- **Lamb's Basket** - thanks for **\$2,500** in 2025 contributions to the FoodBank; the letter included ministry impact statistics for 2025.
- **Liberation Veteran Services** - Thanks for the contribution and appreciation for Epiphany's renewed support in serving veterans.

#### B. Sympathy and Support Cards

- **Get Well**
  - Maxine Brewer
  - Carolyn Kronk
- **Sympathy**
  - Susie Mahanes at the death of her mother, Sophie
  - Brad Williamson at the death of his mother, Betsy
  - Brad Williamson at the death of his brother, Rick
  - Greg Parker at the death of his mother

### 5. Old Business

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

Council discussed the final wording of a resolution to bring to a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 1, 2026, including how much specificity to include in the resolution versus in supporting FAQ materials. Key points of discussion included:

- Maintaining clarity while avoiding language that becomes unnecessarily restrictive (especially around campaign "goal" figures).
- Confirming prior communications that the **first \$200,000** is intended for capital improvements, with the remaining funds supporting mortgage principal reduction.
- Explicitly tying capital improvements to the **five-year property plan** to reduce "mission creep" and to give congregants confidence that projects are prioritized and not arbitrary.
- Anticipating congregational questions about **endowment restrictions** and ensuring those limitations are clearly communicated during the congregational meeting and in supporting materials.

#### B. Call a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, March 1, 2026, to approve the following:

1. For the Congregation to initiate a Capital Campaign over the next three years called "**Epiphany Shines to 75!**" in celebration of the congregation's 75th anniversary in 2027
2. To allocate the first **\$200,000** raised for capital improvements **as directed by the 5-year property plan**
3. Apply additional funds raised to reduce the mortgage principal **before or upon refinancing in 2029.**

4. To request a **10% distribution** from the Epiphany Endowment Fund.
  - **Motion: Missy Hill moved to approve the resolution**
  - **Second:** Gwen Newman seconded.
  - **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

## 6. New Business

### A. Quilters Ministry Proposal (Lutheran World Relief In-Gathering Request)

- **Cathy DeLesDernier** requested Council approval for Epiphany to host an **LWR “in-gathering”** in **April or May**, due to the closure of the former Mid-Atlantic drop-off location in New Windsor, MD. The in-gathering would involve temporary storage in **Price Hall** for several days and volunteer support to load a truck (or U-Haul, depending on volume) during pickup. Cathy shared ministry output since 2015, including **2,250 quilts** and **2,476 school bags**.
- Council approved and agreed that Epiphany should proceed with hosting the in-gathering, with final scheduling details to be coordinated once LWR provides confirmed dates and truck logistics.

### B. Lent Wednesday 2026 Offering Distribution

Pastor Phillip proposed the Lenten Wednesday offering distribution consistent with Epiphany’s practice of directing offerings outside the church and generally balancing global and local impact:

- The first **\$1,800** to **Heifer International** for the construction of wells and organic fertilizers (six wells)
- Everything over **\$1,800** will go to **Encircle**
- **Motion: Leigh Pickels moved to approve the distribution**
- **Second:** Jane Huddle seconded
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

### C. Kneeling Pads Update

Council noted the pending delivery of kneeling pads for the communion rail (previously approved). Follow-up will be made as needed.

## 7. Anything for Hanne?

- Markus Groener will provide Hanne and Turner with the approved minutes from the December and January council meetings for posting on Epiphany’s website.
- Markus Groener will provide Hanne with the Lent Offering Distribution information to post to the newsletter and bulletin.

## 8. Next Meetings

- The next council meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 10th, 2026, at 7:00 pm**.
- Jane Huddle will lead devotions and the prayers.

## 9. Closing Prayer

**Pastor Phillip Martin** offered the closing prayer, including a prayer for Matt Greenshields and the congregation as Lent approaches.

## 10. Adjournment

Mike Dunavant adjourned the meeting at **8:21 PM**.

Respectfully submitted,

Markus K. Groener  
Church Council Secretary