

Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church

Church Congregational Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 10, 2026 – 7:00 PM

Attendees

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

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

Absent: None

1. Call to Order

Council Vice-President Jane Huddle called the meeting to order at **7:02 PM**.

2. Devotions / Opening Prayer

Jane Huddle led devotions centered on the Lenten season, reflecting on themes of repentance, renewal, and reflection. She shared how Lent can be understood not simply as giving something up, but as intentionally creating space for God by replacing a habit or comfort with prayer, study, service, or deeper spiritual attention.

Council members then shared personal Lenten practices and experiences. Members spoke about giving up soda, online shopping, and other routines, as well as taking on new disciplines such as prayer, reading spiritually meaningful books, attending midweek services, and being more intentional in daily habits. The discussion was thoughtful and warm, setting a reflective tone for the meeting. Jane concluded with prayer, asking God to guide the council's discernment and service to the congregation during this Lenten journey.

3. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes from February 10, 2026, and Special Congregational Meeting from March 1, 2026

Council received the February 10, 2026, council meeting minutes and the March 1, 2026, special congregational meeting minutes for approval.

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

Written reports from pastors, staff, and ministry teams were received.

C. Receipt of Treasurer's Report and BOL Update

- **Monthly:** Net income was **favorable to the budget by \$27,136**; total income was **favorable by \$29,007**, primarily because contributions were stronger than budgeted. Total expenses were **unfavorable by \$1,871**, due mainly to a service trip payment and higher utility costs during the cold start to the year, partially offset by the timing of the PC support bill.
- **YTD:** Total income was **favorable by \$6,104**, contributions were **6% higher than 2025**, total expenses were **unfavorable by \$2,381**, and overall net income was **favorable to budget by \$3,723**, even though year-to-date expenses still exceeded year-to-date income by **\$28,625**.

- **Mortgage Reserve:** Balance as of **February 28, 2026**, is **\$304,943**, covering approximately **25 months** of principal and interest payments at **\$12,124/month**, sustaining payments through **March 2028**.
- **Discussion highlights:** Jennifer Edwards noted that the Brighten Our Light tracking schedule is being retired and replaced with new tracking for **Shine to 75**. During the discussion, Gwen Newman asked whether the church should rethink how revenue is budgeted, since the current presentation requires recurring explanation. Jennifer responded that revenue is budgeted according to historical giving patterns, while expenses are more level throughout the year, which naturally creates uneven month-to-month comparisons.

D. Approval of Consent Agenda for February and March (Special Meeting Minutes)

- **Motion:** Jane Huddle moved to approve the consent agenda for February and March (Special Meeting Minutes)
- **Second:** Cindy McClintock seconded.
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously

4. Receipt of Communications

A. Open Requests for Communications Received

Council received and acknowledged several thank-you communications, including:

- **Grace Inside**, expressing appreciation for Epiphany's longstanding support of prison chaplaincy and for sharing Rob McClintock in that ministry.
- **Liberation Veteran Services**, thanking Epiphany for its gift of **\$1,157.55**, received February 6th, 2026.
- **Cross Over Healthcare Ministry**, thanking Epiphany for its recent gift of **\$1,543.40**, received February 4th, 2026, in support of the compassionate healthcare ministry.
- **Tuckahoe Volunteer Rescue Squad, Inc.**, thanks Epiphany for its \$772 contribution in support of emergency medical and rescue services.

B. Sympathy and Support Cards

Brief updates were shared regarding several of those listed, including hospitalization, surgery, recovery needs, and ongoing treatment.

- **Get Well**
 - Max Bernhardt
 - Frances Burger
 - Laura Dietrick
 - Tatter Hartmann
 - Ellen Kessler
 - Carolyn Kronk
 - Mary Sue Oehler
 - Nancy Pridgen
- **Serious Illness**
 - Matt Greenshields
- **Sympathy**
 - Donna von Kanneurff at the death of her mother

5. Old Business

A. Epiphany Shines to 75 - Update and Next Steps

Missy Hill shared a draft of the campaign prospectus and walked the council through several areas still under review before printing. Council discussion focused primarily on the campaign gift chart, especially whether the projected number of gifts in the middle giving range should be weighted more heavily or distributed more evenly. Members generally favored presenting the campaign in a way that is both realistic and aspirational, allowing households to see a range of possibilities without feeling pressured beyond their means.

Council also discussed how commitments will be made. Members favored keeping both **paper commitment cards** and the **Realm** option available. Discussion highlighted the need for very clear instructions in the prospectus, especially that a pledge entered in Realm should reflect the **total pledge amount**, and that any payment schedule should be set up separately through the giving side rather than on the pledge screen. Members also discussed the need to reassure the congregation about confidentiality and to identify a clear office contact for pledge questions or adjustments.

a. Special Reception for “silent phase” of campaign - March 24 and Council commitments on April 14

Missy confirmed that the lead-gift or “silent phase” reception is scheduled for **March 24**, and that council commitments will be received at the **April 14** council meeting so that the congregation can be told that council participation is complete before the broader launch. Council also discussed the campaign timeline, noting that it runs from March 1, 2026, through February 28, 2029, while still allowing flexibility for members who may need more time to fulfill a larger commitment. Members expressed interest in a visible campaign-progress display for the congregation, though the exact format is still being developed.

B. Follow-up from Congregational Meeting

- **Proposed:** Letter to be sent requesting the 10% distribution for the capital campaign totaling **\$100,000** from the Epiphany Endowment Fund Board.
- **Motion:** Missy Hill moved to send the proposed letter to the Epiphany Endowment Fund Board requesting the 10% distribution for the capital campaign from the current fund
- **Second:** Leigh Pickels seconded.
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously

C. Follow Up on Quilter’s Ministry

Council received confirmation that **Lutheran World Relief** will pick up the quilts on **April 18, 2026**. Members noted that this timing overlaps with setup for another church event, so some coordination will be needed for the use of space in Price Hall. Even so, the overall response was positive, and members affirmed that supporting service ministry in the church’s space is fully in keeping with the congregation’s mission and the spirit of the capital campaign.

D. Follow up on the Endowment meeting & set a meeting date with the Endowment and Finance committees.

Mike Dunavant reported on his attendance at the recent Endowment Board meeting. He shared that the endowment currently holds **over \$1 million** and is managed by **Davenport & Company**. He emphasized that the Endowment Fund is a **separate legal entity** from the church, and that this

distinction is important both legally and financially. Mike advised caution about any future efforts to alter annual distributions through council action and said he does **not** recommend reintroducing the earlier rescinded resolution concerning broader annual access to endowment funds.

The discussion then broadened to the endowment's overall purpose. Members noted that the endowment serves multiple functions: supporting the long-term interests of the congregation, helping with extraordinary capital needs, and providing a measure of protection in a worst-case scenario. Joseph Bolick also noted that when the congregation is asked to make sacrificial gifts toward a capital campaign, members naturally expect the endowment to participate as well. Several council members stressed that the deeper issue is transparency and understanding. Jane Huddle noted that an annual high-level report from the Endowment Board would help reduce the sense that it is a "secret fund," and Markus Groener suggested that a summary of investment allocations and risk posture would be useful even if line-by-line detail is unnecessary. Mike said he would circulate the bylaws and constitution materials and continue working toward a joint conversation among council, finance, and endowment leadership.

6. New Business

A. Lenten Dinner Discussion - March 25, 2026

Council reviewed logistics for the upcoming Lenten dinner on March 25. Jane Huddle noted that, given the schedules and realities of the current council, a simplified approach is more practical than expecting extensive home cooking. Members discussed who would bring hot and cold items, desserts, fruit, and lasagnas, and agreed to coordinate the final details once the attendance count is confirmed. Jane also reminded members to make sure they are included in the meal count if they plan to eat while helping. The tone of the discussion was practical and lighthearted, with broad appreciation for Jane's coordination.

B. Appreciation for Carl's effort on CPR class

Cindy McClintock shared her appreciation on behalf of her husband for Carl Erickson's leadership of the CPR training event. She reported that participants learned a great deal, appreciated the positive atmosphere, and came away knowing where the equipment is located and how to use it. Carl also reported that the Red Cross was impressed by the turnout. Markus Groener noted that he had donated **50 face-shield bags** for future use, and members briefly discussed adding additional items to first-aid kits.

C. Kneeling Pads at Communion Rail

Members gave positive feedback on the new kneeling pads, noting that they are already helping some communicants feel more comfortable using the center rail. There was some light discussion about setup logistics for the rail and the usual learning curve for ushers, but the overall response was favorable.

D. Balcony Safety/Risk Mitigation

Markus Groener raised a question about whether the church should consider signage or guidance for young children on the balcony as a general risk-mitigation measure. The matter was not formally resolved during the meeting, but it was acknowledged as a reasonable point for further thought.

E. Seating Patterns in Worship/Camera Visibility

Joseph Bolick noted that attendance remains strong, but observed that people appear increasingly reluctant to sit in the front pews, particularly those visible on camera during livestreaming. Members offered several possible explanations, including longstanding habits of sitting toward the back, late

arrivals, and general comfort patterns. No action was taken, but the conversation surfaced a pastoral and practical concern worth noting.

F. Follow-Up Communications from the March 1 Congregational Meeting

Council briefly checked whether the congregation had already received access to the FAQ materials following the March 1 congregational meeting. Members confirmed that the information had been circulated, including via a QR code.

7. Anything for Hanne?

- Markus Groener will provide Hanne and Turner with the approved minutes from the **February 10, 2026, council meeting** and the **March 1, 2026, special congregational meeting** for posting on Epiphany's website.

8. Next Meetings

- The next council meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, April 14th, 2026, at 7:00 pm.**
- Joseph Bollick will lead devotions and the prayers.

9. Closing Prayer

Jane Huddle offered the closing prayer, asking God to guide the council, help members reflect faithfully on their responsibilities, and be present with Matt Greenshields, his family, and others in need of prayer.

10. Adjournment

Mike Dunavant adjourned the meeting at **8:33 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Markus K. Groener
Church Council Secretary