

Epiphany Evangelical Lutheran Church
Church Congregational Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 11, 2026 – 7:00 PM

Attendees

Present (via video conference): Mike Dunavant (President), Jane Huddle (Vice-President), Jennifer Edwards (Treasurer), Markus Groener (Secretary), Joseph Bolick, Carl Erickson, Matt Greenshields, Sarah Lang, Cindy McClintock, Leigh Pickels

Absent: Missy Hill, Phillip Martin, Gwen Newman

1. Call to Order

Council President Mike Dunavant presided via video conference and called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Mike thanked Jane Huddle for presiding in his recent absences and noted that graduate coursework would continue to limit his availability over the coming months, though he intends to join meetings whenever able.

2. Devotions / Opening Prayer

Leigh Pickels led devotions, reading Matthew 14:28–31 — Peter walking on the water toward Jesus and beginning to sink when he fixed on the wind and waves rather than on Christ. Leigh reflected that faith means keeping our focus on Jesus rather than on our circumstances, since fear breeds doubt and lets distractions weaken faith. She shared that a tree had fallen on her home during the previous night's storms; no one was hurt, and the experience reminded her that what mattered most had been kept safe and that God was watching over her family throughout. She invited members to recall a recent time when they had doubted but their faith carried them through. Members shared warm personal reflections on choosing faith over fear — spanning family health challenges, career transitions, a parent's move to be closer to family, ministry uncertainties, and long-awaited answered prayers — and gave thanks for the ways those situations had ultimately worked out. Leigh offered the opening prayer, asking God to grant the council courage to choose faith over fear and to guide its decisions.

3. Consent Agenda

A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes of July 14, 2026

Council received the July 14, 2026, council meeting minutes for approval. Markus Groener reported that no corrections or comments had been received during the review period.

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

Written reports from pastors, staff, and ministry teams were received. No questions or comments were raised.

C. Receipt of Treasurer's Report and Mortgage Reserve / Shine to 75 Update

Jennifer Edwards reviewed the financial reports for the month ending July 31, 2026. She noted that the reports had arrived late (the afternoon before the meeting) and that the Shine to 75 / Mortgage Reserve transaction report had not yet been received and would be circulated once available.

- **Monthly:** Net income was **unfavorable** to the budget by \$8,985. Total income was **unfavorable** by \$11,074, due to lower-than-expected contributions, which is typical for the summer months. Total

expenses were **favorable** by \$2,089, primarily because the agreed-upon-procedures (audit) expense was budgeted in July but paid in August; this favorability is expected to reverse in August.

- **Year-to-Date (YTD):** Total income was **favorable** by \$20,640, with total contributions running approximately 7% higher than in 2025. Total expenses were **unfavorable** by \$4,706, primarily due to higher-than-planned utility payments (from both a very cold winter and a very hot summer) and a higher water/sewer bill stemming from an earlier water leak. Net income was **favorable** to budget by \$15,934, even though year-to-date expenses still exceeded year-to-date income by \$70,852.
- **Mortgage Reserve:** Balance as of July 31, 2026, is \$264,469, covering approximately 21.81 months of principal and interest payments at \$12,124/month, sustaining payments through approximately April 2028. The balance reflects the regular monthly mortgage payment and the monthly reserve buildup. The outstanding mortgage balance stood at approximately \$1,715,492.
- **Shine to 75 Update:** As of July month-end, the Shine to 75 Capital Campaign account held approximately \$236,925. Jennifer noted these figures were drawn directly from the statement of financial position because the supporting Shine to 75 / Mortgage Reserve report had not yet been received. Drawing on figures from the contribution side of Realm, Jane Huddle reported total pledges of approximately \$1,004,892 (still 120 pledges) and total campaign receipts to date of approximately \$357,462 (including the endowment distribution from the Epiphany Endowment Fund Board and excluding amounts already applied to the mortgage).
- **Discussion highlights:** Jennifer reported that the TowneBank checking account balance stood at only about \$9,475 at month-end — below the council-established minimum — and that a transfer from the Vanguard accounts is needed. Because Finance Manager Elizabeth Hurst does not yet have transfer access, Debbie Sexton, who retains signatory authority, is expected to move funds in the interim to maintain the minimum balance; the pending Vanguard name changes (see New Business) will enable the transition. Mike Dunavant asked for a breakdown of Shine to 75 repair spending to date; Jennifer noted she did not yet have that detail without the outstanding report. Council also noted that a large mortgage principal payment (approximately \$140,000) was made in August and is expected to appear in the August report.

D. Approval of Consent Agenda

- **Motion:** Jane Huddle moved to approve the August Consent Agenda.
- **Second:** Leigh Pickels seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

4. Receipt of Communications

- None this month, as the meeting was held virtually; any open requests will be carried to next month. Markus Groener noted that no sympathy or support cards were received from Hanne Hamlin this month.

5. Old Business

A. Epiphany Shines to 75 – Update

In Missy Hill's absence, Jane Huddle provided the campaign update. Total pledges remain at 120, running approximately \$1,004,892, and total receipts to date are approximately \$357,462 (including the endowment distribution). Jane reported that the campaign continues to look very strong and that additional gifts are expected toward year-end as members review their giving statements. Carl Erickson asked what portion of Shine donations arrive through Realm automatic payments versus check; Jane and Jennifer Edwards noted this detail is not readily available to them and that staff may have it.

On capital improvements, the roof project is complete. Pastor Joseph Bolick reported that work is currently focused on the Christian Education wing, where furniture has been moved out and new flooring is being installed; the timeline for Price Hall is not yet known. Sarah Lang noted that the audiovisual (AV) work is scheduled to begin in September. Cindy McClintock suggested creating a visual display — similar to the campaign pledge “thermometer” — showing the total mortgage and tracking the paydown progress to encourage additional giving toward the mortgage; Jane Huddle suggested a companion display showing how the campaign’s property and capital-improvement funds are being spent. Council was supportive of pursuing both.

B. Update on Office Administrator Position

Three candidates are moving forward for interviews to fill the Office Administrator position. Based on recent email correspondence, interviews are being scheduled for the coming week (spanning roughly three evenings), coordinated by Pastor Phillip Martin, who remains on vacation. Jane Huddle and Carl Erickson have each volunteered to serve as council representatives in the interview process. Council hopes to have the position filled before Hanne Hamlin’s departure at the end of the month.

C. Update Recognizing Hanne’s Service

Hanne Hamlin’s recognition event will be held Sunday, August 30, between services in the Commons. The gathering will include a brief presentation, recognition of the resolution the council reviewed and affirmed, and acknowledgment of the congregational “love offering,” for which a mailing has already gone out. A lighthearted “Hanne’s Top 10” segment is also planned. A subgroup is coordinating refreshments, including Danish specialties in honor of Hanne’s heritage, with a planning call scheduled later in the week. In response to a question about whether the recognition resolution required a formal vote, council confirmed that the resolution circulated by Pastor Phillip Martin had been provided for council review and input and that no formal council approval was required.

D. First Epiphany Shines Mortgage Payment Made

The first Epiphany Shines mortgage principal payment, in the amount of \$140,000, was made, with Jim Huddle writing the check; a smaller additional payment (approximately \$3,000) is expected to follow, and further payments will be made as campaign funds are received. Council confirmed that authorization for these payments had already been granted at the July meeting, when council approved the Finance Committee paying down the mortgage principal immediately as funds above \$200,000 are received. After discussing whether to formalize a fixed monthly cadence, council reaffirmed its prior decision to leave the timing and approach to the Finance Committee; no further motion was made.

6. New Business

A. Allocate \$1,200 of the Council Discretionary Budget to the Reception for Hanne (business transacted Tuesday, August 4, 2026, per email)

Council approval was needed to allocate \$1,200 from the Council Discretionary budget line to cover expenses for Hanne’s reception on August 30. The team does not anticipate needing the full amount; refreshments will be light, with some special Danish pastries for the occasion since Hanne is Danish. This line held approximately \$9,250 per the June financials and is the line from which council has typically drawn year-end cash gifts for non-called staff. This business was transacted by email on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, and is recorded here for the minutes.

- **Motion:** Phillip Martin moved to allocate \$1,200 of the Council Discretionary budget to the reception for Hanne.
- **Second:** Markus Groener seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

B. Approve Name Changes for the Vanguard Accounts (business transacted Tuesday, August 4, 2026, per email)

Council approval was needed to update the authorized names on the congregation's Vanguard accounts. This business was transacted by email on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, and is recorded here for the minutes.

- **Motion:** Phillip Martin moved to add the following names to the congregation's Vanguard accounts — Elizabeth Hurst, Rob McClintock, and Carl Gustafsson — and to remove Debbie Sexton.
- **Second:** Markus Groener seconded.
- **Vote:**  Approved unanimously

C. Endowment Board Quarterly Reporting

Jane Huddle asked to revisit, at a future meeting, an item from the council's joint meeting with the Endowment Board and Finance Committee regarding a periodic (quarterly) report to council and finance, which has not yet been received. Mike Dunavant agreed to take the matter up at the next meeting, noting that under the Endowment Board's current bylaws the board is required to report only once a year (typically around September), so a report should be due soon. He suggested a quarterly-reporting expectation could be added as the board amends its bylaws or, failing that, addressed through a future resolution or congregational bylaws change. Markus Groener noted that, per the joint meeting minutes, council had asked for quarterly updates but the Endowment Board made no commitment and no action item was recorded. Mike added that Jim Huddle had discussed the request with Vince Pate, who seemed amenable, and that it would be raised again at the board's next meeting. No action was required.

7. Anything for Hanne?

- The approved July 14, 2026, council meeting minutes will be forwarded to Hanne Hamlin (and Turner) for posting on Epiphany's website. Markus Groener will provide the approved minutes.

8. Next Meetings

- The next council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at 7:00 PM. Jane Huddle will preside, with Mike Dunavant joining as his schedule allows.
- Missy Hill will lead devotions and the opening prayer.
- Secretary's note: Markus Groener will be traveling for the October meeting; arrangements will be made to record the meeting so the minutes can be prepared.

9. Closing Prayer

Leigh Pickels offered the closing prayer, asking God to replace the council's doubts and worries with active trust and to lead the congregation forward in faith, unity, and deep peace.

10. Adjournment

Council President Mike Dunavant adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:49 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Markus K. Groener
Church Council Secretary