

# Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

**Mission:** Knowing Jesus & Making Jesus Known

**Vision:** To be a beacon of light and hope that impacts the world

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## Church Council Minutes: October 27, 2025

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<i>Members in Attendance</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Attending</i>
Kathy Ewald, Chair	Sam Petras (Treasurer)	Pr. Elisabeth Himmelman
Jim Bono		Pr. Ben Sloss
Cindy Hildner		Pr. Brian Wise
Terese Jackway		Jean Jepson
Kelly Hoke		
Dave Mevis		Laurie May (Recording Secretary)
David Novak		
Rachel Petty		
Matt Pickering		
Kris Reenstjerna		
Teresa Thompson		

## Opening Prayer Devotion—David Novak

### Action Items

- Approval of September Council minutes

***A motion to approve the September 2025 minutes was made by Jim Bono and seconded by Kris Reenstjerna. The motion was approved.***

- New Member Report for Council: October 27, 2025
  - 24 individual new members have been received to OSLC between July 20 and October 27, 2025. This includes: 12 new households, 8 individuals by baptism

Label	How	First Name	Last Name	Date Joined
Kevin Andrews		Kevin	Andrews	09/28/2025
Jess Armbrecht		Jess	Armbrecht	10/26/2025
Bodhi Beirne	Baptism	Bodhi	Beirne	08/24/2025
Jordan Browen		Jordan	Browen	09/08/2025
Robert Browen		Robert	Browen	09/28/2025
Holden Bruzek	Baptism	Holden	Bruzek	09/07/2025
Brooke Friesner		Brooke	Friesner	10/20/2025
Grayson Frigo	Baptism	Grayson	Frigo	09/28/2025

Katherine Frigo		Katherine	Frigo	09/28/2025
Luca Frigo		Luca	Frigo	09/28/2025
Michael Frigo		Michael	Frigo	09/28/2025
Sarah Griesse		Sarah	Griesse	09/13/2025
Harper Haze	Baptism	Harper	Haze	08/16/2025
Matthew Heine	Baptism	Matthew	Heine	09/21/2025
Lucy Morrison		Lucy	Morrison	08/17/2025
Everleigh Norgaard	Baptism	Everleigh	Norgaard	07/20/2025
Craig Pynn		Craig	Pynn	09/20/2025
Susan Pynn		Susan	Pynn	09/20/2025
Darlene Rodriguez		Beatrice	Rodriguez	07/20/2025
David Rodriguez		David	Rodriguez	07/20/2025
Daniel Rotta		Daniel	Rotta	10/20/2025
Mary Anny Ryan		Mary Anny	Ryan	09/13/2025
Brittany Sheldon		Brittany	Sheldon	09/18/2025
Jaxson Williams	Baptism	Jaxson	Williams	08/19/2025
Oliver Musiał	Baptism	Oliver	Musiał	09/17/2025

***The motion to approve the new members was made by Kathy Ewald and seconded by Cindy Hildner. The motion was approved.***

## Discussion Topics

- 1. Pastor Elisabeth will travel to Mozambique in July, 2026** with other members of the congregation in the capacity of Pastor. Her fees for the trip will be covered by continuing education funds.

- 2. Office Privacy Signs have been installed.**

In response to recent ICE activity in our community, we have determined that in an emergency, our private Pastoral offices at the OSLC campus and the Pastoral Care office at Celebration can be used to provide a temporary safe space and protection until legal assistance can be reached. Clear signage has been placed in these spaces. Public areas, such as the Bach Room, Nelson-Neimi Fellowship Hall, workroom, or other meeting rooms, will not be used for this purpose because they are considered public. In the coming weeks, Pastor Ben will provide training for our staff, ushers, evening hosts, and worship team leaders to answer questions and ensure that everyone feels informed, safe, and supported. Our response is not

political. It is theological. Scripture is clear about how we are to treat those who are vulnerable, displaced, or afraid.

### **3. Stewardship Update**

Trivia Night was a big hit with 85 attendees! Participants have requested that we do this type of event more often. Pledges have shown an average increase of 8% over last year. This will go towards making up last year's deficit. It is hoped that 100% of Church Council members will pledge. Looking at ways to increase pledging, it was suggested to pledge at the time of passing the Church budget.

### **4. Staff Christmas Gifts**

We are looking for a way to give staff more choice in their gift. We are investigating websites where a gift can be chosen in specific dollar amount categories. The consensus was that this was a good idea. Pastors would like to have matching stoles. Each stole would run about \$300, so we will look into possible private donations to help offset the cost.

### **5. November meeting date**

Since our next meeting will be during Thanksgiving week, the Council considered moving the date. As most members could attend, it will remain on Monday, Nov. 24th. Kathy will not be able to be present.

## **Generative**

None

## **Committee Reports**

### **Finance Committee – Sam Petras**

-Operating cash balance increased \$140k during September (\$148.5k ERC interest shifted from Dedicated to Operating)

NOTE: We are well above the \$150k threshold; FC discussed and recommended shifting ERC interest from Dedicated to Operating

-FY26 - giving down 13% \$14k vs. same period last year and down 3% \$3k vs. budget

NOTE: Interest is up \$6k; rent is up \$2k; giving is down (\$3k); programs are down (\$2k).

-FY26 - comp & benefits is \$91k (95%) vs. \$95k giving

NOTE: Budget for September 83%; last September Actual 70%.

-78% of 2025 pledged gifts received through September (75% of calendar year is complete)

NOTE: 2024 pledged gift budget was \$731k; 2025 pledged gift budget is \$821k.

### **Youth & Family Ministry Board**

### **Celebration Children's Center (The Preschool)**

### **HR Committee**

### **Stewardship/Endowment -**

## **Worship & Arts – Cindy Hildner**

Pastor Brian noted:

We have moved to a new gluten-free (GF) bread that is made and packaged in a safe environment and cut and handled on-site with GF boards and knives. This new GF communion bread has been well received. Pastor Brian states he is grateful for the care of the sacristy team and those who have helped us find a communion bread that welcomes all to the table.

Pastor Ben reported:

Worship and arts met this month to touch base on new scheduling software and new plans for gluten-free communion bread at all services. There will be a special volunteer training on Sunday November 9th, after 9 am and 11 am worship to train current and new volunteers on the new systems at OSLC campus! A training day/time for Celebration Campus is still in the works!

Nicholas Davis reported:

- Cantata rehearsal has begun. The Cantata will be on Dec. 7 at 4:00 PM.
- Life Together Ensemble sang on October 5. We will meet again, for those interested in singing, on Wednesday, Nov. 26, for the Thanksgiving Eve service.

Chris Brown noted:

- The sax quartet will play this month on 11/2 at the 10:00 All Saints service and again on 11/29 for the first week of Advent.
- Two of our teens will be singing solos this month at Celebration services. It is good to see them get involved in service.

## **Mission and Benevolence—**

### **Nominating Committee—**

### **Property Committee—**

### **Just Love—Andrea Field**

Just Love met on October 6th to start planning our programmatic calendar. We agreed that the welcome statement will be our focus for the upcoming year, starting with RIC Sunday in January. We will meet on November 3rd at 7:00 PM in the Bonhoeffer Conference Room to continue planning.

## **Building and Sustaining Community**

Jim Bono and Teresa Thompson report they continue to meet with Christy LaFave Grace and Jean Jepson to develop stories for OSLC communication vehicles such as a piece recently run by Christy about electronic access that was the result of an interview between Pr. Ben and Jim and an announcement at the Senior Lunch by Pr. Ben about hearing-assisted devices.

Jim Bono has also been working with Pr. Elisabeth on the impact of the Federal Legislation the "One Big Beautiful Bill" which was signed into law last July 4th. The first presentation about the impacts of

that bill on SNAP (Food Stamps) and Medicaid was presented at the Leadership Retreat. Pr. Elisabeth and Jim also agreed that additional presentations needed to be developed regarding the legislation as new details became available. The "target audience" for the second presentation would be faith leaders who would be concerned with the impact of the legislation on their congregations and the community.

## Pastor Brian's Quarterly Update

These past few months have been filled with energy and hope. The 'Life Together' theme has taken deep root in this congregation. It's shaping how we gather, pray, eat, and practice generosity. It's reminding us that church isn't something we attend, it's something we live together, and I'm really grateful for all of the creativity, dedication, and love that our members are living out.

The outdoor worship with St. Timothy's at Loaves & Fishes was one of the clearest pictures of that vision. We gathered on the holy grounds of Loaves, where people are served every week, and it felt like church at its best, focused on God's abundance.

The Life Together Summit continued to build on that momentum. We revisited the early church in Acts 2 and reflected on what it means to live with shared purpose. Different break out sessions on healthy dialogue, accessibility, Hospitality, and more helped us grow as leaders and practice the kind of understanding our world desperately needs.

We have launched weekly prayer emails that are similar to the Lenten devotions. Our goal is to send these email devotions out every Monday and invite all groups to read, reflect, and pray together, even when we are apart.

We've also seen incredible progress in this year's stewardship campaign. Over 100 pledges have already been received, which puts us ahead of last year. The average pledge has increased by about 8 percent, showing real confidence in the direction God is leading us. This generosity has the potential to help us move out of our projected deficit and strengthen our mission moving forward. It's a hopeful sign of what happens when we are transparent in our vision and communication and I pray that people continue to build on this momentum.

Our staff has grown, too. We've added a full-time Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry and another part-time position to better support our people through the Community Wellness Manager. These changes are already bringing new life and deeper connection.

We should also celebrate that Our Saviour's continues to welcome new families into membership, and you can feel the excitement in worship and in the halls.

I have been working to rebuild and restart our Mission and Benevolence Board. We are very blessed to have amazing mission leadership, and this team's goal is just to continue to support those leaders as they plan and serve!

I know I've shared a lot of updates, but one of the biggest things is that we have landed on a truly Gluten Free communion bread. Our dream has been to offer one safe opportunity for anyone who comes to the table, and this current plan seems to be the greatest option for a church our size.

As we look ahead, there's even more to be excited about. The Season of Sharing is about to begin, continuing our long tradition of generosity toward our mission partners. Advent and Christmas planning are underway where we are excited to share new art that will be dedicated to our Church. In 2026, My family is hoping to take youth to Slovakia, giving our students a chance to experience global church life. And I have been asked if OSLC would consider another trivia night, and as long as my table wins next time, I'll agree to it.

**Other business:**

- The RIC Logo has now been placed on both Celebration and main campus signs.
- Caring for Creation is helping promote more consistent recycling on our campuses. The committee is working with Groot and Greg Nasman to improve our practice. Caring for Creation will also sponsor specific recycling drives throughout the year. In the future they will look into food recycling. Christmas trees at each campus will display "green" decorations.
- Additional note to Jim Bono's report "Building and Sustaining Community" : He and Pastor Elisabeth are creating a document that specifically focuses on the food insecurity that will likely result from the "Big Beautiful Bill".

**Unfinished Business:** None

**Next Meeting:**

Monday, November 24, 2025— Opening Devotion - Rachel Petty

**Closing Prayer:** David Novak

Notes submitted by Laurie May, Recording Secretary