

# Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

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

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

---

## Church Council Minutes: April 27, 2026

---

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

### Opening Prayer Devotion—Kris Reenstjerna

### Action Items

- Approval of March Council Meeting minutes

***A motion to approve the March 2026 minutes was made by Kathy Ewald and seconded by Matt Pickering. The motion was approved.***

- Update of New Members (Quarterly) - In May

### Discussion Topics

#### 1. 2026-2027 Budget

There are no major changes from last year's budget.

#### First Pass Budget from Operating and Preschool

##### Operating

-Budget assumption of giving is up \$26k vs last year's budget and down (\$76k) vs expected projected finish for FY26. Kathy C did a detailed review of member giving using what is known as of April 2026.

-Budget cost inflation 3.1% ELCA salary guidance.

-Edward Parking lot rent increase \$7k annually based on contract terms.

-8% projected facility cost increase. This takes into account known contract increases, projected inflation impact, and known capital projects.

-Interest income potential \$72k annually (3.6% projected interest rate).

- Children's Center Benevolence set at 25% of preschool revenue spread evenly over 12 months.
- In general, any pass-through related revenues and expenses will be processed directly with the dedicated account balances.
- The Synod pledge and Mission allocation will remain at a % of revenue.
- Capital Project pledge remains flat (\$180k annually). Repairs and maintenance needs continue to grow for each facility. Current capital project reserve balance is over \$220k (*NOTE: Goal of \$100,000 Minimum Balance Every June 30*).
- Staff salaries exclude custodians as we continue to utilize an outsourced cleaning service.
- Pastor Ben will continue to manage internal IT needs for OSLC.
- Property insurance - currently insuring at 80%. This continues to be a challenge and we will look into new insurance bids during the next renewal process. The most recent renewal came in flat vs prior year.

### **Preschool**

- Tuition assumption is up 2% vs last year's budget. The school continues to run at full capacity.
- Comp and Benefits assumption is up 7.3% vs last year's budget.
- Children's Center Benevolence increase noted above.
- Classroom remodeling / improvements assumption is down 22% vs last year's budget. The Children's Center continues to execute their approved classroom remodeling plan utilizing approved preferred vendors.

Discussion involved potential inflation rates, possible insurance increases, and positive financial response from the congregation. A big thank you goes out to the Finance Team for all the thoughtful work that has gone into the putting the budget together. Since there may be minor tweaks, the Council will hold an email vote to make final approval before the Congregational meeting.

## **2. Resolution Reclaiming America's 250th Birthday Celebration - Pr. Brian and Jim Bono**

The idea is for local congregations and individuals to celebrate the 250th anniversary of our country in a positive, uplifting way, through 250 local acts of kindness. OSLC, along with 4 other congregations, have signed off on this to be presented at the Synod Assembly.

**This will be brought forward to the congregation for voting at the Annual Meeting.**

June 2026

The member churches of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) do hereby consider and ratify the following resolution:

**Whereas:** The Gospel is the good news that God, in unconditional love, has already acted in Jesus Christ to forgive, restore, and give new life to all, and

**Whereas:** Lutheran theology calls Christians to love and service to one's neighbor through faith that is "a living, busy, active, mighty thing (Martin Luther) and

**Whereas:** As an RIC Synod, the Welcome Statement of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA, clearly states our commitment to both the inclusion of all

individuals and our communal work toward justice, peace and advocacy. in accordance with the Gospel, and

**Whereas:** 2026 will be the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, and

**Whereas:** National, state, and local celebrations of this anniversary will have a particularly pronounced focus this year, and the Gospel calls us to consider how our congregation will live out this moment through the lens of the Good News of God's mercy and compassion, and

**Whereas:** In a time when expressions of Christian nationalism are rising in ways that often distort the teachings of Jesus toward power rather than love, the member congregations of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA are called to embody the Gospel through lives marked by mercy, compassion, and service,

**Therefore, be it Resolved:** That individuals and groups within the Metropolitan Chicago Synod of the ELCA are called during 2026 to engage in 250 acts of compassion and service, as best expressed through their individual and collective capabilities and resources. Such acts may include, but are not limited to:

- The donation of 250 packets of toilet paper
- The donation of 250 nonperishable food items
- The donation of 250 toothbrushes, feminine products, or other items not covered by SNAP
- The offering of 250 volunteer hours in support of a mission or ministry area
- Financial gifts of \$250, or multiples thereof, given to a mission or ministry of the Metro Chicago Synod

In Witness Whereof, the undersigned have set their hands this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2026, in accordance with constitutional requirements

A motion was made to bring the **Resolution Reclaiming America's 250th Birthday Celebration** up to the congregation for adoption at the Annual Congregational Meeting. The motion was made by Jim Bono and seconded by Kris Reenstjerna. The motion passed unanimously.

### **3. Staffing Updates**

Jim Stellmacher has accepted the invitation to serve on our staff as the part-time Contemporary Worship Leader for the 10:00 a.m. service at Our Saviour's Celebration Campus.

Jim brings a strong background in music and ministry. He currently serves as choir director and department chair at Lisle High School and has experience leading worship in several Lutheran congregations. He understands both the musical and spiritual sides of worship, and we are excited to see his gifts added to our worship team.

In this role, Jim will partner closely with Nicholas Davis and our pastoral staff to plan and lead the 10 AM worship service at the Celebration Campus. His work will focus on building teams, inviting participation, and helping create a worship environment that is joy-filled, engaging, authentic, and rooted in the love of God that defines our life together.

What stands out most about Jim is not only his experience, but his heart for community and his commitment to helping people connect with God through music and worship. We are thankful for the gifts he brings and the ways he will strengthen our shared ministry.

He will lead his first Sunday service May 3rd.

#### **4. Annual Forums/Meeting**

In person and online forums will be held to accommodate the various needs of individuals in the congregation. All the pastors, Kathy Ewald and Sam Petras will be at both meetings. Other Council members are encouraged to attend.

In-person forum will be Wednesday, May 20th 7pm

Online on Zoom will be Thursday, May 28th

Annual Meeting will be Sunday May 31, Only one service will be held that weekend at 9:00 am followed by the annual meeting.

Voting: Cindy will be out-of-town on May 31st. . At the May 18th Council meeting, final plans will be made for voting.

The agenda for the annual meeting is being put together by staff. More details will be available on May 18th.

## **Generative**

### **1. None**

## **Committee Reports**

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

#### **Key Highlights from March**

-Operating cash balance increased \$4k during March

NOTE: We are well above the \$150k threshold

-FY26 - Giving up 21% \$23k vs. same period last year and up 33% \$32k vs. budget

NOTE: Giving is up \$32k; rent is up \$5k; interest is up \$4k; programs are down (\$3K).

-FY26 - Comp & Benefits is \$80k (60%) vs. \$132k giving

NOTE: Budget for March 82%; last March Actual 71%. YTD Actual 72% vs Budget 81%.

-35% of 2026 pledged gifts received through March (25% of calendar year is complete)

NOTE: 2026 pledged gift budget is \$783k; 2025 pledged gift budget was \$821k; 2024 pledged gift budget was \$731k.

## **Youth & Family Ministry Board - Kelly Hoke**

In March we performed a Sunday School SWOT Analysis to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities to grow, and threats.

In April we performed a SURGE SWOT Analysis to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities to grow, and threats.

### Key Ministry-Wide Updates

- VBS Registration is open and will happen the week of June 22
- Hotwheel event took place on April 18 @ Celebration 8:30-11:30 am
- Baccalaureate will take place on April 26 @ Celebration 10 am with reception to follow
- Just Move program with Dave Scherer will happen on May 3
- Last Day of Ignition is April 19
- Last Day of Surge is May 6
- Last Day of Sunday School is May 17

## **Celebration Children's Center**

School Board Meeting held on 4/7/26

- Introduced two new members: Terese Jackway (Council Liaison) and Liz Sandborn (Parent Liaison and District 203 Employee)
- Financials are good:
  - Quotes in progress for July updates - bathroom refresh, painting and carpet
  - Playground updates are needed and quotes are being requested.
- Many successful events/activities over the last quarter:
  - Christmas Chapel - 600+ attendees
  - Dad's Chapel (January)
  - Fun Run (February)
  - Lutheran School's Week (March 9-13)
  - Preschoolers sang in church (March 22)
- 2026-2027 Registration is full for all PreK classes and just a few openings in their 2EXT/PDO classes
- DCFS License Renewal is almost complete (with minimal required changes!)
- Summer Camp:
  - 5 weeks in June and July
  - 17 total camps (Mon -Thurs)

## **Nominating Committee - Matt**

No Report

### HR Committee - Kathy Ewald

(See Staffing Update above)

The HR Committee will be meeting in a couple of weeks.

They are looking to replace a member of the committee who is rolling off. If you know of a qualified candidate, please let Kathy know.

### Endowment and Stewardship - Dave Mevis

The next meeting will be Monday May 4th. Three new members will be coming on. New committee members will be approved by Council at the May 18th meeting.

### Worship and Arts - Cindy Hildner

Nicholas Davis reported the following highlights:

The interview process with candidates for the Contemporary Worship Leader position has been completed. Jim Stellmacher has accepted the invitation to serve on our staff as the part-time Contemporary Worship Leader for the 10:00 a.m. service at Our Saviour's Celebration Campus.

The new risers are in and have been well received. We are using different chairs that do not have pockets, so Nicholas worked on finding covers with pockets that are still aesthetically pleasing.

As of this writing, we are in the interview process with candidates for the Contemporary Worship Leader position. By the time the council meets, we likely will have identified a preferred candidate.

The Worship and Arts Board met on April 14th. The meeting started with each person sharing where they saw God present in our worship services, if and how we are engaging all generations in worship, things that went well during Lent/Holy Week/Easter, and areas for improvement. Each member then shared information about their specific area. Full minutes from the meeting are available upon request.

The Sanctuary Choir, Women's Chorale, Bach Ringers, and Children's Choir will be wrapping up their year at the end of May. Over the summer, Nicholas will work on obtaining special music for worship services.

We will continue using the current liturgies at the 5, 9, and 11 services until Mid-Summer.

Attendance provided by Kathy Clolinger, Accounting Manager

	Attendance sheet not provided, estimated								
	<b>In Person Attendance</b>					<b>YouTube Views</b>			
	<u>5:00</u>	<u>9:00</u>	<u>10:00</u>	<u>11:00</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>9:00/11:00</u>	<u>10:00</u>	<u>Total</u>	

4/19/2026		45	112	95	42	294	42	34	76
4/12/2026		43	150	74	48	315	56	23	79
4/5/2026	Easter					996			378
4/3/2026	Good Friday					214			144
4/2/2026	Maundy Thursday					138			66
3/29/2026	Palm Sunday	79	170	80	68	397	78	40	118
3/22/2026	Preschool at Celebration	39	116	164	47	366	45	32	77

**Wellness - Jim Bono**

Jim created maps of the 2025 and 2026 Shine articles to make sure that all areas of ministry are covered. These Shine article maps are located in a folder in the google shared drive.

**Property Committee - Dave Mevis**

Requesting approval to proceed with a \$22,250 project to replace the current concrete pad in preparation for the Labyrinth rather than repairing the existing multiple cracks.

**Mission and Benevolence - Teresa Thompson**

Meet in two weeks

**Memorials - Kris Reenstjerna**

1. Labyrinth at Celebration campus is moving forward. Memorial Wall repairs are complete. Date for Labyrinth construction will be coordinated with VBS dates.
2. The team decided to meet 3 times per year instead of 4. The three meetings will be during the church program year and not in summer. Online voting will be used when necessary.
3. Next meeting: October 14, 2026.

## **Just Love - Rachel Petty**

May 4th planning for the Aurora Pride Parade on Sunday, June 14th at noon. Email Kathy if interested in attending.

Just Move coming up this Sunday, May 3rd. David Scherer will be presenting at all 3 services and leading 2 sessions, one for the whole congregation and another for youth. People from Alleluia and St. Andrew's will be attending.

## **Caring for Creation - Terese Jackway**

April Events:

- Urban Canopy presented composting options at the 4/13 meeting attended by C4C members and several other church members. All attendees were in favor of using their services. Next steps are to have church staff meet with Urban Canopy to determine what program meets our needs and the cost before decisions are made.
- Author event held on 4/16 in collaboration with Bonfire. Diane Osgood spoke about her new book *Your Shopping Superpower: Follow Your Values and Better Your World One Purchase at a Time*.
- Dupage River Sweep was held on 4/18 in Naperville through the Conservation Foundation.

Upcoming:

- 5/17 - Planting day with the Sunday school children. 9:00 at Our Saviour's; 10:00 at Celebration.
- June - Supporting VBS plant theme with flowers and planters.

Next week Pr. Ben, Kris, and Susan Hanford will be going to a 3-day Faith in Place workshop.

**Unfinished Business:** None

## **Next Meeting:**

Monday, May 18, 2026 — Opening Devotion - Matt Pickering

**Closing Prayer:** Kris Reenstjerna

Notes respectfully submitted by Laurie May, Recording Secretary