

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: November 24, 2025

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

Opening Prayer Devotion—Rachel Petty

Action Items

- Approval of October Council minutes

A motion to approve the October 2025 minutes was made by Jim Bono and seconded by Therese Jackway. The motion was approved.

Discussion Topics

1. Staff Christmas Gifts

A link has been posted to staff to choose their gifts.

2. Pastoral Stoles

Matching pastoral stoles have been funded by individuals in the congregation and have been ordered.

3. The Council Holiday Party

This year's party has been moved to January 23rd, since most people were unavailable in December.

4. Pastoral Housing Allowances

Each year the Council approves the pastors housing allowances. This is not additional compensation, but an allocation of a portion of their salary for housing expenses for income-tax purposes unique to Pastors. The amounts may appear higher this year as the Pastors are doing some remodeling work on their homes, and for tax purposes it is better to estimate too much than not enough housing allowance expense.

Pr. Brian \$100,000

Pr. Elisabeth \$60,000

Pr. Ben \$65,000

A motion to approve the housing allowances as stated above was made by Jim Bono and seconded by Cindy Hildner. The motion was approved.

5. Budget discussion - Snow Removal

Last year, Greg Nasman negotiated for snow removal to be budgeted at \$24,000. Removal would begin after a one-inch snowfall. The preschool wanted it to be a zero tolerance (plowed after any amount of snow) because of safety concerns. Consequently, snow removal costs came in over budget at \$30,000. The preschool and the church will share the additional cost.

6. Budget Approval - Memorial Garden Wall Repair

Repairs to the wall will cost \$10,900 (Parapet Capstones Repair) and \$10,800 for tuckpointing and sealant.

Anything expenditure over \$15,000 must be approved by Council.

The motion to approve \$21,700 for the Memorial Garden Wall repair was made by Dave Mevis and seconded by Jim Bono. The motion was approved.

7. 2026 Meeting Schedule & Prayer

2026 Council Meeting Dates and Devotionals	
<u>Meeting Date</u> (usually 4th Monday)	<u>Devotion</u>
January 26	Kelly Hoke
February 23	Terese Jackway
March 23	Kathy Ewald
April 27	Kris Reenstjerna
May 18 (3rd Monday)	Matt Pickering
June 7 - Annual Meeting (after combined service)	None
June 22 - Orientation	Pastor Brian
July 27	Teresa Thompson
August 24	Jim Bono
September 28	Dave Mevis
October 26	Cindy Hildner
November 23	Rachel Petty
December - TBD Christmas Party	

Generative

None

Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Sam Petras

Summary from October:

- Operating cash balance increased \$5k during October
NOTE: We are well above the \$150k threshold
- FY26 - Giving up 17% \$30k vs. same period last year and up 35% \$17k vs. budget
NOTE: Interest is up \$2k; giving is up \$17; programs are \$1k.
- FY26 - Comp & Benefits is \$94k (82%) vs. \$116k giving
NOTE: Budget for October 83%; last October Actual 85%.
- 86% of 2025 pledged gifts received through October (83% of the 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 Ben:

- Worship Leader Training sessions were held on the weekend of 11/9/25.
- Volunteers are still needed for Christmas Eve services.

Nicholas Davis:

- The Women's Chorale and Sanctuary Choir continue to add new members.
- The Life Together Ensemble will sing this Wednesday at the Thanksgiving Eve Service.
- The Cantata "Let There Be Christmas" is on Sunday, Dec. 7th at 4:00 PM. We have nearly 90 participants, comprised of the Sanctuary Choir, Instrumental Ensemble, Celebration Ensemble, Women's Chorale, Children's Choir, and the Bach Ringers Handbell Ensemble.

Attendance provided by Kathy Clolinger, Accounting Manager

In Person Attendance						YouTube Views			
	5:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	Total		9:00/11:00	10:00	Total
11/23/2025	62	121	100	47	330		78	42	120
11/16/2025	37	148	79	53	317		66	28	94

11/9/2025	44	154	108	50	356	56	24	80
11/2/2025	91	156	89	48	384	97	40	137

Mission and Benevolence—

Nominating Committee—

Property Committee—Dave Mevis

1. We welcome Todd Freitag back to the team. We are blessed with having the current and 2 prior Facility Managers as members. Their experiences and knowledge of the facilities is invaluable!
2. The following were discussion updates to the current year projects and some adjustment to the 4-year plan
 - a. Jim advised we now have the results of the Threshold assessment and their recommendations. We have formed a small subcommittee who have reviewed it. We do have some questions and plan on a video conference with their team in the next few weeks. It's encouraging that we likely can improve the acoustics in the Fellowship Hall likely in phases as we believe we can do some of the sound management panels ourselves. They also affirmed they believe the sound management in the Sanctuary was fine yet added that we should likely consider replacing the dated audio sound system. More to come!
 - b. Greg shared the update of the quotes to install an exit sidewalk from the SE Sanctuary corner emergency exit. (that is correct, there never has been one there!). We chose the quote from Maul (a preferred provider). The work will be done this coming spring.
 - c. Repairs of the area by Fellowship Hall NW exit door where the water intruded have been completed. We removed the mulch and laid down a landscape plant barrier with river rock on top of it. Also had the landscaper enlarge the holes in the storm drain to improve flow. We still plan on replacing the door threshold.
 - d. Jim and Greg advised the spraying of the English Ivy succeeded in killing the Ivy! We plan to have the dead plant remains removed and disposed of yet this fall by the landscaper who helped with this.
 - e. The Gregs shared an update about the water intrusion issue in the SE corner of the Sanctuary organ room. This caused rusting and needed replacement of some electrical channels. They plan to further explore the cause of the issue and recommend plans to fix it.
 - f. Greg provided an update on the LED conversion at both campuses. Most all fixtures at Church campus are done except for the Sanctuary, Narthex, and Fellowship Hall ceiling light fixtures. There's, cost is an issue and likely will need fixture replacement. Several areas at Celebration have also been updated to LED, like the gym. We also asked Greg to draft an update about this for Weekly Connections.
 - g. The LED discussion prompted a discussion about writing a quarterly update to the Congregation about our progress. Jim agreed and will draft an initial one.

3. Mark and Jim shared the status of the Memorial Committee's proposed project to install a labyrinth in the Memorial Garden at Celebration (as was originally planned during the garden's original construction)
 - a. We have received 2 quotes for repair of the Memorial Wall and agreed to select Harling whose proposal covered all improvements needed. They are also a preferred supplier who has done multiple projects for us. The contract is being processed this week for Council review and hopeful approval by Council in the Dec 24 meeting. This work needs to be completed before the project to install the labyrinth so it isn't damaged by the wall improvement.
 - b. A small subcommittee has been established, led by Mark Witt, to work with Pastor Elisabeth and the Exec team to provide the Congregation with background and understanding of the meaningfulness of the labyrinth and our project. Hopefully this would also lead to fund raising to raise the balanced of funds needed.
 - c. Greg advised that our landscaper, Renovatio, has completed a project to level and reset the brick pathway in the Memorial Garden.
4. Jean and Greg shared an update on the renewal of our snow removal contract with Renovatio. Our 2025–2026 Snow Removal Contract reflects a 27% increase over this year's budget.
 - a. The main driver is a shift from a 1inch plowing snowfall threshold to a "0" tolerance threshold during pre-school and service times, which ensures safer conditions but was not included in the original budget.
 - b. Additionally, this winter season snowfall is projected to be worse than recent years, with significantly more snowstorms, increased snowfall, and icy conditions. This contract change will allow our lots and sidewalks to be serviced as soon as snow accumulates and ensure they are ready for heavy car and foot traffic.

Annual Contract Comparison:
2024–2025: \$22,120 (\$12,515 CCLC / \$9,604 OSLC)
2025–2026: \$30,400 (\$17,200 CCLC / \$13,200 OSLC)
 - c. Since the preschool uses the Celebration campus five days per week from 7am to 1pm, we are proposing that it cover a proportional share of this year's cost
Increase: Total Increase (Celebration Campus): \$4,684
Preschool Share: \$41/day × 5 days/week × 16 weeks = \$3,280
One-time "single push" expense (Nov 10 snowfall): \$1,500
Total Request: \$4,780
(Includes the preschool's seasonal share and the one-time early plowing expense.)
5. Jim led a discussion on the potential to delay the final phase to replace the last 2 HVAC units at Celebration "copying" the approach used for Phase 2. The reason is the expenditure for Phase 2 has left us with a much smaller budget for current year projects. The unit replaced serve the high use areas of the building plus the remaining 2 units have been working well with no issues and cover lesser utilized areas. Everyone agreed and felt we can address revisiting the plan in either next fiscal year's budget or the following year. We still believe we need to finish the replacement.
6. Laura led a discussion on proposed ADA improvement projects at the Church. The main point was the potential to install an elevator in the Education wing building. A team is being formed to help draft a potential grant draft to secure funding from outside the Church. This team will meet in February to begin. Other areas discussed included needing ADA compliant doors for the Church bathroom, plus the entrance door

- 5 on the NE corner. These could potentially also be partly or wholly funded through grants.
7. Jim and Greg Norgaard provided an update about the process and intention of co-leading and partnering. We asked patience as we determine where we lead or manage together and what can be more effectively done individually to increase effort and results. More to come!
 8. Last, Jim reminded everyone that our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 16 and held at Celebration in the main conference room.

Just Love—Andrea Field

Building and Sustaining Community - Jim Bono

This month we have seen the transition of the communications position from Christy to Tracy. Christy's husband Joe is assisting our transition. To have sufficient "bulk" for the December issue of Shine, stories were submitted about both accessibility and the DIY team. Joe will work with Jean et.al., to get the December Shine ready for publication.

Teresa and Jim will meet with Tracy and Jean (time TBD) to begin planning stories for January 2026 and beyond.

Update Sunday Night 23 November 2025

Jim & Pr Brian met this morning and three feature stories will be developed for the January issue of Shine including: Sandy Martinich and the history of TP drives at OSLC, the need at Loaves & Fishes, and the success of the current drive. A story about the success of the other efforts within the season of sharing, Haiti, Mozambique and the ornaments on the sharing trees. The final story will be the revitalization of the Mission Committee, its membership and goals moving forward into 2026.

Other business:

- Dave Mevis is very impressed with the Property Committee's efforts on behalf of the church. He suggested that it might be helpful to have the Property Committee visit a Council meeting. Sometime before the Annual Meeting would be good, possible February or April. Greg Norgaard has stepped up to cochair the Property Committee with Jim Harms.
- Check the Sign-Up for Christmas volunteers. 70 people will be needed!
- St. Andrew's in West Chicago - Kris Reenstjerna They were extremely thankful for our financial help and support in being present on Sundays.

Unfinished Business: None

Next Meeting:

Monday, January 26, 2026 — Opening Devotion - Kelly Hoke

Closing Prayer: Rachel Petty

Notes respectfully submitted by Laurie May, Recording Secretary