

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: July 27, 2026

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

Opening Prayer Devotion—Teresa Thompson

Action Items

- Approval of May Council Meeting minutes

A motion to approve the May 2026 minutes was made by Jim Bono and seconded by Kris Reenstjerna. The motion was approved.

- Laurie will create minutes from the 2026 Annual Meeting recording
- Update of New Members (Quarterly)

Discussion Topics

1. Pastoral Staffing Updates

The Executive Committee (Pastor Brian, Pr. Elisabeth, Jean Jepson, and Nicholas Davis) has decided to consider offering contract positions for pastoral care and tech, rather than begin the call process at this time. This would allow us to have a \$20,000 - \$30,000 surplus, rather than a \$50,000 deficit in compensation. Taking into account Pr. Brian's and Pr. Elisabeth's duties, they feel it does not warrant having another full-time pastor at this time. We will revisit this topic and evaluate how things are working and what direction we should take in the future.

Our contract pastor would be present at $\frac{3}{4}$ weekend services, and will be responsible for care and wellness.

Pr. Anna introduced herself and expressed her delight at being considered for this opportunity. This position fits into her schedule very well and matches her experience. In discussion with Council members, Anna explained that she worked in pastoral care in her last position, in addition to other duties. She worked as a chaplain in a hospital, and feels she has a good grasp of what is needed in the role.

Anna was asked how she might organize a system of visitation, how she feels about our wellness model, and how she feels about doing home and hospital visits. Not only might Anna do the visits herself, she would also help keep the other pastors in the loop about needed visits. It was brought up that visitation is not only needed for seniors.

A motion to give Pastor Brian permission to use budgeted funds to fill appropriate contract positions was made by Jim Bono and seconded by Cindy Hildner. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. 2026 Church theme - God Works

This topic will be discussed in depth at the August Council meeting.

Pastor Brian stated that the Constitution, Welcome Statement, and Church documents are available to everyone, with the Council being encouraged to frequently refer to them and use these to inform their actions.

Generative

1. None

Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Sam Petras

Key Highlights from June

-Operating cash balance decreased \$45k during June

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

-FY26 - Giving down 4% (\$3k) vs. same period last year and down 15% (\$15k) vs. budget

NOTE: Giving is down (\$15k); interest is up \$13k; programs are up \$2K.

-FY26 - Comp & Benefits is \$82k (98%) vs. \$84k giving

NOTE: Budget for June 83%; last June Actual 80%. YTD Actual 75% vs Budget 80%.

-58% of 2026 pledged gifts received through June (50% 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

Goals for next year include:

- Stronger connections among children, youth, families, and the broader congregation.
- Increased participation in ministry opportunities both within and beyond the church walls.
- Greater confidence among parents and caregivers in nurturing faith at home.
- A ministry culture that moves beyond age-level silos toward a shared journey of discipleship from birth through young adulthood.

Proposed changes for next school year are:

2. A shorter Sunday school session to allow children to participate in part of the worship service.
3. More milestone classes for elementary students (Lord's Prayer, first communion, etc.)
4. Focus on including 4th and 5th graders who are outgrowing traditional Sunday school programs.
5. Strengthen the high school Ignition program

Important Dates:

- August 23rd- CYFM Sunday
- August 30- Sunday School begins
- June 2027- Youth Gathering

Celebration Children's Center - Terese Jackway

HR Committee - Kathy Ewald

- Two part-time positions are currently being sought: Worship Tech Coordinator and Wednesday Midweek Meetup Coordinator.

Endowment and Stewardship - Dave Mevis

Worship and Arts - Cindy Hildner

Nicholas Davis reported:

- The Choir season will kick off with a Sanctuary Choir Retreat and a Women's Chorale Retreat on Saturday, August 29th
- We have had quite a few people provide special music during the summer, and more to come.

- Men's Sing will be at the 5 pm service and the 9 am service on August 15th and 16th.
- Next meeting is coming up in early August

Attendance provided by Kathy Clolinger, Accounting Manager

	In Person Attendance					YouTube Views			
	<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>
7/19/2026	43	113	64	37	257		83	23	106
7/12/2026	37	108	73	43	261		46	34	80
7/5/2026		150		86	236		108		108
6/28/2026	46	121	150		317		54	49	103
6/21/2026	35	87	75	52	249		62	41	103
6/14/2026	39	100	76	50	265		103	50	153
6/7/2026	43	126	78	46	293		61	24	85

Wellness - Jim Bono

Property Committee - Dave Mevis

Mission and Benevolence - Teresa Thompson

The next meeting is scheduled for August 12, 2026. Below are known updates to mission work since the board met in May.

	Fund Name	Point Person	Balance as of May 26	Description and/or information
1	Baby Care	Betty Landorf	\$4345.49	No known update.
2	Bridge Families	Cathy Cayer	\$0.00	No known update.
3	Educating Africa's Children (Uganda)	Jan and Tom Dusek	\$1,033	Took orders for coffee in the Narthex. Building progress photos shown on-line.
4	Feed My Starving Children	Les May	\$9408.78	No known update.
5	Feed The Need	Les May	\$7,858.50	No known update.
6	Fuhrer Scholarship Fund		\$10,126.73	No known update.
7	Haiti Scholars	Nicole Waite	265.00	Fundraising scheduled for August at the Naper Settlement.
8	Loaves & Fishes	Nancy Couch	\$435.23	Church members are contributing diapers and toilet paper.
9	Lutheran Social Services of IL (LSSI)	David Novak	\$7,490.00	No known update.
10	Lutheran Disaster Relief	Pastor Wise	\$1,235.00	100% of congregational donations go to this, but the church also adds to these donations. No known updates.
11	Mega Garage Sale	Debbie Friend	being updated	Approximately \$58,000 raised (after expenses). The group is lowering their carry-over amount. Donating \$250 to charities each month.
12	Mozambique	Susan Fergusen	\$78,905.80	Updates will be forthcoming after the group returns from Mozambique.
13	Refugee Ministries	Jim Bono and Lee Thomsen	\$6,470.09	Requested money to help families with upcoming school supplies for those already here with green cards and not at risk for deportation.
14	Slovakia	Gail Jernberg	\$6,236.14	Updates will be forthcoming as a result of the group's visit in Slovakia.

15	World Hunger	Jim Bono and Lee Thomsen	\$12,000.00	Expenses largely go into three areas: #1 Publications and education about work, #2 food pantries for low-income kids– we use Loaves and Fishes, and #3 Heifer Project type support (animals, seeds, farm equipment, and school uniforms). Requested \$10,000 to go to specific supports per this organization's specific framework.
16	MBC Undesignated	Pastor Wise	\$50,713.06	No known update.

	Groups w/out accounts	Point Person	Description and/or information
A	Bright Stars of Bethlehem	TBD	No known update.
B	ELCA Synod	Pastor Wise	Monthly, the church gives 5% to the synod.
C	Holy Family Ministries	Jan Dusek	No known update.
D	Lutheran Seminary of Theology at Chicago (LSTC)	Pastor Wise	There are currently no funds to allocate at this time.
E	Riverwalk Adult Day Services	Pastor Wise	Currently waiting for the group to connect with us in order to continue working with them.
F	Samara Care	Pastor Wise	Pastor Elizabeth Pynn Himmelman is serving on the board along with church members going to their meetings. Samara Care presented during church services in July and provided info before/after services.

Memorials - Kris Reenstjerna

Next meeting is October 14, 2026

Just Love - Rachel Petty

Caring for Creation - Terese Jackway

The Urban Canopy contract was approved and composting should begin in August. Work is in progress to provide education/communications to members particularly those using the

kitchens. Members will also have an opportunity to sign-up for composting in their homes via a special code. For every Our Saviour's household, who signs up, we will get a credit.

Assessments are underway to determine whether to add solar panels and when. There are some tax credits available until the end of 2027 that would provide significant savings. We are trying to get the needed information timely so a decision can be made.

Unfinished Business: None

Next Meeting:

Monday, August 24, 2026 — Opening Devotion - Jim Bono

Closing Prayer: Teresa Thompsen

Notes respectfully submitted by Laurie May, Recording Secretary