

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: September 28, 2026

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

Opening Prayer Devotion—Cindy Hildner - Interesting findings of effect of intercessory prayer

Action Items

- Approval of August Council Meeting minutes

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

- Update of New Members (Quarterly) - Next month

Discussion Topics

1. Solar Panel Presentation and Discussion

Kris gave some background on the investigation into installing solar panels. The committee was inspired by a presentation by Faith in Place. They suggested that now is the time to act, because federal incentives expire at the end of 2027. These would cover up to 70% of the cost of installation. The State of Illinois and Naperville also offer incentives.

Jim Harms summarized the document with the committee's findings.. None of the installers recommend installing solar panels on roofs older than 5 years. Only three areas of OSLC would qualify: Sanctuary, Fellowship Hall and offices. The roof at Celebration is too old. [Of](#) the two vendors interviewed, the committee preferred Straight Solar. The upfront cost would be just over \$330,000, but would be reduced to about \$60,000 with incentives. This would provide 20% of our electricity needs, saving about \$820/month, and would take 6.6 years to recoup costs. They offer a 25 year warranty. The other vendor was deemed unacceptable as we would not own the equipment.

When Celebration needs a roof in 5 years, we may consider installing solar panels at that time. We would need to put extra money away to add solar panels. Hopefully, that would cover a large portion of the electrical needs of that building.

While there is still time to take advantage of the rebates, it would need approval of the congregation.

While the Council affirms the value of solar power as helping protect God's creation, they agree with the recommendation of the Committee that it is not economically feasible at this time. The Council supports looking into solar power at some future point.

The Committee recommends doing a no cost energy audit to find other possible ways to save energy.

2. OSLC 70th Anniversary Celebration, (Jean Jepson)

- Gathering people to be on the committee
- April 10th kick-off at 5:00 on Saturday inviting former pastors and interns, followed by a reception
- April-October will feature other special events: Music Sundays, Decades, "70" collections, Commemorative book, Art Gallery displaying timelines
- October Family Sock Hop and church trivia

- Planning Committee is meeting Wednesday Sept. 30th at 10:15

3. Staff Christmas Gifts

- The Council is taking into consideration the tax benefits of giving certain types of gifts. Although there were some minor glitches, staff enjoyed choosing gifts from a catalog last year. We will do that again. Kathy will work with Jean on the logistics.

Generative

1. None

Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Sam Petras

Here are some of the key highlights from July:

-Operating cash balance decreased \$30k during July

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

-FY26 - Giving down 31% (30k)*vs. same period last year and down 34%(34k)* vs. budget

NOTE: Giving is down (34k); *interest is down (2k)*.

-FY26 - Comp & Benefits is \$75k (113%) vs. \$66k giving

NOTE: Budget for July 86%; last July Actual 78%. YTD Actual 113% vs Budget 86%.

-63% of 2026 pledged gifts received through July (58% of calendar year is complete)

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

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Youth & Family Ministry Board - Kelly Hoke

Celebration Children's Center - Terese Jackway

HR Committee - Kathy Ewald

1. Christy LaFave-Grace has had to step down as the Ministry Support Lead due to scheduling conflicts. A replacement is being sought.
2. A Temporary VBS Director position is being considered to help coordinate and grow the summer Vacation Bible School program.

Endowment and Stewardship - Dave Mevis

Meeting with good discussion about the stewardship campaign. Family Bingo is coming up in October. Stewardship letter will be going out within the next week.

Worship and Arts - Cindy Hildner

Nicholas Davis reported:

The Celebration Worship Team has begun weekly rehearsals on Monday evenings. Big thank you to Jim Stellmacher for making this happen.

On September 13th, we switched to Holy Communion Setting 3 at the 5:00 and 9:00 services. At 11:00, we are doing a collection of different responses found in the ELW. We will continue using these settings through Christ the King Sunday.

There are three concerts planned at OS in the next few months:

-The Chicago Gargoyle Brass and Organ Ensemble will be presenting a free concert at OS on Sunday, Nov 29th at 2:30 pm

-The Chorus of DuPage (men's barbershop) will be holding their winter concert at OS on Saturday, Dec. 12 at 7:00 pm and Sunday, Dec. 13 at 3:00 pm. Tickets must be purchased for this event.

-The Valparaíso University Chorale and Chamber Orchestra will be giving a free concert on Sunday, March 7 at 2:00 pm. They will also participate in the 9:00 am service.

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>
9/20/2026	38	138	90	33	299		102	37	139
9/13/2026	43	159	90	56	348		80	34	114
9/6/2026	44	93	81	33	251		69	44	113
8/30/2026	39	123	75	50	287		65	38	103
8/23/2026	53	109	106	52	320		75	25	100
8/16/2026	67	152	68	54	341		45	28	73
8/9/2026	48	111	77	41	277		144	44	188
8/2/2026	49	89	79	46	263		74	26	100

Wellness - Rachel Petty

Meetings are the 2nd Thursday at 7:00

Property Committee - Dave Mevis

1. Project updates:

a. Labyrinth project update – Jim confirmed that the repair of the concrete pad is contracted and confirmed the work to be done Tuesday, Aug 25. Mark advised we would potentially see the labyrinth done in September. Mark also affirmed that the intent is for the Memorial Committee to fund the repairs. This will be finalized at the October memorial Committee meeting. In the meantime, the cost of repair will be charged to the Capital fund and then transferred to Memorial after their meeting.

b. Install status of the last 2 HVAC units at Celebration – Greg Nasman

affirmed the 2 new HVAC units had been delivered Monday August 17, and the old units removed. The install should be completed by the end of the week. This completes the replacement of all the Celebration HVAC units!

c. Greg also confirmed the install of ADA doors openers on both OSLC main hall restrooms. He also confirmed all the toilets are 17-inch ADA compliant. As budget allows, we will plan for the same plan for the Celebration Welcome area restrooms.

d. Jim and Greg updated the committee of the new concrete ADA compliant curbing at OSLC. The ADA curb drop off area is now approximately 30 feet long and well-marked with bright yellow strips for visibility.

e. The ADA discussions prompted a team discussion about potentially designing and adopting new informative signage for placement at the OSLC Front Desk and potentially other areas were, especially, visitors would benefit from the aids. Jacob and Mark discussed some thoughts they had previously share in the design team. Jacob agreed to take lead and see how we might proceed.

f. Jim and Greg advised that the front OSLC landscape has again had weeds removed and mulch will be installed within a week or so. Once it is laid, the Landscape firm will apply preemergent herbicide to minimize the potential of weeds. Once funds are available to be used for this, the Landscape Subcommittee will meet to discuss plans.

g. Jim and Greg Norgaard provided an update on the progress assessing the feasibility of a Solar install. It has been affirmed that it is only economically feasible if the target roof areas are approximately 5-6 years old at most. This left 3 roofs area at OSLC for installation and none at Celebration. Three contractors have been engaged to develop install proposals with cash flow assessment plus rebate eligibility. The plans typically called for an initial investment of approximately \$325,000 or more, a 7.3-year payback, and net cost of \$75,000 at the end of the 7+ years after all incentives. It would

support generation of approximately 20% of our monthly consumption annually for the Church. The financial challenge is that the Federal Rebate incentive applies after one year of the install. Also, the Federal incentive is discontinued if the install does not complete by Dec 31, 2027. Some other incentives rebate over the following number of years. The delays are the cause of the 7.4-year payback. The team is still exploring yet another approach and hopes to have final assessment by the end of September. The recommendation would then be reviewed by the Exec team and then presented to Council

h. Greg Nasman gave a nice overview of the continued excellent support of the DIY team.

i. Jim and Greg Norgaard shared progress in collaboration with Kelly helping with Preschool capital projects. The desire is to enable capital planning similar to the Property Committee with defined projects and cost estimates where practical for annual budget planning. In addition, the plan could include support for specification development to be used in the RFP process. Where applicable, contractors/ would be leveraged from the experience of both Property Committee and Preschool experiences.

2. Discussion:

a. Jim shared an update, given the Celebration HVAC install completion, on where we stand with available funds for the balanced of the fiscal year. There is an approximate budget balance of \$75,000 to support initiatives thru June 2027. We discussed the need to ensure critical issues can be funded and managed carefully what non-critical or deferrable projects are done. More to come as we proceed.

Next meeting dates based upon prior agreements is Nov 16, 2026 (3 rd Monday).

Meeting place will be determined.

Mission and Benevolence - Teresa Thompson

Memorials - Kris Reenstjerna

Meet in October

Caring for Creation - Terese Jackway

Faith in Place Environmental and Spirituality Summit:

This annual 2-day summit is taking place on September 28th and 29th. We are a host site again this year to watch the Keynote Address on the evening of September 29th. Attendees should register online and join us in Fellowship Hall on Tuesday.

Composting:

Urban Canopy composting has been rolled out at the main campus! Frequent kitchen volunteers have been trained and Kevin is guiding teams providing midweek meet-up meals through the process. A video will be shared in October to further communicate to our members about this new and exciting service. A second and maybe third bucket will be needed.

Report to Council | September 28, 2026

Elisabeth Pynn Himmelman, Associate Pastor

This summer was a whirlwind – and a joy-filled one! I am especially grateful for the opportunity to lead the Mozambique mission trip in July. The deep connections made and rekindled with our partners and one another were truly worth their weight in gold, even if my suitcase did not make it to Chimoio for an entire week!

Our summer mission experiences also created significant opportunities for youth engagement and connection. In June and July, OSLC hosted five students from CCE in Martin, Slovakia; five OSLC youth participated in the Slovakia mission trip and another five participated in the Milwaukee mission trip. Brittany is building on the connections, relationships, and energy generated through these experiences as she works to reinvigorate Ignition, our high school youth ministry.

June also brought a wonderful week of Vacation Bible School, “Just Like Me.” We welcomed 73 children and 42 volunteers, including five Slovak students who served alongside us. It was a

joyful week of learning, laughter, and faith formation, and a reminder that when the church shows up together, God does something beautiful.

This summer also brought the bittersweet transition of Pastor Ben's departure. In saying goodbye to a valued friend and colleague, there is no minimizing the complexity of moving forward with a smaller pastoral team. With Pastor Anna coming on board part-time, I believe this season is an opportunity to look closely at how we function as a pastoral team under Pastor Brian's leadership in the ministry God has entrusted to us.

Wellness Ministry kicked off fall with Thrive, a physical wellness group for adults of all abilities including stretching, a short devotional, mindfulness, and fellowship; and with Wonderfully Wired Families, a support group for neurodivergent children and their parent/guardians. The Wellness Board continues to guide a monthly wellness theme highlights a special program such as bringing your gifts to share on Labor Day weekend worship for Vocational Wellness month. We continue to discern the congregational needs for wellness and this area will transition to Pastor Anna's supervision over this fall (exact timeline is still being determined at time of this report).

A new round of small groups, "God Works in the Word" kicked off in September, with 5 new adult small groups, 2 existing small groups participating, and our Surge confirmation youth. I had the joy of writing the curriculum with my parents.

"Midweek Meetup," our Wednesday ministry, kicked off on September 9 for youth and parents with a meal and informational meetings for each area of CYFM ministry. 64 people attended, in part, I believe, due to Brittany calling 160 households the week prior to make sure they had all the current information, personal invitation, and connection with her. Our regular programming continues on Wednesday nights, and I strongly encourage council members to attend, even if just for the meal at 6pm, to be part of the vibrant community that is "Midweek Meetup!"

CYFM ministry has made some changes for this program year, with an emphasis on earthly elements that was developed by the CYFM Board last spring. The new logo highlights each ministry area, as seen on the next page. Our newest changes are that "Daily Bread" Sunday school at 9:00 and 10:00 worship services is shorter so kids can spend more time in worship at the beginning and re-join the community to receive communion; and SALT (Serving and Loving Together) 4th & 5th grade ministry focused on leadership and service, meeting every other week on Wednesday nights with a variety of service projects throughout the year (first one is the CROP Walk for Hunger with local churches on October 18), led by mentors Jon O'Toole and Greg Nasman.



In hope,
Pastor Elisabeth
9.27.26

Council Terms

Dave and Kathy are the only members remaining on the December schedule. (Retiring at the end of 2027L)

Unfinished Business:

Next Meeting:

Monday, October 26, 2026 — Opening Devotion - Dave Mevis

Since Laurie and Cindy will be out of town, Teresa Thompson will take minutes.

Closing Prayer: Cindy Hildner

Notes respectfully submitted by Laurie May, Recording Secretary

