

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: January 26, 2026

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

Opening Prayer Devotion—Kelly Hoke

Action Items

- Approval of November Council minutes

A motion to approve the October 2025 minutes was made by Matt Pickering and seconded by Teresa Thompson. The motion was approved.

- Welcome New Members

A motion to approve the new members listed below was made by Kathy Ewald and seconded by Kris Reenstjerna. The motion was approved.

New members October 31 2025 to January 26, 2026

Label	Household Label	Last Name	First Name	Date joined	Joined by
Dee Cordell	The Cordell Family	Cordell	Dee	1/19	
Tim & Kathryn Crickenberger	The Crickenberger Family	Crickenberger	Tim	11/14	
Kevin & Eleanor Doherty	The Doherty Family	Doherty	Kevin	11/19	New member + baptism
Justin Duffy	The Duffy Family	Duffy	Justin	10//31	Baptism
Charlotte Harmon	The Harmon Family	Harmon	Charlotte	11/30	Baptism

Ronald Krause & BJ Rahn	The Krause & Rahn Family	Krause	Ronald	11/09	
Lee & Marge Marek	The Marek Family	Marek	Lee	11/20	
Chad & Stephanie Nolte	The Nolte Family	Nolte	Chad	1/11	
Anna, James & Luke Roper	The Roper Family	Roper	Anna	1/14	
Henry Rothwell	The Rothwell Family	Rothwell	Henry	12/6	Baptism
Genna & Kara Walden	The Walden Family	Walden	Genna	11/02	

11 family units with 19 total new members this quarter

3 children welcomed by baptism.

A new member class will be held at Noon on February 15th.

Discussion Topics

1. Synod Lay Leadership March event

This meeting had been previously hosted by Our Saviour's. It is sponsored by the Carlmark family. The event is primarily for lay leaders, but pastors may attend. It will be held at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Schaumburg on March 14th 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM.

2. 2026 Church calendar

Dates for Council meetings in 2026 were set at the November 2025 Council meeting.

On May 31st one worship service will be followed by the Annual Meeting. Two Forums will be conducted beforehand on dates TBD. Because of the timing, the budget may have to be passed through Council on an email vote, so that it is ready for the Annual Meeting.

The Synod Assembly will be held on June 5th and 6th. We can send 4 members. We would like to send a full complement of attendees as the new bishop will be elected at that time. Email the pastors if you are interested in attending.

3. Council Member Terms

Since we will be electing new Council members at the Annual Meeting, we need to determine which current members will be returning. The next Council members to end their 6 year terms will be Dave Mevis and Kathy Ewald in Dec. 2027. If anyone would like to end their term early, please inform Kathy Ewald, Matt Pickering, or Pr. Brian by March 1st.

4. Council Member Roles

The latest practice is to have new Council Members be at large, with no specific committee assignments. While this has had some benefits, there has been a lack of consistency in contact and in reporting back to the Council. Going forward, we will return to more specific Committee assignments. Council members will always be welcome to drop in on committee meetings to stay informed.

Generative

Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Sam Petras

November Highlights

-Operating cash balance decreased (\$17k) during November

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

-FY26 - Giving up 33% \$30k vs. same period last year and up 22% \$22k vs. budget

NOTE: Giving is up \$22k; rent is up \$2k; Children's Center Benevolence is up \$5k.

-FY26 - Comp & Benefits is \$83k (68%) vs. \$122k giving

NOTE: Budget for November 82%; last November Actual 78%.

-96% of 2025 pledged gifts received through November (92% of calendar year is complete)

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

December Highlights

-Operating cash balance increased \$31k during December

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

-FY26 - Giving up 7% \$10k vs. same period last year and up 32% \$38k vs. budget

NOTE: Giving is up \$38k; rent is down (\$20k); interest is up \$4k; programs are up \$1k. Timing issue with receipt of Edward Parking Lot rent for December. This was successfully resolved in January 2026.

-FY26 - Comp & Benefits is \$87k (55%) vs. \$157k giving

NOTE: Budget for December 69%; last December Actual 52%.

-100% of 2025 pledged gifts received through December (100% of calendar year is complete)

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

Youth & Family Ministry Board - Kelly Hoke

- March 14 9am-3pm Lay Person Leadership Day \$10 Prince of Peace, Schaumburg, IL

- Next meeting is February 17th, 2026- Ministry visits to be completed by then so we can debrief

- **Delaying the meeting of MWM/Surge until January 14th**

- **Sunday School**-library connection to theme and trying sensory monthly ideas. Read alouds to extend activities.

- **Schedule**
 - **Children's Choir- Christmas Pageant**

 - **Kids Club - Monthly "Special Event"-Dec. 11-** Photo booth and singing-coloring books- Kids Club restart Jan 15-

 - **Nursery- Follow up w/ parents (TBD- Dec. 7?)-** updating changes via email-binder with activities included

 - **Surge- -Caroling-** Christmas party

 - **Ignition-Toys 4 Tots & Christmas Party-** Sharing Connections

Worship & Arts – Cindy Hildner

Pastor Ben reported: There was no Worship & Arts meeting in January.

Thank you to the many additional worship volunteers who made the Christmas Eve worship services flow smoothly and welcomed so many into our worship spaces!

We are excited to offer gluten-free communion at all worship services each and every week.

The planning center continues to be an invaluable tool for worship volunteer scheduling and communication. Please see Pastor Ben if you want to help out in worship!

Nicholas Davis reported: The Cantata was a huge success. It was so exciting to see all the different music groups participating and to see the church full. Next year the plan is to move the time up earlier in the afternoon so that people are not out so late.

The new choral risers have been ordered. All the money being used to purchase the risers is from generous donations and memorial designations.

We continue to add new members to both Sanctuary Choir and Women's Chorale.

Chris Brown noted: The Caroling Party concert raised over \$1800 for Loaves and Fishes.

We had wonderful Christmas Eve services with a special shout-out to Brittany for helping with the Children's pageant.

Attendance provided by Kathy Clolinger, Accounting Manager:

CHRISTMAS EVE				
		2025	2024	2023
	2:30	450	450	330
	4:30	500	493	567
	8:00	368	364	333
	11:00	255	203	223
		1,573	1,510	1,453
Day	11:00	0	53	70
		1,573	1,563	1,523
Youtube Views				

	2:30	109	102	114
	4:30	95	104	145
	8:00	115	101	
	11:00	81	96	132
		400	403	391
Grand Total		1,973	1,966	1,914

		Attendance sheet not provided, estimated								
		In Person Attendance					YouTube Views			
		5:00	9:00	10:00	11:00	Total	9:00/11:00	10:00	Total	
1/11/2026		41	167	79	46	333	67	37	104	
1/4/2026		49	111	115	44	319	43	27	70	
12/28/2025		35	91	72	41	239	105	25	130	
12/24/2025	Christmas					1,573			400	

12/21/2025		38	165	81	43	327		65	46	111
12/14/2025		38	150	92	43	323		126	50	176
12/7/2025	Cantata	350				350			141	141
12/7/2025		57	45	61	31	194		109		109
11/30/2025	Christmas Carolers 4:00	220				220			112	112

Property Committee—Dave Mevis

1. Several projects have been delayed until spring when the weather warms:
 - a. Repair of the Memorial Garden Wall,
 - b. Installation of a new sidewalk from the sanctuary southeast emergency exit to the existing sidewalk, and
 - c. Removal of the dead English ivy from the front of the church

2. Based upon the recommendations of Threshold, the firm that performed the acoustics study of the sanctuary and fellowship hall, we are now beginning the development of a plan to improve the noise issue in fellowship hall. We will likely approach it in phases, carefully monitoring cost. More as the plan develops.

3. Given management of the annual budget, it is possible that we may proceed with the last phase of the Celebration HVAC replacements this year. We hope to finalize this

planning and present to Council in February. The approach would follow the plan present for Phase 2: contracting in the spring, down payment about July 1, and installation before the start of the Children's Center school year in the fall of 2026.

Building and Sustaining Community - Jim Bono

- 1) Jean Jepson, Tracy Jackway, Teresa Thompson and Jim Bono met to draft a **communication calendar** for 2026. Using the existing church calendar, events were broken out into "routine/recurring" and "one-time". This framework was then used to develop a template for Shine which would feed into other communication channels. Developing this framework will ensure consistent communication and inclusion of all ministry, mission and activities within OSLC over the course of the year.
- 2) A **curriculum for Financial Literacy** is being developed as part of the OSLC Wellness Initiative. Graham Brenna, Jeff Colaianni, Andrew Morrison and Jim Bono presented a draft overview of the curricular topics to Pr. Elisabeth the evening of January 14th. We are looking to schedule a spring general overview session followed by more in-depth sessions this coming fall.
- 3) **Bright Stars of Bethlehem** event-planning meeting occurred on January 15th with Pr. Ben, Tracie Ortman and Jim Bono. The event is scheduled for February 27th and will include a half-hour Oud concert, an hour-long presentation by Dr. Mitri Rehab and an art exhibit in the gallery by Palestinian women artists. Jim typed up summary notes which were distributed to Pr. Ben, Tracie, Tracy, Jean, Nicholas Davis and Jan Dusek – all of whom are involved in the event.
- 4) **Braver Angels Workshops** are planned for March 21st and May 2nd. The workshops are "Your Inner Polarizer" and "Disagreeing Better". Steve Spayer, John Hildner and Jim Bono are coordinating the event with the C

Caring for Creation - Kris Reenstjerna

Caring for Creations is recycling like crazy. They donated 6 big boxes of Christmas lights and are actively collecting other recyclables.

Nominating Committee—Matt Pickering

Celebration Children's Center (The Preschool)

HR Committee

Stewardship/Endowment -Mission and Benevolence—

Memorial Committee

Just Love—Andrea Field

Other business:

Weekly Devotions: Please contact Tracy Jackway to sign up for a date to share a devotion. This will continue through May, but the pastors will be covering them during Lent.

Pastors have decided to give up announcements during the service in the season of Lent.

Unfinished Business: None

Next Meeting:

Monday, February 23, 2026 — Opening Devotion - Therese Jackway

Closing Prayer: Kelly Hoke

Notes respectfully submitted, Laurie May