

Trinity Lutheran Church Council Meeting

January 15, 2026 – 6:30 PM

Conference Room

Members present: Matt McMerty (President), Colleen Peterson, Mitch Becker, Phil Murdoff, Barb Pfeifer, Dean Natwick, Effie Carr, Denise Wetzel, Julie Leer, Pastor Mark Narum, and Pastor Martha HarriSon

Members absent: Lucas Teigen, Bob Baumann

President McMerty called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Devotions were given by Phil Murdoff.

Approval of Agenda: Request was made to add the following items to the agenda:

Dwelling in the World

New Business:

Palm Sunday Procession

Letter from staff to let us know he will be running for elected office

Appointment to the Property Committee

New computer needed

It was moved by Julie Leer and seconded by Colleen Peterson to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Acceptance of Consent Agenda:

It was moved by Matt McMerty and seconded by Effie Carr to remove the December Council Minutes from the Consent Agenda for purposes of clarifying a statement in those minutes before considering approving them. Motion carried.

It was moved by Barb Pfeifer and seconded by Denise Wetzel to accept the Consent Agenda as amended (to not include the December Council Minutes). Motion carried.

Approval of December Council minutes: After discussion, it was determined the December Council Minutes needed to be clarified to identify the 4% increase for staff was limited to the retirement benefit and was not the overall salary increase (which was 3%). It was moved by Colleen Peterson and seconded by Mitch Becker to approve the December Council Minutes with that clarification. Motion carried.

Financial Report: Denise Wetzel presented the Financial Report. See Attachment A. It was moved by Julie Leer and seconded by Phil Murdoff to approve the Financial Report. Motion carried.

Dwelling in the World: Council members discussed the Lenten lessons being used by Trinity this year. Council considered the questions Jesus asked and considered what he is asking of us.

Old Business:

Lighting System update:

The lighting project continues.

Christmas Special Offering:

The Christmas Special Offering raised \$8537 which has been presented to Youthworks.

Budget:

For the Annual Report, Pastor Mark suggested the use of an abridged version of the budget be included in the Annual Report. Full financial details will be available in a separate document for anyone who is interested. It was moved by Mitch Becker and seconded by Barb Pfeifer to accept the use of the abridged version of the budget for the Annual Report. Motion carried.

Windfall Gifts Policy:

Council discussed the Windfall Gifts Policy which will be instituted to guide Trinity in handling unexpected large financial gifts to Trinity that exceed a certain threshold and that are not designated for any particular purpose by the giver.

Carpet:

Council discussed the options for replacement of the carpet in the Narthex, the Sanctuary, church school area, and the lower youth room. Different quotes and areas to be recarpeted were discussed. It is anticipated there are adequate funds available that allow us to accept the quote which accommodates the carpeting to be installed as one project as opposed to doing so in phases. It was moved by Mitch Becker and seconded by Denise Wetzell to accept the bid to allow installation to be completed as one project using the funding sources identified including General Fund, Restricted Carpet fund, Restricted Thrivent fund, Restricted Youth Carpet fund, 2026 Structural Maint, Restricted Youth Room, and a Trust Grant. Motion carried.

Rejoicing Spirits:

The first service went well! Service in February will be held on SuperBowl Sunday at 2:00 p.m. – well in advance of the game.

New Business:

Annual Meeting:

Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 22, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. (between services as requested during last year's annual meeting).

Trust Grants:

The following trust grant requests were discussed:

- Request for \$3000 to fund the three events planned by the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Task Force for 2026.
- Request for \$500 by the Worship and Music Committee to "purchase bins and containers to better store Christmas and other decorations for the church".
- Request for \$4500 from the "Restricted: Seminary, Global, Radio" fund to help support 18 weeks of radio broadcast/livestream of our Sunday and Wednesday worship services.
- Request for a trust grant to fund \$9925 of the amount needed to replace the carpet as discussed under old business. This amount represents the amount not covered by the other funds mentioned under old business.

It was moved by Julie Leer and seconded by Effie Carr to recommend the grant requests to Trust. Motion carried.

Palm Sunday Procession:

Christian communities from across the region will be gathering at 3 p.m. on Palm Sunday to form a procession to the ND State Capitol grounds for a time of communal worship and prayer reflecting shared Biblical values of feeding the hungry, caring for the vulnerable and welcoming the stranger. This is being organized by Beth Anderson, Deacon, Western ND Synod; Sylvia Bull, Associate Pastor, Faith Lutheran, Bismarck; and Gretchen Deeg, Pastor, Bismarck UCC, Highland Acres. Trinity has been identified as a potential beginning spot for the processional.

Letter from staff re: considering running for elected office:

Music Director Jason Thoms has submitted a letter to Council saying he is considering running for the ND Senate. The letter is a courtesy. As an employer, Trinity will not prevent a run for public office by any employee; however, Trinity does expect any employee's extracurricular activities will not prevent them from doing the job they are hired to do. Council appreciates the courtesy shown by Jason in making us aware of his potential plans.

Appointment to the Property Committee:

Pastor Mark identified a potential new appointee to the Property Committee. It was moved by Julie Leer, and seconded by Mitch Becker that Craig Matheise be appointed to the Property Committee. Motion carried.

New computer:

Pastor Mark needs a new computer after HP informed him that they are unable to fix his old one. Council approved a new computer for Pastor Mark.

Reminder: Saturday Morning Men's Group is serving Breakfast on Sunday morning (January 18th).

Next meeting is Thursday, February 19, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Devotions for February: Barb Pfeifer.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 8:07 p.m.

Submitted,
Julie Leer, Secretary