

Trinity Lutheran Church Council Meeting

March 19, 2026 – 6:30 PM

Conference Room

Members present: Colleen Peterson (President), Mitch Becker, Phil Murdoff, Barb Pfeifer, Dean Natwick, Londa Rodahl, Mark Wagner, Lucas Teigen, Denise Wetzel, Julie Leer, Pastor Mark Narum, and Pastor Martha HarriSon

Members absent: Bob Baumann

President Peterson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Devotions and communion were given by Pastor Mark Narum in the Sanctuary.

New Council Organization

Committee Assignments:

The following Council members will continue on the committees to which they were previously assigned:

Property: Mitch Becker

Community Builders: Phil Murdoff

Mission: Lucas Teigen

Mental Health/Substance Abuse: Dean Natwick

The new assignments are:

Trust Fund: Denise Wetzel

Stewardship: Mark Wagner

Worship, Music & Arts: Barb Pfeifer

Faith Formation: Bob Baumann

Devotion assignments:

Devotions for the coming months will be as follows:

April – Colleen Peterson

May – Lucas Teigen

June – Dean Natwick

July – Denise Wetzel

August – Londa Rodahl

September – Julie Leer

October – Mitch Becker

November – Bob Baumann

December – Phil Murdock

January – Barb Pfeifer

February – Mark Wagner

March – Pastor Mark

Approval of Agenda:

It was requested that the following items be added to the agenda under New Business:

--Synod Assembly appointment

--Wedding Policy discussion

--IRS rules re: the percentage match of IRAs for some employees

It was moved by Mitch Becker and seconded by Denise Wetzel to approve the agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Acceptance of Consent Agenda:

It was moved by Barb Peifer and seconded by Julie Leer to accept the Consent Agenda.
Motion carried.

Financial Report: Denise Wetzel presented the Financial Report. See Attachment A. It was moved by Mark Wagner and seconded by Mitch Becker to approve the Financial Report.
Motion carried.

Dwelling in the World: Council discussed the following: When it comes to issues of faith, what are our non-negotiables? This comes out of conversation with the Sunday morning Bible Study Group. Council discussed the beliefs we would not compromise when it comes to faith.

Old Business:

Personnel Policy update:

The updates continue.

Update on App:

Pastor Martha will pick up where outgoing council members left off.

Lighting System update:

The lighting for the center of the sanctuary is complete. The chancel and balcony lighting will be completed after Easter.

Property is working on new lighting for the Narthex and saving the church a considerable amount using their expertise and ingenuity.

Repairs continue to the under-balcony lighting.

Celebration of the completion of the Capital Campaign:

The lighting project is the final project of the Capital Campaign and is almost complete. A celebration will be held this fall!

250th Anniversary of U.S. Independence celebration:

A volunteer committee has come together to lead the effort for the details for this celebration: Scott and Becky Parkin, Steve and Paula Schilling, and Terry Bakke. The date for Trinity's celebration of the U.S.'s 250th birthday is scheduled for June 28, 2026.

Palm Sunday Breakfast:

Council volunteers will gather Saturday a.m. for prep work. Council will serve breakfast Palm Sunday morning between 9:00 and 11:00.

Other Old Business:

Carpeting installation is anticipated to occur this summer – sometime after the 250th Anniversary of U.S. Independence celebration.

Discussion of the potential for refurbishing the pews resulted in a decision to ask the Property Committee to consider options.

New Business:

Thank yous:

Pastor Mark shared thank yous received by Trinity over the year.

Purchase Offer on 3rd Street parking lot:

Mitch Becker shared some information on where the offer originated. Pastor Mark shared some history on the income and expenses received over several years for the 3rd Street parking lot and on past offers received for that parcel. Based on the information discussed, the offer presented, and how it compares to the average rate per sq. foot for similar

properties in Bismarck, Council thought the offer was low. It was moved by Julie Leer and seconded by Denise Wetzel to reject the offer. Motion carried.

Committee Appointments:

It was moved by Denise Wetzel and seconded by Mitch Becker to approve the following appointments to the identified committees:

Synod Assembly: Becky Parkin

Faith Formation: Taylor Seibel, Naomi Keney

Property Committee: Lee Herberg

Motion carried.

Council Retreat:

Save the Date!

May 2, 2026 from 9 a.m. through lunch.

Tentative Agenda:

Non-negotiables of Faith

Invite Property and Trust to discuss and re-evaluate the project list.

Trust Grants:

The following trust grant requests were discussed:

--Request from Property Committee for \$2500 for 3-4 skim coatings of drywall where the old chalkboards hung in the upstairs Sunday School area.

--Request from Property Committee for \$1000 to purchase 17 lighting kits for the rear of the sanctuary.

--Request from Property Committee for \$16,500 to complete phase 3 of a 4-phase plan repointing and tuck pointing the 1931 building.

--Request from Trinity Church School for \$520 to purchase shelves, totes, and other storage for the church school area.

--Request for \$610 to purchase 2 more cases of Trinity coffee mugs.

--Request from Altar Guild for \$2200 to replating a silver communion tray lid. (No longer able to buy replacements.)

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

Wedding Policy:

Recent inquiries by a couple wishing to be married at Trinity revealed an area of Trinity's wedding policy that needs some clarification. While a couple may select an officiant who is not a Trinity pastor to perform a wedding ceremony in a rented space like the community center, the same is not true of weddings performed in the sanctuary. To ensure the wedding policy clearly reflects that Trinity is an ELCA congregation and that weddings conducted in the sanctuary require the participation of Trinity pastors and may include other ELCA pastors or ministers of ELCA Full Communion Partner churches, Council considered changes to Trinity's wedding policy for weddings held in Trinity's sanctuary.

It was moved by Colleen Peterson and seconded by Lucas Teigen that the following language be incorporated into Trinity's wedding policy:

One of the pastors of Trinity Lutheran Church will officiate at all weddings within the Trinity sanctuary. In some instances, assisting ministers from other ELCA congregations or one of the ELCA Full Communion Partner churches may participate at the discretion of Trinity's Lead Pastor.

Motion carried.

Approved Retirement match – IRS implications:

During the budgeting process, council approved changing Trinity's Simple IRA contribution for staff from 3% to 4%. Enter the IRS and its rules. The Simple IRA was established in a manner that requires an increased contribution for any employee would mean an increased contribution for ALL employees. As that was not the intent of the change made during the budgeting process, Council considered the options available to maintain the spirit of the increase approved without running afoul of the law. To that end, it was moved by Mitch Becker and seconded by Barb Pfeifer to address this situation as follows:

Trinity will revert to the 3% match and pay the other 1% directly to the impacted employees who are enrolled in the 4% match. Trinity encourages the impacted employees to add the addition 1% to the retirement account of their choice in keeping with the intention of the approved increase.

Motion carried.

TSA gift card drop-off point:

To mitigate the impacts of the current government shut down on TSA agents in our community, Klarissa will be collecting gas and food/grocery gift cards to deliver to the local TSA for distribution to impacted agents. Council approved Trinity as a place for people to drop-off gift cards for Klarissa to deliver to TSA.

Next meeting is Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

Devotions for April: Colleen Peterson

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer at 8:12 p.m.

Submitted,
Julie Leer, Secretary