

Final

**Epiphany Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting
August 11, 2026**

Attendance: Pastor Brad, Dianne Mawhirter, Cindy Ganem, Ray Holmes, William Lytle, Lynn Rigelman, Dell Moller, Josh Thornton, Ashley Turner

Excused: Jeff McCullough, Mike Poyer

Guests: Roger McLoney, Ruthie Schmitz, Linda Fosnaugh

Call to Order: Dianne called the meeting to order.

Prayer: Pastor Brad opened the meeting with a prayer.

Devotion: Ashley's devotion talked about finding peace amidst the chaos, especially given the time of the year with school starting. This kind of peace is what we get from God which is not earned but freely given as a gift to us.

Memorial Garden presentation: Members of the Memorial Garden Committee—Roger McLoney, Ruthie Schmitz, and Linda Fosnaugh—presented information to Council seeking approval to spend \$5,260 to remove and replace several trees in the Memorial Garden. Thanks to the generosity of several church members, the Committee has the funds to cover this expenditure. As part of their presentation, they wanted Council to have the following information:

- In the next 2 years, the Committee expects to spend over \$11,300 to maintain the Garden in its current condition including garden maintenance, tree pest control, tree soil treatment, cleaning of pond and supplies, adding “gold dust” which helps the soil, and repair of the brick patio.
- They do apply for and typically receive a \$2500 grant every two years.
- While the Committee purchased a new columbarium last year at an “all in” cost of \$76,153, there will probably be need to add another columbarium in future years as currently, 60% of people are choosing cremation.
- The Memorial Garden is under the budget heading of Gifts & Furnishings and is typically funded through purchases of niches and memorial bricks along with donations.
- It was noted people who are not members of Epiphany come to sit and enjoy our beautiful space.

Upon motion by Dianne Mawhirter and second by Will Lytle, motion unanimously carried to accept the estimate from Van Kannel Lawncare to remove and replace several trees in the Memorial Garden at a cost of \$5,260.

Council Minutes/Approval: The June 9, 2026 Minutes were previously sent out for review. There being no corrections or changes, Council dispensed with the reading of these

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Minutes. After motion by Dell Moller and second by Ashley Turner, motion unanimously carried to approve the Minutes.

Treasurer's Report/Approval – February 2026: Josh emailed this report and hard copies of the summation page were provided to Council at this meeting. Josh had planned to provide copies of the March-July reports but the Chase Bank online service was down. Following is the pertinent information from the February Report:

The Report notes February's Gifts and Interest were less than Expenses by (\$4,554) and the YTD Gifts and Interest were also less than Expenses by (\$5,343). February's Offerings were less than Budget by (\$5,360) and YTD Offering was also less than prorated budget by (\$17,785).

Fund Balances:

General Fund Balance \$18,191
Gifts & Furnishings \$45,500
Memorial Funds \$9,444
Operating Reserve Funds \$114,410
Youth Mission Funds \$27,531
Non-budgeted Funds \$4,737
Special Gifts & Projects \$211,809

Monthly Bank Reconciliation: Operating Assets have been reconciled to changes in General Fund and other aggregate Fund balances (see full Report for details).

Bank Balances were: Operating Account \$267,612; Savings \$50,014; Schwab Brokerage Account \$108,604; Endowment Cash & Investments \$297,853.

Monthly notes and comments from the Treasurer:

- Benevolence amounts are set by budget for 2026 regardless of income.
- Large Disbursements--over \$1,000 and not typical ongoing for this month: none

There were no questions or corrections on the February 2026 Treasurer's Report. After motion by Lynn Rigelman and second by Ashley Turner, motion unanimously carried to approve this Report.

Pastor's Time:

- Several members' funerals/memorial services have taken place or will be taking place. On a happier note, there is a member's wedding planned in September in Springfield.
- He has contacted the 2026 Nominating Committee to see if they are still willing to serve to begin the process of finding candidates for the following 2027-2028 Council positions: President, Children/Youth/Family, Congregational Events, Property, and Social Services. People currently serving in these positions are eligible to serve the next 2-year term with

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the exception of Property. He thanks Dell Moller for his last 6 years of service as Property liaison!

- The Internship Update includes completing Tony's one-year evaluation with Pastor Brad and the Internship Committee which will be submitted to Trinity Lutheran Seminary and the Southern Ohio Synod; and Pastor Brad serving as an off-site supervisor for pastoral intern Staci Stought who is completing her internship at Messiah Lutheran Church in Reynoldsburg.
- On Dec. 6th, there will be one service at 10a with Pastor Paul Omen as our guest. He led Epiphany through the painting of the Easter mural last year. Pastor Paul will be capturing our service on Dec. 6th in a painting! There will be a painting activity following the service and the annual Women's Christmas event will be a luncheon following the painting activity.
- The Annual Congregational Meeting will be on Sunday, December 13. After some discussion, Council agreed to go back to holding the meeting at 12:15p. Last year's meeting between services proved to be too rushed. There was some discussion about changing our Annual Meeting to take place in January so all the year-end financial reports would be done. Perhaps look into this at another time which would include a change to the Constitution.

Committee Reports:

Congregational Events: The annual End of Summer Bash cookout will be on Saturday, Aug. 22. PAUSE will resume on Aug. 26.

Finance: Josh presented an overview showing: the General Fund Balances for January-August with the +/- monthly and YTD changes; the current bank balances in our various bank accounts; the current Giving report which shows we are worse than plan by (\$28,658.16) which is about \$8,000 better than last year this time; and the Estate Gift Summary for this year (\$105,617). He also advised the annual budget process will begin in September/October. A question was asked why we are still so far behind in giving when last year's stewardship program seemed to go well with many financial commitments being made.

Preschool Board: The Pre-K all day classes are full with a wait list. The 1/2 day classes still have openings. Enrollment for the age 2+/potty trained class is going well. One of the teachers quit for personal reasons so until the replacement is found, Director Elaine Schroeder will be filling in. Elaine was also at the Pickerington back-to-school bash to hand out flyers for the Preschool and our Youth programs.

Property: Nothing else to report beside the Memorial Garden presentation.

Social Services: Ashley's employer receives anonymous donations of powder infant formula and she was able to pass the latest donation along to the LSS. We provided a backpack with food to a homeless woman who was found behind the local Kroger and we contacted the area's local support person to reach out to her. We have received 5 Thrivent Grants to help with purchasing supplies for the Sep. 13 God's Work Our Hands plus donations continue to come in from our members and others.

Welcome & Outreach: Nothing reported.

Children, Youth & Family: Cooldown & Connect has been a unique experiment this summer. The Niagara Mission Experience included 9 youths and 6 adults who joined 47 other youths and adults from congregations in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and South Jersey with several different service experiences to challenge the kids (and adults). Epiphany's Day Camp took place in July with 29 youth attending, led by 3 Hopewood staff members. Rise & Shine starts again on Aug. 23. Will begin planning for the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering in Minneapolis; estimating we will need \$65,000+ to be able to send 25 youths and 6 adults (costs \$2100-2500pp); fundraising will begin with selling football squares.

New / Old Business:

- Audit 2024/2025. Dianne emailed the 2024 report out to Council for review and to approve at the September meeting.
- Constitution Changes. Dianne emailed these changes to Council for review and to approve at the September meeting. Cindy explained that since all the changes are required by the ELCA, we really can't debate them. We will then present the changes to the congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- Ministry Connections. Dianne passed at a draft of each Committee's purpose for the appropriate Council member to review with their Committee. She will be working to make a presentation on a future Sunday with these Committee highlights and showing opportunities for other members to serve.
- Stewardship for All Seasons. Josh advised it's time to begin Year 2 of this program which includes identifying a team, planning the theme, identifying priorities, and setting dates for the appeal.

Strategic Planning:

- Space – Kitchen. Will provided a report outlining estimated costs to purchase the equipment needed for this upgrade, although he plans to continue to try and lower those costs. The unknown costs at this point are for installation, plumbing, electrical, and inspection/permits. He also had drawings showing the changes he expects to make.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 8th, at 7:00p. Pastoral Intern Tony Maggio will have the devotion.

Adjournment: Dianne led Council in the Lord's Prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Ganem

Cindy Ganem, Secretary