

FINAL

**Epiphany Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting
December 9, 2025**

Attendance: Pastor Brad Gee, Ray Holmes, Cindy Ganem, Lynn Rigelman, Jeff McCullough, Dell Moller, Mike Poyer, William Lytle, Ashley Turner

Excused: Dianne Mawhirter, Josh Thornton

Guest: Tony Maggio

Call to Order: Ray called the meeting to order.

Prayer: Pastor Brad opened the meeting with a prayer.

Devotion: Tony shared a devotion from a book on family systems. Families can be messy, especially around the holidays, so we need God's grace for ourselves and to give to others.

Council Minutes/Approval: The November 11, 2025 Minutes were previously sent out for review. There being no corrections or changes, Council dispensed with the reading of these Minutes. After motion by Dell Moller and second by Ashley Turner, motion unanimously carried to approve the Minutes.

Treasurer's Report/Approval for November: Josh emailed this report and copies were passed out to Council at the meeting. Pastor Brad noted that November's gifts exceeded expenses by almost \$7,000 but our year-to-date giving is still less than expenses by \$(55,827). We've received some extraordinary gifts in the last couple of months and since December is typically a higher giving month, the hope is we will end the year on a positive note. Following is the pertinent information from the report:

The Report notes November's Gifts and Interest were more than Expenses by \$6,965 but our YTD Gifts and Interest remain significantly less than Expenses by \$(55,827). November's Offerings were more than Budget by \$23,936 but YTD Offering remains less than prorated budget by \$(49,461).

Fund Balances:

General Fund Balance \$9,646
Gifts & Furnishings \$51,733
Memorial Funds \$14,294
Operating Reserve Funds \$117,439
Youth Mission Funds \$27,990
Non-budgeted Funds \$3,785

FINAL

Special Gifts & Projects \$88,643

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 \$151,974; Savings \$50,012; Schwab Brokerage Account \$107,654; Endowment Cash & Investments \$285,846.

Monthly notes and comments from the Treasurer:

- The total benevolence is 8% of General Fund Income to our partners.
- End of October payroll processed in November (3 payrolls instead of 2 in November). So, our actual November Monthly Expenses for payroll related items will look higher than typical.
- Large Disbursements--over \$1,000 and not typical ongoing for this month:
\$4,920 to Stedman Floor (*Youth Room carpet paid from special projects donation*)
\$2,000 to Southern Ohio Synod (*Stewardship for All Seasons fee—year 1 of 2-year program*)
\$4,508.83 to Recreations Outlet (*Preschool playground expenses paid from Endowment Fund*)
\$1,457.18 to Wayfair (*Youth Room furniture paid out of Darlene Bell Youth gift*)

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

Pastor's Time: Since it's December, there is a lot happening this month. Question was asked if the offering plates would be passed at the Christmas Eve services like last year. The answer--it is still under discussion with the Staff.

Committee Reports:

Congregational Events: Upcoming PAUSE themes are: Dec. 10 – A Charlie Brown Christmas; Dec. 17 – Christmas Brunch and cookie exchange; Jan. 7 – Resolution Starters; Jan. 21 – TBD. Ladies Christmas Dinner received many positive comments and great reviews of the festivities. Men's Breakfast continues each month. Dartball team of 13 continues strong.

Finance: See Stewardship section under New/Old Business.

Preschool Board: The Christmas program is on Dec. 18 at 6p. Registration will open in January for the 2026-27 school year. With the Pickerington Schools going to all day kindergarten starting in 2026, the Preschool made the decision to offer a longer day to help kids

FINAL

acclimate to all day kindergarten. This extended day program will be on Monday – Thursday, from 8:30/9a to 2:30p and needs at least 10 kids to make it financially feasible. They will need to buy cots to offer “quiet time” and kids need to pack their own lunch.

Property: Nothing to report.

Social Services:

- 210 Thanksgiving meal bags were collected for LSS which is a 91% increase from last year!
- We collected enough gifts to provide 6 each for 18 children currently staying at the Lighthouse Domestic Violence shelter. Mary’s Circle wrapped all 108 gifts this past Monday. People also bought 47 - \$25 gift cards which Lighthouse will use for any families coming in later this month. Total worth of Epiphany’s generosity is around \$4,000.
- The annual gift catalog is on display.
- January will be “Undie Sunday,” collecting undergarments for the homeless.

Welcome & Outreach:

- They will be passing out a bookmark at the Christmas Eve services that has the Epiphany logo, QR code, etc. Might have some mints for people to grab but no individual goodies bags will be passed out.
- Suggestion was made for New Member receptions to have pictures of those people to be part of the morning’s announcements along with their bios. Council suggested having the pictures posted by the reception table, too.
- The coordinator for Welcome Center volunteers and Guest Services (follows up with guests who filled out yellow cards), Carol Crawford, has advised that she needs to step down from this role starting in February. So, Stacia Thornton and Jeff McCullough are looking for names of someone else to fill this role. May be looking to combine the Greeter and Welcome Center role for the 11:00a service since it is difficult to fill both slots at that service.

Children, Youth & Family:

- November included a *Minecraft* movie event, FUSION grocery shopping for their annual Thanksgiving Meal Service night and to fill 50 Thanksgiving meal bags for LSS. Junior & Senior High baked 50 pies and made over 1300 buckeyes for their annual fundraiser. THANK YOU to Council for helping with the revamp of the Youth Room.
- December so far included FUSION making JOY packages for Epiphany’s young adults and the 3rd annual Advent Nativity Brunch with crafts to make, nativity animals, food, and a visit with Santa Claus; over 111 people attended. Coming up in December is the Pop Up Christmas Pageant on Dec 17 and the Rise & Shine PJ Party on Dec. 21.

FINAL

New / Old Business:

Stewardship for All Seasons. This Stewardship Appeal culminated on Nov. 23 with Commitment Sunday. The results were announced at both services on Dec. 7 as follows:

Participation Summary

Total commitment cards received: 92
New Givers: 13 households (3 of those without receiving the actual mailer!)
Households increasing their giving: 92

Financial Impact

Total Weekly Increase Committed: \$1,801 per week
Campaign Goal: \$2,000 per week
Progress Toward Appeal Goal: 93%

Impact to our Budget

1. Average weekly giving needed in 2025 to meet our Budget was \$13,894 (*average weekly giving received as of 10/26 was \$12,133*)
2. Adding actual 2025 giving plus the pledged increases = \$13,934 weekly giving for 2026
3. Draft 2026 Budget required \$14,261 weekly giving so we would need an additional \$367 per week in commitments to meet that goal.
4. Good news is we are still receiving commitments.

Next Steps

Thank you letters with a copy of completed commitment cards. Separate letter to anyone who hasn't yet responded. At the end of the year, Josh will make a final tally of commitments plus the giving patterns of those who didn't turn in a commitment card to present a final 2026 Budget to Council for consideration at its January meeting. The Council approved 2026 Budget will be presented to the congregation to vote on at a Special Congregational Meeting on Jan. 25.

Annual Congregational Meeting. Need 3-4 volunteers to help set up chairs in the HMOC at 10:00a after the children have moved out; Mike Poyer, Ray Holmes, Jeff McCullough and Dell Moller agreed to help. Need 2 volunteers to make sure people entering the room get the handouts (Agenda, Ballot, 2026 Interim Budget, and 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes, if wanted); Will Lytle agreed to help and Cindy Ganem probably assist. It was suggested that the 9:00a ushers help direct people towards the HMOC.

Mission Endowment Fund Committee. The new Board of Trustees met and decided on the following terms/roles:

Steve Wolfarth will serve a one-year term as Chairperson

Brian Kelly and Ann Leak will serve two-year terms; Ann will be Vice Chairperson

FINAL

Todd Ebbrecht and Mariann Menter will serve three-year terms; Mariann will be the Secretary

Strategic Planning:

- Space. The Youth Room renovation is done and the kids are very happy with the result.
- Communication. This team needs to schedule another meeting.
- Building. On hold.

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, January 13th, at 7:00p. Dianne Mawhirter will have the devotion. **NOTE:** This is a very important meeting as we will be reviewing the proposed 2026 Budget to be presented to the congregation on January 25th *so please try to attend*.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Ganem

Cindy Ganem, Secretary