

FINAL

Epiphany Lutheran Church Church Council Meeting November 11, 2025

Attendance: Pastor Brad Gee, Dianne Mawhirter, Ray Holmes, Cindy Ganem, Lynn Rigelman, Jeff McCullough, Josh Thornton

Excused: Dell Moller, Mike Poyer, William Lytle, Ashley Turner

Guest: Tony Maggio

Call to Order: Dianne called the meeting to order.

Prayer: Pastor Brad opened the meeting with a prayer.

Devotion: Josh shared a devotion based on 1 Corinthians 4:2, that we have to faithful and trustworthy when dealing with the gifts given to us from God and shared with the church.

Council Minutes/Approval: The October 14, 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 Lynn Rigelman and second by Josh Thornton, motion unanimously carried to approve the Minutes.

Treasurer's Report/Approval for October: Josh emailed this report and provided copies to Council at the meeting for review. Following is the pertinent information from the report:

The Report notes October's Gifts and Interest were more than Expenses by \$4,681 but our YTD Gifts and Interest remain significantly less than Expenses by \$(62,793). October's Offerings were less than Budget by (\$13,126) and YTD Offering was less than prorated budget by \$(73,397).

Fund Balances:

- General Fund Balance \$2,680
- Gifts & Furnishings \$49,707
- Memorial Funds \$14,358
- Operating Reserve Funds \$117,439
- Youth Mission Funds \$25,922
- Non-budgeted Funds \$1,916
- Special Gifts & Projects \$100,721

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

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Bank Balances were: Operating Account \$156,077; Savings \$50,011; Schwab Brokerage Account \$107,286; Endowment Cash & Investments \$292,485.

Monthly notes and comments from the Treasurer:

- The total benevolence is 8% of General Fund Income to our partners.
- End of October payroll processed on the Monday following. Typically, that full expense is around \$17,000 so our actual October Expenses should be closer to \$60,000 which continues our deficit for the year.
- Large Disbursements--over \$1,000 and not typical ongoing for this month: \$1,152.00 to Hopewood Outdoors (*Women's Retreat payment*)

There were no questions or corrections on the October Treasurer's Report. After motion by Ray Holmes and second by Jeff McCullough, motion unanimously carried to approve this Report.

Pastor's Time:

- One of Epiphany's children, Rowan Harmon-Matthews, would like to announce to the congregation that she is starting an environmental group as part of a school project and would like the church members to consider participating. Pastor Brad asked for Council's formal approval of this project. After some discussion, Josh Thornton moved to endorse Rowan's project and with a second by Lynn Rigelman, motion unanimously carried with enthusiasm and gratitude!
- Walter Huffman will be teaching a class in January at 10:00am on "How Jesus Became God."
- This year's Advent theme is "Kinship: No Walls. No Exceptions." The series uses the traditional themes of hope, peace, joy and love to challenge our notions of "us" versus "them", calling us to see the face of Christ in everyone, particularly those on the margins, and to build a community where all are welcomed and cherished.
- Dec. 21 will be the annual "Blue Christmas" service for those experiencing sadness during the Christmas holiday.

Committee Reports:

Congregational Events: The Ladies Christmas Dinner is on Dec. 7. Upcoming PAUSE themes are: Nov. 12 – Veterans Honor, Nov. 19 – Thai street food, Dec. 3 – Greek vacation, Dec. 10 – Christmas movie, Dec. 17 – It's a PAUSE Christmas, with a cookie exchange. Dartball team is near the top of the standings. Women's Retreat went well but next year they will prepare their own food. Men's Retreat also went well.

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Finance: Audit Committee has met and started the 2024 Financial Audit with plans to have it done before the end of the year.

Preschool Board: The families who were able to attend Preschool PAUSE night had a great time. Huge number of Preschool families, past and present, attended Trunk or Treat with positive feedback.

Property: Roger and Sandy McLoney washed the windows in the entry way and plan to clean the windows between the Gathering Space and Sanctuary in the near future.

Social Services:

- The coat and blanket drive was a huge success with 1,091 items collected (75% increase over last year). Items have been distributed to LSS Fairfield County, Star House, and St. Peter's in Lancaster.
- Thanksgiving meal bags are currently being collected with the box filled up and more coming in.
- 527 items were collected for the emergency homeless kits for LSS Fairfield County.
- We are teaming up with Mary's Circle to provide treat bags and gifts for Lighthouse Domestic Violence shelter in December. Their Director of Development attended Mary's Circle meeting this past Monday and will do so again at its December meeting to help with gift wrapping. The giving tree is up in the Gathering Space so members can take a tag to purchase a child's gift or provide a gift card.
- The annual gift catalog will be out right after Thanksgiving.

Welcome & Outreach: Nothing reported.

Children, Youth & Family:

- Work with the Age to Age Grant is underway and will be implementing two Innovative Ministry Projects over the course of the school year for Advent and Lent.
- Youth Room is 97% revamped and the students are thrilled with the result.
- Pies and Buckeyes can be ordered and everything will be prepared on Nov. 23 by the Junior and Senior High youth.
- Advent Nativity Brunch is on Dec. 6 which includes breakfast with Santa, crafts, a book for families to use during Advent, cookie decorating. Can use volunteers to help in the kitchen or with the crafts.

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New / Old Business:

Stewardship for All Seasons. We are three weeks into this program with one more week remaining. There will be another letter with the commitment card being mailed to members in the near future.

Mission Endowment Fund Committee. They reported receiving one gift in October. Continue to have an active presence on the bulletin board in the Gathering Space. They are asking for Council's approval to have Epiphany members Mariann Menter and Todd Ebbrecht join the Board of Trustees, bringing them back to the required five Trustees. Upon motion by Josh Thornton and second by Ray Holmes, motion unanimously passed approving Mariann Menter and Todd Ebbrecht be placed on the EMEF Board of Trustees. Cindy will advise Steve Wolfarth.

Annual Congregational Meeting. This meeting will take place on Dec. 14 in the HMOC immediately following the 9:00a service, which will be a shortened service. Cindy has started a draft Agenda and the other required documents. We need the Nominating Committee to reach out to the potential candidates for the 5 openings (Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Preschool, and Welcome & Outreach) as well as come up with 3-4 names for the 2026 Nominating Committee.

Interim Budget. Josh presented the Interim Budget for Council's review. This Interim Budget is to temporarily take the place of the 2026 Budget until the results of the stewardship program can be determined, which will tell us how to prepare the 2026 Budget (cuts still needed, can we increase our ministries, etc.). The Interim Budget is a continuation of the 2025 Budget with the exception that required increases will be included for 2026 such as insurance, utilities, etc. At this point, Jeff McCullough shared a proposal for an increase to the Staff wages to be included with the Interim Budget. After discussion, the consensus was to hold off on Staff wage increases until after the stewardship results are in. Jeff was thanked for the detail he put together which will be helpful when considering possible wage increases for 2026. Ray Holmes made a motion to accept the Interim Budget as presented and with a second by Cindy Ganem, the motion unanimously passed.

Special Congregational Meeting. Cindy Ganem made a motion to hold a Special Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 25, 2026 to present the 2026 Final Budget to the congregation and with a second by Lynn Rigelman, the motion unanimously passed.

2025 Nominating Committee. Pastor Brad reports this Committee is still working on names for the 2026 Council positions and the 2026 Nominating Committee.

Strategic Planning:

- Space. The Youth Room renovation is almost complete and looks great.
- Communication. Nothing new to report.
- Building. On hold for now.

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Next Meetings:

Tuesday, December 9th, at 7:00p. 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