

## Special Meeting Summary

Friday July 31, 2026

Members present: Charlotte Preuschoff, Gary Cook, Todd Ekstrom, Barbara Hamilton, Chris Falk, Pastor Rod Vereb and Bishop Meggan Manlove.

The meeting was opened at 6:00 pm by Charlotte Preuschoff, opening prayers were offered by Bishop Meggan Manlove.

The Council met with Bishop Meggan Manlove to discuss the future ministry and mission of Emmanuel Lutheran Church. Following introductions, the primary discussion centered on the possibility of utilizing a Synod Authorized Minister (Lay Minister) to serve the congregation. The use of the church basement for the Options program was also discussed as an important community partnership.

Bishop Manlove expressed interest in the congregation's current outreach efforts and encouraged expanding opportunities for community involvement. She suggested opening the Wednesday prayer meetings to members of the community and recognized both the Options program and the Prayer Breakfast as valuable ministries. She recommended incorporating portions of the Prayers of Intercession into the Prayer Breakfast so students can learn to pray for the needs of a broader community, as well as sharing church celebrations and seasons throughout the year with the students.

The Council acknowledged that the congregation is aging and discussed the importance of intentional growth in the coming years while reflecting on the Lutheran theology and traditions that are most meaningful to the congregation.

Pastor Paul Polumbo of Lake Chelan Lutheran Church was discussed as a resource. He teaches *Liturgy in Life* and would be invited to lead a session demonstrating how the liturgy can be incorporated into daily life throughout the week rather than experienced only during Sunday worship.

The Council noted additional resources for future planning, including the ELCA Church Property Resource Hub and the publication *Gone for Good? The Coming Wave of Church Property Transitions*, both of which provide guidance for long-term stewardship of church property while encouraging facilities to remain active community spaces. The importance of continuing the church's partnership with the Presbyterian Church was also affirmed.

Regarding the possibility of Rhonda Kahlous serving as a Synod Authorized Minister, Bishop Manlove shared that she is comfortable supporting Rhonda in this role, describing her as

curious, caring, and well-suited for ministry. She indicated that Pastor Ty from Davenport could mentor Rhonda during her service. The ELCA Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program was also discussed as an option that would allow someone to serve while completing seminary through distance learning. A Synod Authorized Pastor will be allowed to perform baptisms, communion, and funeral services but we are unsure about a wedding service.

The conversation then shifted to future ideas for congregational growth and outreach. Suggestions included improving the church's website to better reflect the life of the congregation, displaying more information within the church about weekly ministries, encouraging members to personally invite others to worship, and speaking more openly about their faith. Additional outreach ideas included hosting community events such as "Pizza and Prayer" or "Bible and Brews."

The Council also discussed intentionally incorporating the church calendar into worship through meaningful observances such as lighting candles on All Saints Sunday, participating in God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday, and inviting a retired veteran to share a faith story in recognition of Veterans Day.

Bishop Manlove reviewed the process for requesting a Synod Authorized Minister, explaining that the Call Committee would make a recommendation, the Council would submit the request to the Bishop, and while a congregational meeting could be held, it is not required. The Council expressed a desire to have Rhonda Kahlous preside over a worship service before moving forward with a formal request. Bishop Manlove explained that Synod Authorized Ministry appointments typically begin with a one-year agreement, followed by annual reviews, with Rhonda reporting to the Bishop each year.

Finally, Riverview Community Chaplain Evett was identified as a valuable ministry resource and potential support for Rhonda.

The meeting was adjourned after the Lord's Prayer at 7:35pm.