

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: 11/30/25

The November Congregation Council Meeting was held on 11/19/25

Council Members Present: Pastor Bannister, Carolyn Cutilli, Alan Divver, Bruce Roper, Carol Schlegel, Jenn Shaw, Mark Vallone, Ken Woods, and Louise Woods.

Absent: Ashdon Bobbie, Kiran Bodamer, Barbara Quinn, Anna Sweeney, and Janice Vallone.

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Jenn Shaw at 6:07 p.m. The scripture was read by Pastor Bo and the prayer was offered by Alan Divver.

PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL:

None

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

*It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes from October 2025 as presented without changes. The motion was made and seconded by Ken Woods / Carol Schleigel.

MOTION CARRIED

REPORTS:

Pastor Bannister – Attached

President, Alan Divver –Attached

Attendance – Attached

Finance Committee – Attached. Carol also explained that we had an unexpected bill for \$6,000 for fixing some heating issues. Revenue has increased which has helped with these expenses. Attendance has been up. In preparation of this year's budget, the Finance committee has reviewed all expenses and contracts and have cut costs as much as possible in every creative way imaginable, including reducing postage for the home bound down to a standard \$0.78 stamp envelope.

Carol has also been speaking with the Generosity Committee about starting a group who would keep in contact with congregants with a phone connection, calling them just to check in and help them feel a part of St John's.

*It was moved and seconded to accept the Finance Committee's report as presented. The motion was made and seconded by Bruce Roper / Ken Woods. **MOTION CARRIED**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Community Outreach Ministry – No report
- Constitution and Bylaws – No report

- Fellowship Connections – See report – They are looking for a karaoke machine to borrow. Carolyn mentioned that Zeo Brothers in Hatboro might have one. Jenn also said she may have a contact for one.
- Generosity Committee – No report
- Hatboro Community Cupboard – See report – Carol expanded on the report, explaining that the response for donations has been overwhelming. 38 new families were signed up in October. And the donations have been exceptional.
- Kids & Family Ministry – No report
- Memorials – No report
- Mutual Ministry – No report
- Property – See report – Darren got a quote for JP Mascaro as a potential savings for trash pickup. Their service would be for two 6-yard dumpsters (one for trash and one for recycling), picking up every other week. Our current trash company is Waste Management. We have a 3-yard dumpster for trash and a 4-yard dumpster for recycling. Waste Management, wants to charge us for picking up their old dumpsters. There would be a small savings the first year. JP Mascaro would not charge us a fee if dumpsters are overfilled as Waste Management has tried to do to us in the past. Carol is concerned about the amount of recycling and if a six yard dumpster could hold two weeks worth. There was also concern that Mascaro said they would hold Waste Management's dumpsters so that we would not have to pay the pick-up charge if we switched companies. It is a good offer, but it is unknown if they can really do that without it turning into a legal issue.

Council will raise these concerns with property (Darren) before any decision to switch is made.

- Social Media – No report
- Stewardship – No report
- Women's Ministry – No report
- Worship & Music – See report – Pastor said that they talked about combining trunk-or-treat and the haunted house to be at the same time next year. He also mentioned that Advent Readers are needed. Promoting the Mary and Joseph show is also being discussed, as well as the Advent Tree.

Alan relayed that Michael mentioned that in past, committees were more involved in Fastnacht, wherein committees would perform. Alan will reach out to the groups to see which would be interested. Carolyn asked if children would be participating and Alan said yes, he is checking with Abbie on that. Same with youth group.

OLD BUSINESS:

- **Staff Job Descriptions/Compensation**

Alan has been working on finalizing the details on the job descriptions. Carol explained that typically part-time jobs don't have benefits but we are trying to include some and it is these kinds of details that are being finalized.

- **Directory**

No new progress since last month. Alan would like to send something out to the congregation for them to submit what they want (members could submit their own pictures and information that they would like included) and then put something simple out.

- **Values/Goals**

It was agreed to use “Sharing” and “Trusting” as the ST in ST JOHNS, and then using what Bo had suggested for JOHN’S a few months ago. So the complete version will be:

S - Sharing

T - Trusting

J – Jesus is the center. Learning and practicing the way of Jesus.

O – Openness. Welcoming all with radical hospitality, embracing diversity, and listening without judgement.

H – Humility. Leading with grace, acknowledging our limits, and depending on God and each other.

N – Nurture. Fostering spiritual growth, care, and deep relationships within and beyond the congregation.

S – Service. Living our faith through action, compassion, and love for neighbor.

A Motion was made to use the above wording for St John’s Values/Goals. It was moved and seconded by Ken Woods / Jenn Shaw

- **Hymnals**

Using the hymnals during service was discussed as part of the effort to reduce paper and ink by not having to print out all the songs for the services. Announcing where to find the music during service was suggested. Bo mentioned that it also helps people to know the music. We could put the hymn numbers and page numbers in the bulletin rather than the whole song. Bo suggested that we wait until after Advent season. Carolyn asked how visitors would perceive either way and suggested that maybe we should ask visitors or newer members for their feedback.

ONGOING BUSINESS:

- **Community Outreach**

Alan said the bazaar was very successful for raising awareness of St John’s in the community.

Jenn has three handouts for the holiday parade. One about the church, one about Christmas, and one about the Joseph and Mary play. Each will have a card and candy cane. Word about the event is being broadcast through a couple other churches too.

Caroling will be done around the church’s neighborhood, gathering at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday December 7th and going out shortly thereafter.

Bo said that Linda Morrison brought what we collected for Thanksgiving to Grace Lutheran.

- **Vitality Survey**

Bo distributed a handout. We need a start date and to run for about a month. We also need a liaison person with Linda Manson. Alan said he would take that role. Alan asked how quickly we can get this going, thinking that maybe December would be good since attendance is normally up and we could hear from people that maybe aren't here all the time. Bo agreed. Carol asked how we'll tell people the survey is taking place. Alan said church announcements and also on line.

Carolyn expressed concern about so much going on right now, if people will give the survey the attention it deserves. Jenn suggested announcing the survey during the upcoming Budget meeting on December 7th. The survey consists of 36 questions with a choice between three answers. Carolyn thinks that is a lot. Carol agreed with Carolyn's point however she also thinks people do have time. December 15th through January 15th was suggested for the rollout. We do not have the actual survey yet so we do not know the exact format or how long it takes to complete. Alan will try to get a copy of it.

It was agreed to start promoting the survey process on Sunday December 7th and run through Sunday January 11th.

- **Mission Insight**

A couple point people are needed. Alan suggested an Exec person and an office account too. Bo said this will come later when we're on our vitality journey.

- NEW BUSINESS:**

- **Insurance Liability for Outside Groups**

Carol pointed out that our building use form says the outside groups need insurance and we're getting push back from these groups. Council can waive this requirement, but if we do, we would be first in line if a lawsuit happens. Carol pointed out that our insurance company suggests we do not waive this requirement. Carol asked Council if we are willing to waive it. Although sympathetic, it was agreed that we should listen to our insurance company's recommendation and that we should not waive this requirement.

Carol looked into alternative insurance for the groups and it's a few hundred dollars. Ashdon and Carol are trying to work with the outside groups. It is also very possible that our insurance rates would increase as a result, were we to give a waiver.

A motion was made to not grant a waiver to any outside group in lieu of them not having their own insurance. The motion was made and seconded by Ken Woods / Carol Schlegel. **MOTION CARRIED**

- **Livestreaming**

Alan gave an update that he and Jenn discussed live streaming with Michael and he asked about the sound, which was very poor for the singing. They decided to pause live streaming (again). It was suggested to use canned music during the singing parts which currently has very poor sound quality. Reading and speech sound quality are fine. They will continue to work on a work-around for the music with Michael and Lew DiEva to simply our sound board. Another issue Michael had is that if the sound is bad to begin with, there is no way to improve it. We were prerecording in the past, but that was extremely time consuming. They are all trying to figure out what would be ideal but also what we can make work with the resources we have. Also, what our target audience is needs to be determined. One issue is that we only have a couple mikes. That is not sufficient to capture the audience and as a result the quality is very poor. Carolyn said that her impression is that she just wants to get it out to the people that cannot attend and that we should not be looking for a top-quality performance. Many churches just set up a camera and let it run without worrying about quality. It is felt that most shut-ins do not watch the presentation anyway. Alan feels that it needs to be bearable. If it's so poor that it's irritating, people will turn it off. And Michael doesn't want to be reflected poorly. We will continue to work with Michael. Carol also asked that we talk to other churches on how they do it in a simpler fashion.

• 25th Anniversary

This is Michael's 25th year as the Director of the Music Program. Alan would like to celebrate it and get him a gift. Chris Brinkworth will make a cake. Alan will call it out during a service and maybe present a slide show. A cash gift was thought to be appropriate.

• Community Garden

Scouts finished the community garden outside and did a very good job. It is available for winter crops, but we will do a spring kick-off of the garden. "Come Grow With Us" was suggested by Mark for the slogan.

• 2026 Budget

Carol informed Council that for the first time in a very long time, we have a balanced budget. She would like to dispel the idea that the committees do not have any money. It's just that she would like the committees to seek donations first but then also to come to Finance with what their financial needs are and they will do their very best to make sure they come up with the money.

Finance has exhausted every opportunity to cut costs. Donations were reduced from last year because that was the trend this year. Since Aug 2024 we have been using restricted funds to cover our deficit. We have about 1 1/2 yrs left of restricted funds before we run out.

Bruce pointed out that the budget does not include any building expenses. Not just HVAC but anything. Carol agreed that that is the case. We do have maintenance contracts, but they do not cover labor. Also, there is no salary for the Finance Director.

Alan asked where the Property figure of \$14,642 comes from and Carol explained that it is envelope donations that come in for property/capital improvements. He also asked if the Building Use donations are actual figures and Carol said that yes, they are and that

they also include the rent on the parsonage. She also said that there is \$3,000 private income that is interest from Thrivent.

The one caveat regarding the benefits expenses is that Carol will not get the final number until January so that figure in the budget could go up or down.

A motion was made to accept the 2026 budget as presented. The motion was moved and seconded by Jenn Shaw / Ken Woods. **MOTION CARRIED**.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

CARES AND CONCERNS:

Pastor Bo and council members shared their cares and concerns.

NEXT MEETING: Date: 12/17/25

Meeting Leader: Alan Divver

Scripture: Ashdon Bobbie

Prayer: Pastor Bo

Refreshments: Alan Divver

*It was moved and seconded by Ken Woods / Pastor Bo to adjourn the meeting at 8:29 p.m. **MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Roper

Council Secretary