

CONGREGATION COUNCIL MINUTES

Date: 9/4/25

The August Congregation Council Meeting was held on 8/20/25

Council Members Present: Pastor Bannister, Ashdon Bobbie, Carolyn Cutilli, Alan Divver, Shannon O'Neill, Barbara Quinn, Bruce Roper, Carol Schlegel, Jenn Shaw, Mark Vallone, Ken Woods, and Louise Woods.

Absent: Kiran Bodamer, Anna Sweeney, Janice Vallone

The meeting was called to order by President Shannon O'Neill at 6:00 p.m. The scripture was read by Pastor Bo and the prayer was offered by Tom Smith.

PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS COUNCIL:

Darren Shaw representing the Property Committee

HVAC System Funding Darren Shaw, co-chair of the property committee, shared new information about pursuing grant funding for a new HVAC system for the sanctuary. He and Shannon detailed their research into grants and communication with state representative Nancy Guenst, who offered to personally assist with a funding request and advised seeking bids for new equipment. They also mentioned the LSA (Local Share Account) grant, which requires community advocacy, and suggested approaching the borough for support. This grant would have to be for the benefit of the community, not just St John's. Shannon O'Neill also noted Mike Gildein from Peters HVAC inquired about Synod funding, as they may work with churches to help secure such funding, or possibly low interest loans.

Grant Application Strategy and Challenges Shannon reported that Nancy Guenst is keen to advocate for the church to obtain funding, with no specified limits, and suggested pursuing multiple avenues, including the state funding request and the LSA grant, despite the process taking several months. It was also suggested contacting Bruce Smith's daughter, who is a professional grant writer, to help with the proposal due to the specific language required for grant applications. Carol shared past experiences with grant applications, emphasizing the need for patience, detailed information that highlights unique aspects of the church's community involvement, and understanding that some grants are reimbursement programs. Darren committed to obtaining detailed information about the funding process and whether funds are direct or reimbursement-based.

HVAC System Bids and Options Darren mentioned that two new bids for the HVAC system are being secured, with one coming from Peters HVAC, since the previous bid's equipment is no longer available and prices have increased. They also discussed a less expensive option of installing split units in the sanctuary, requiring three to four units, and will obtain a bid for this

alternative, addressing potential concerns about aesthetics and noise. It was noted that despite the church's financial hardship and deficit, Nancy Guenst assured them it was not a problem for securing funding.

A Motion was made to proceed with obtaining appraisals and grants for the HVAC system. It was moved and seconded by Shannon O'Neill / Barbara Quinn. **MOTION CARRIED**

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

*It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes from June 2025 as presented without changes. The motion was made and seconded by Shannon O'Neill / Ken Woods. **MOTION CARRIED**

REPORTS:

President, Shannon O'Neill –Attached

Pastor Bannister – Attached

Attendance – Attached

Finance Committee – Attached

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

OLD BUSINESS:

Directory – Ashdon said that she has taken members information from Aplos but it will take time to go through it and clean it up, but she's working on it.

Staff job description/reviews/Compensation Packets and Policy – July/Aug performance reviews were done and the plan is to do them quarterly moving forward. Compensation was brought up but there is nothing in writing yet. Carol hopes to have it for approval in the next couple months. Carol explained that she had a call with an insurance broker to get competitive bids, and they require an employee handbook. Bo said other churches have them and we can use one of them and tweak it to get it done quicker. He will ask churches for a template to use.

Dedication flowers form revision for review – Ashdon said that the florist asked for a tentative number now but we can give an updated number only two weeks in advance. This year we will send out sooner than Advent so we can get them back two to three Sundays before Christmas. Carolyn brought up the pricing to use. We would like to cover expenses and still make a little profit. Charging \$25 was discussed but the final cost will be decided at a later date.

Council approved new members, however Bo has one correction to make.

A motion was made to accept all listed people as new members. It was moved and seconded by Shannon O'Neill / Carolyn Cutilli. **MOTION CARRIED**

NEW BUSINESS:

A Motion was made to go into Executive Session with staff stepping out of the meeting. It was moved and seconded by Shannon O'Neill / Bo Bannister.

A Motion was made to leave Executive Session and have staff return to the meeting. It was moved and seconded by Bruce Roper / Alan Divver.

2026 budget discussion – Changing the statement on the quarterly statements to be a stronger message was brought up. Asking if people can give an “estimate of giving” for next year rather than “pledging” might be helpful.

The group also discussed creating a culture of generosity and explored potential revenue streams, such as renting out the church basement space or classrooms for commercial use. This was inspired by another church's success. We have an inspection due, so Carol will ask the fire marshal his thoughts.

Property concerns – Ken said that the pantry a/c unit has repeatedly failed and that we need a fix. Peter's, who installed it, also hold the maintenance contract and have been unable to fix it despite multiple attempts, raising questions about continuing their service when the contract is up for renewal. They also mentioned considering external opinions for a permanent fix.

Trailer Insurance for Troop 81 – Shannon O'Neill brought up a request from Troop 81 for St. John's to insure their trailer, as their previous charter organization dropped their coverage. The trailer is currently uninsured, and while it would cost approximately \$500 annually, questions arose regarding ownership, registration, and whether the church's insurance could cover an asset not owned by or used for church functions. More information is needed to determine the feasibility of this request.

Building Use Form – Concerns were raised about the building use form, noting that there are two different versions and that the updated one is not user-friendly. It was reported that some groups using the church premises have caused security issues by propping doors open, leaving lights on, and not turning off the air conditioning, necessitating a meeting with these groups. Council needs to finalize an updated building use form to address these inconsistencies and security requirements.

Building Use Fees – A revised fee structure for facility rentals, noting current inconsistencies in pricing, was discussed. A fee of \$50 was proposed for Fellowship Hall and \$25 for other classrooms for regular meetings, distinguishing these from higher rates for events. The discussion also included the basement being priced similarly to Fellowship Hall at \$50 for meetings due to its size.

Weight Watchers are interest in renting Fellowship Hall on Saturdays and a classroom during the week, projecting approximately \$200 per week in revenue from their extensive meeting schedule.

The proposal for Weight Watchers' use of the facilities, along with requests from the Scouts and Alanon, was approved, with a suggestion for the Scouts to use the basement instead of Fellowship Hall for their post-Court of Honor party.

It was agreed that we should not charge the County Choroliers or charter groups such as Scouts.

Event Rental Fees and Kitchen Use – Shannon presented proposed event rental fees, suggesting \$100 for Fellowship Hall or the basement, with an additional \$50 for kitchen use, making Fellowship Hall with the kitchen \$150 for an all-day event. They mentioned that the basement also allows access to the upstairs kitchen if needed.

A Motion was made to approve the building use form with above edits. It was moved and seconded by Shannon O'Neill / Ashdon Bobbie. **Motion Carried.**

Holiday Bazaar Commercialism Concerns – Shannon shared a complaint from a former member regarding the holiday bazaar's commercial nature, as it will include food trucks and non-religious vendors, departing from previous strictly Christian-themed events. They clarified that vendors selling new items and crafts would be in Fellowship Hall, while a flea market would be in the basement.

Mobile Pumpkin Patch Fundraiser Idea – Ashdon introduced a proposal for a mobile pumpkin patch fundraiser, where pumpkins would be brought to them for sale with a profit-sharing model. However, she also expressed concerns about the legitimacy of the offer and the potential for the organization to be left with unsold pumpkins.

Joseph Production Update – It was announced that the Joseph musical would now be a dinner and a show, with tickets being sold, a change approved by Michael and the Generosity Committee. They also mentioned efforts to re-engage Thrivent for event support. This event is being planned for December.

Hatboro Baptist asked if St John's would like to help with the homeless. The first meeting is in September. Bo thinks we should have representation at a discussion meeting on how we can work together. It was asked if we would want to form a committee here at St John's and someone could go as our representative to these meetings. It was suggested that we put an announcement in the bulletin about it first. It was agreed to bring this topic up at the upcoming All Committee meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Community Outreach Ministry – No report
- Constitution and Bylaws – No report
- Fellowship Connections – See report
- Hatboro Community Cupboard – See report
- Kids & Family Ministry – See report
- Memorials – No report

- Mutual Ministry – No report
- Property – See report
- Social Media – No report
- Stewardship – See report
- Women's Ministry – No report
- Worship & Music – See report

CORRESPONDENCE:

Alanon submitted a request for their 51st anniversary celebration on October 24th from 7:30-9:00

Troop 81 submitted a request for their Court of Honor ceremony on September 22nd in the sanctuary from 7:30 to 8:00 and then moving to the basement from 8:00-9:00.

The Scouts would also like to use St John's basement on Saturday Nov 22 to set up their wreath event and will be out before the Saturday service.

A Motion was made to approve the building's use for Weight Watchers Alanon, and the Scouts. It was moved and seconded by Shannon O'Neill / Ken Woods.

CARES, CONCERNS and CELEBRATIONS

Pastor Bo and council members shared their cares, concerns and reasons for celebrations.

NEXT MEETING: Date: 9/17/25

Meeting Leader: Alan Divver

Scripture: To Be Determined

Prayer: Pastor Bo

Refreshments: Carolyn Cutilli

*It was moved and seconded by Bruce Roper / Alan Divver to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

MOTION CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Roper

Council Secretary