

Nov. 16, 2025 Semi-Annual Business Meeting Minutes

Call to Order- 11:03 AM by Council President Bob Brande

Count of Voting Members present and on Zoom - 20 members (19 present + 1 on Zoom)

Opening Prayer and Remarks - Bob Brandemuehl

Lightning Strike on the Bell Tower - Our Bell tower was on Friday night / Saturday morning, October 18. Concrete from the base was tossed all over the lawn and sidewalk. There was much damage to the electrical. We had actually suffered a smaller lightning strike about 3 ½ years ago. This time there was much more damage. The electricians will be coming back this week to give us estimates. The power between the breaker box in the boiler room and office is no longer connected. The organ was damaged as well. We have 3 lightning rods on the tower, but there must be a disconnect; perhaps they are no longer grounded. The carillon bells will also need to be fixed. But the structure itself is stable. Our insurance company requires us to get 2 estimates for each item.

Approval of March 2, 2025 Business Meeting Minutes - Zach Buchmann moved and Gary Himebauch seconded to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Discussion / Approval of Budget for 2026 (Treasurer) - Jamie Pennington (Director of Budget & Finance) spoke on Treasurer Jean Bocker's behalf about the budget for 2026. In 2018 we voted to put 10% of the budget towards Missions and 10% to Capital Improvements. Last year we chose not to put 10% towards Capital Improvement. This year we are proposing to do away with 10% for Missions, since our budget is very tight and we still have an abundance of funds remaining in Missions. The Council moved and Terry Buchmann seconded to approve the budget as presented. Motion carried.

Missions & Capital Improvement Approval - The Council moved and Kay Rowntree seconded to approve not to use 10% of the budget for Missions. Motion carried.

Nominating Committee Report and Approval - The Nominating Committee did a great job filling as many positions as they could for next year. But they were not able to find anyone to fill the position of Director of Congregational Care. Pastor Mark Hensley nominated Jennifer Schmitz for the Congregational Care position. Jamie Pennington seconded the motion. Motion carried. Dave Beilfus moved and Sue Roberts seconded to approve the slate of officers for 2026. Motion carried.

Sale of the Parsonage - We had sent out a survey to the membership to find out peoples' thoughts about what to do with the parsonage, since Pastor Mark already owns his own home. Only 7 people responded to the survey. Of those, 71% indicated that they would like to sell the parsonage. 29% wished to use it for ministry purposes. Pastors these days want to build equity by buying their own homes. We, as Council members and members of the congregation, do not wish to be landlords. So the Council recommends that we sell the parsonage. Zach Buchmann agrees that we should sell it, but thinks that we might need to put a fence or some sort of boundary between the church and the parsonage. Another thing that we would have to deal with is that the church and the parsonage share a water line. This would have to be separated.

Bev Webber asked what the value of the repairs would be. Kay Rowntree believes that we should leave that to the realtor we select. Sue Roberts pointed out that we shouldn't put much into repairs, because the new owners would probably rip out everything anyway.

Pastor Mark has served 4 different churches with parsonages. He believes that when there is a parsonage, there is often a problem with boundaries between the pastor's privacy and what members of the congregation assume. He feels that pastors these days want to own their own houses. Yet, at the same time, we need to honor the grief of the loss of the parsonage.

The Council moved to approve to put up the parsonage for sale, and Zach Buchmann seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Jennifer Schmitz, who has experience with real estate sales, mentioned that realtors can work with us to make the process a smooth one. We need to find out from the realtor what repairs he or she suggests.

Kay Rowntree asked for a Parsonage Sale Committee. Bob Brandemuehl, Sue Roberts, Jennifer Schmitz, and Joanne Himebauch volunteered to be on this committee. We suggested that Rae-Ellen Preuss, as Building & Grounds director, should be part of this. We will need to ask her.

Anything new from the floor? - Nothing.

Remarks and Closing Prayer - Bob Brandemuehl thanked us for a great discussion and Pastor Mark Hensley closed us in prayer.

Adjournment - Zach Buchmann moved and Dave Beilfuss seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Himebauch
Council Secretary