



November 2025 Council Meeting Minutes

Date: 11-18-2025	Time: 6:30 PM	Location: Fellowship Hall and Zoom
<p>Those present are indicated in bold: Pastor Dan Nelson, Deacon Savannah Olaphson, Pastor Steve Olson, Kelly Meyers (Church Administrator), Tom Getchius (President), Julie Maes (Vice-President), Kirsten Stenoien (Treasurer), Rick Ites (Financial Secretary), Kim Whalen (Secretary), Jennifer Johnson (Adult Faith Formation), Emily Sienkowski / Karina Nelson (Children's Education), Amanda Ropchak (Evangelism), Bev Osekowsky / Ruth Lunde (Parish Fellowship), Jolene Engle / Nicole Seieroe (Middle School Youth), Ellie Scheler (High School Youth), Lou Hernandez (Property), Kelly Robert (Social Ministry), Jim Andreen (Stewardship), Eric Lovestrand (Worship, Music & Arts)</p>		
<p>Call To Order: 6:34 PM Devotion: Eric L Adjourned: 8:18 PM Jennifer motion, Lou 2nd</p>		
<p>Approval of October Minutes: Jim motion, Ruth 2nd, all voted to approve</p>		

Action Item	Who	Status	Expected Completion
Update the proposed motion not to allow non-member use of space (that is not non-profit or for-profit)	Kelly M.	In Progress	Dec 2025
Proposed updated constitution and bylaws, including a change to the Service & Justice committee name.	Pastor Steve	In Progress	2026
Communications re: income concerns (will fall under Stewardship)	Rick, Jim, Kirsten	Complete	Nov 2025

SENIOR PASTOR CALL PROCESS - Tom G.

The Special Congregational Meeting to vote on calling Pastor Dan as the Senior Pastor will be December 7 in person, and also online via Zoom. Quorum is 10% of active membership. We have identified 650 active/eligible members and about 700 inactive/ineligible. Have sent e-mails to members indicating whether we have them marked as eligible or ineligible, and are getting things corrected.

EXPENSE APPROVAL POLICY - Kirsten S.

Kirsten S. presented a document spelling out the expense approval policy. This is in response to a finding by the 2024 internal audit. Something new in the policy is that any check or credit card bill that is over \$500 will require approval from a council member. There is an electronic form for approval. Another change is that credit card charges need to be pre-approved.

Lou moved to approve the policy, Eric seconded. All voted to approve.

ATTENDANCE AND FINANCIAL UPDATES

Attendance - Rick I.

- a little over 2,000 in October
- YTD 67% in person
- For 6-month period, best since 2021. For 12-month period, also best since 2021. (In 2021, we counted online attendance in a manner that made it look higher.)

Giving - Rick I.

- October basically on budget
- 12-month rolling period is a bit higher than the previous period, for the first time in many months.

Financial Statements - Kirsten S.

- October income was right on track. YTD we are a little ahead of giving budget, but Nov/Dec budgeted income is higher than in earlier months, so we are hoping giving will rise in those months.
- When November closes, we will send out departmental reports with 2025 actuals so committees can compare those numbers to their 2026 budgets. Committee members should send any 2026 budget changes to Kirsten S. and Kelly M. If you are trying to understand a number, Kelly M. is a good resource.

ANNUAL REPORT and ANNUAL MEETING (Jan 25, 2026) - Kirsten S.

Annual Report

- Half a page 2025 report per committee by Dec. 5, visuals encouraged.
- Will work on telling the story and not duplicating information between sub-reports.

Annual Meeting

- Planning agenda for annual meeting

PASTORAL AND STAFF UPDATES

Pastor Dan

- October had 1 funeral and 3 baptisms.
- 1 new member gathering. Added 12 new members. Has a meeting with another family who has been online and want to become members. Some other families are in similar positions. New families seem to be attracted because we are a Lutheran church with ELCA theology, with programs for kids and a friendly worshipping community. The Statement of Welcome on our website was important for some families. Pastor Dan is working on ideas for new member programs.

Pastor Steve

- Presented a draft constitution. Julie suggested emailing a Google doc to council so we can make comments. We will do a similar process with bylaws later.
- This vote on a new constitution would not line up with the annual meeting.
- The staff is aware that worship times have been getting longer, and they are working on it.
- Please let the church know if you know of someone with Pastoral Care needs including being in the hospital.

Deacon Savannah

- The first Game Night raised \$8,500 for Cristo Obrero.
- The Craft Sale raised \$2,745 for Onward and will sell some more on Wednesday.
- Partner congregations expressed appreciation for Immanuel members showing up to worship with them.
- Thomas worship service coming up November 19.

Kelly M.

- 2025 has been a big year of transitions including staffing and software.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Children's Education - Emily S. / Karina N.

- Sunday School is off to a great start.
- Parents' Night Out for Sat 11/22 had to be cancelled - demand was strong (17 kids), but unfortunately we didn't have adequate youth volunteers to supervise them.

- Intergenerational "Deck the Halls" event on 11/30 to decorate for Advent.
- Child Led Advent coming up on 12/14.
- Christmas Party planning underway.
- Will be partnering with Evangelism to evaluate continuing the Beach Party.

Parish Fellowship - Bev O. / Ruth L.

- Wednesday Cafe is going well, with attendance of 65-90 each week. Donations have been good. We still need a leader for one of the four teams.
- Smorgasbord planning is going well. 101 reservations as of early November.
- Sunday morning Fellowship has included beverages and treats between worship services. We need more volunteers, especially to make/serve coffee, lemonade, etc. People express frustration with Amplify regarding volunteer sign ups.
- Planning is underway for the Annual Meeting lunch in January.
- Serving for Funerals is going well. Adapting is helpful, e.g. had a substantial increase in number attending vs how many the family expected.

Middle School Youth / High School Youth - Jolene E. / Nicole S. & Ellie S.

- Many students participated in the game night on November 1st. They helped set up, sell and serve dinner, and clean up.
- Middle School and Senior High council members made a trip to Target on Sunday, November 2. We purchased Candy, Popcorn, Gum, and Chapstick for the College student care packages. We spent our exact allotted budget, \$140 dollars. We packed the supplies in packages that Paul Erdmann got from the post office after the Target Trip.
- On Thanksgiving Eve, November 26, Confirmation students will have the opportunity to set up and serve pie slices in the Narthex.
- The weekend of November 14th we had 34 confirmation students, 11 student leaders, and 13 adults attend the confirmation retreat. The retreat was held again at Camp Eden Wood, which proved to be of value so people could come and go to accommodate other obligations.
- On October 26 we had six 10th graders get confirmed.
- Older kids have a few opportunities in November and December to get money for their youth accounts. November 22 we are offering babysitting and December 6 there is an opportunity to work at the smorgasbord.

Service and Justice - Kelly R.

- Game night was a success! We were able to donate a total of \$8,500 to Cristo Obrero!
- We are in the process of establishing our Benevolence budget for 2026 and should have it finalized at our December meeting
- Kelly R. will be ending her 2-year council term and nominating Cate Everett to be considered and voted on for the role at the annual meeting
- Kate Bottiger is doing an amazing job with our ministry champions and partners. The ministry partner meeting on October 20 went well.
- With the help of Jackie Getchius, new committee member, we will be increasing our commitment to mental health ministries, topics and education in 2026.