

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF STILLWATER, MINNESOTA
Congregational Council Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2026

Voting Council members present: John Hodler, Bill Bjorum, Bryan Barts, Pastor Kristine Stedje, Mike Karlsrud, Kirsten Parker, Shane Brockshus

Non-voting Council member present: Parish Administrator Sarah Kinsman

Absent: Pastor Jen Hackbarth (on Puerto Rico mission trip)

Location: Trinity Lutheran Church office conference room

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by President John Hodler.
Pastor Kristine opened with a prayer.

I. Consent Agenda – M/S/P:

- Approval of June 15, 2026 Council meeting minutes, and
- Approval of July 20, 2026 Council meeting agenda

II. Book Study continued “How To Lead When You Don’t Know Where You’re Going”.

- Book study conversation led to much thought discussion on living out our Core Values, where we are going as an organization, our purpose, and how that purpose guides the building of our next budget.

III. Liminal Season budgeting

- Council discussion on guiding principles and priorities in developing the annual budget within spending “buckets”.
 - Ministry
 - Facilities
 - Personnel compensation
 - Benevolence
- Realities of being mortgage-free: While this is an incredible and freeing long-term blessing, the impact to annual budget is limited. Communication and understanding of this is important.
- There is opportunity for more coordination amongst mission and projects, including financially.
- Council guidance is that fair, market-competitive salaries for staff is a priority.
- Secondly, any excess funds should be directed toward building operational reserves.

IV. Pastoral updates were reviewed and accepted, per reports previously submitted to the Council.

V. Financials were reviewed and accepted, per reports previously submitted to the Council. In addition:

- Mike as Treasurer and Sarah as Administrator are working to simplify how financials are reported by showing an operational result per month.
- The goal of this is to provide transparency as operational reserves are used to cover short-term cash flow needs.
 - i.e. our money market account can be viewed similarly to how the church has utilized a line of credit in the past.

- M/S/P to approve the Investment Committee strategy and risk parameters as presented by Mike and John:
 - Strategy - considers the amount invested & timeline, impact on projects
 - Risk - invest in FDIC-insured products such as CDs; no stocks
 - New & Renewing Campaign funds investment interest is to be deposited into operating reserves
- Council will meet jointly with the Finance Team at 4:30 on 8/17/26 to review budget proposals prior to a meal and regular monthly Council meeting

VI. Unfinished business

- **Drive-in property** – Bill updated Council on a proposal to sell .28 acres of the property to adjoining neighbor Bridgeview Storage. Follow-up includes pursuing potential for a cash sale that would leave the buyer responsible for all fees.
 - Bill and the task force working on this will continue their due diligence process. Bill will bring a recommendation to Council at the September meeting.
 - Choosing to sell this piece of property would require congregational approval. If recommended by the Council, this would be brought forward at the annual meeting.
- **EV charging project**
 - Council approved, in March 2025, a project to begin fundraising, develop a structured plan, and install an EV charging station on Trinity property.
 - A number of decisions need to be made which will inform an operational plan
 - Fact-gathering and detailed planning need to happen between the EV charging project team and Council representatives.
 - John, Kirsten and Bill will represent Council and Sarah will represent Trinity staff, to meet with the EV team with the goal of planning/preparing for a successful project.

VII. New Business

- **Annual meeting** – M/S/P to approve Tom Haugrud as Parliamentarian for Trinity's 2026 Congregational meetings.
 - Clark noted the singular theme mentioned by every respondent in the Transition Team report was music excellence. This is a blessing and has become an expectation in the church.
 - Clark shared his vision and ideas for future growth, staffing, and the use of our facilities by the church and the community, as well as the current time commitments and responsibilities for Clark and lay leaders.
- **Trinity Fest** –
 - Charlie Payne has proposed using more of the interior of the church for the event this year.
 - Council members are encouraged to attend and be available to speak about current issues and priorities of the church.

Pastor Kristine led us in closing with the Lord's Prayer.

M/S/P to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 PM.

***Next meeting:** 8/17/26 joint Finance Team/Council Budget meeting @ 4:30 PM in Trinity conference room, followed by August Council meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Shane Brockshus
Council Secretary