St. John's Congregational Council Meeting

February 21, 2026 Off-site

Members present: President Dr. Scott Hirth, Vice President David Clark, Treasurer Teresa Orahood, Secretary Rachel Katterhenrich, Cindy Gonsowski, Dennis Imbrock, Abby Johnston, Doug Knisely, Susan Previts, Dave Stallard, Bonnie Swanson, Amy Wanner, Pastor Patti Morlock

Members Absent: none

Call meeting to order: Dr. Hirth called the Council Meeting to order at 8:52am.

Introductions: Each member introduced themselves, including their occupation and leadership experiences, to help form a background of skills we can offer within council.

Opening prayer and devotions: President Dr. Scott Hirth started our time together with prayer and led a devotion on Matthew 18. Future devotions will be rotated among all members.

Approval of previous month minutes: Secretary Rachel Katterhenrich confirmed that the November minutes had been approved by a majority of council members over email. Dr. Hirth explained that in future, we will be approving minutes at the following meeting as the resolutions only allow for email voting when truly necessary. Minutes will continue to be distributed in a timely manner.

Donation: A basket was passed around to collect a donation for Lutheran Social Services. Other ministries may be considered for donations in future months.

Mission Statement and NALC Core Values: Dr. Hirth read the mission statement of our congregation and Pastor Patti went through the NALC core values to remind everyone of our driving purposes and focus as leaders at St. John's. The core values include being Christ-Centered, Mission-Driven, Traditionally Grounded, and Congregationally Focused.

Council notebook: Dr. Hirth went through the council notebook and highlighted some key points to be aware of and how to find information about the church's constitution, policies, and guidelines. Particularly of note is the guidance to follow Robert's Rules during meetings. Dr. Hirth also noted that he would like to send out reports ahead of council meetings, and requests all reports for the next meeting be sent to him 7-10 days before the meeting so they can be assembled into one meeting packet (avoiding many different emails being sent prior to the meeting).

Missions Team: (moved up in the agenda to address before Abby had to leave) Dr. Hirth moved to ratify the missions team as listed in the meeting packet. Teresa Orahood seconded the motion and it passed with no objections. Council then discussed the missions budget line items. There are currently three restricted funds, General Mission, Mexico Mission, and Alaska Mission. It was brought up that it should be clear where funds from fundraisers are going, whether to a specific trip, with people from our congregation involved, or to a mission organization. It was also discussed that only the congregation can make changes to allocated funds and that it should be clear who makes decisions about how those funds are used. Abby Johnston made a motion to table the discussion until the March meeting. Amy Wanner seconded. Discussion – this will give us a chance to check on the regulations and also to think about ways to give the congregation more options to support the youth and missions in various ways. The motion carried.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Patti gave an overview of her activities over the last two months to help give the council an idea of the workload of the pastor. These included, among other things, 5 baptisms, 4 funerals, 31 hospital visits,1 wedding and associated preparation, ministerial meetings, overseeing the pastoral intern, providing community aid, and of course, sermons and leading worship. Pastor Patti also informed council that next weekend she will be out of town helping to lead a women's retreat.

Financial report: Treasurer Teresa Orahood distributed the financial report. She reported that the weather in January has led to a slow start to the year financially. Teresa moved to accept the financial report, David Clark seconded, and the motion was approved.

Teresa then made a motion for the property team to use up to $3000 from the Designated Music Memorial Fund to replace the cabinets in the choir room. Pastor Patti seconded. During discussion, it was brought up that heavier cabinets may be beneficial for holding the heavy music and to prevent having to replace the cabinets again in a short time frame. Dr. Hirth made a motion to amend the amount to $5000. David Clark seconded. The motion was approved.

Teresa made an additional motion to approve the use of up to $3000 from the property endowment fund available income to replace a damaged divider in the downstairs Sunday School room. Rachel Katterhenrich seconded and the motion carried.

Membership Report: Rachel Katterhenrich read the December membership report. Dr. Hirth indicated that he would like to see membership reports include a broader range of changes, including all baptisms, and deaths, as well as transfers and affirmation of faith. Rachel motioned to acknowledge the outgoing member by transfer Michael Walsh, from the December report. Pastor Patti seconded and there were no objections.

Vice President election: David Clark has expressed his willingness to continue in this role. No other nominations were offered. Dr. Hirth motioned to accept David Clark as vice president. Bonnie Swanson seconded and the motion passed.

Prayer requests: Dr. Hirth invited council members to share prayer requests and several were shared among the group.

Unfinished business:

- The Call Team continues in their work to call a new Senior Pastor. Dr. Hirth reminded council to be careful with sensitive information that may be shared as the process continues so that we can be respectful of pastors considering the call.

New Business:

- Ratify the property team – the team membership list was provided by Karen Bentley, the chair of that team. One change is to remove Jason's name from the list and to add the title 'Building and Grounds Manager' to the list. Dr. Hirth motioned to approve the team, Teresa seconded and it passed.
- Council Liaisons – After some discussion on the roles of council liaisons, Dr. Hirth motioned to approve the following list of council liaisons. Dennis Imbrock seconded the motion and it passed. Rachel Katterhenrich will send a description of the networks to the council members.
    - Property Team – Dennis Imbrock
    - Missions Team and Service Network – Abby Johnston
    - Call Team Liaison – Dr. Hirth
    - Adult Discipleship Network – Bonnie Swanson
    - Stewardship Network – Teresa Orahood
    - Communication and Technology Network – David Clark
    - Property Care – Cindy Gonsowski
    - Education Network and Youth Network – Amy Wanner
    - Worship Network – Rachel Katterhenrich
    - Outreach Network – Doug Knisely
    - Fellowship Network – Susan Previts
    - Member Caregiving Network – Dave Stallard
- Teresa also motioned to approve the following finance teams. Amy seconded and the motion passed.
    - Finance Team – Kathy Myers, Dave Keil, Larry Sutton, Shawn Brace, Tony Bennett, Nate Wanner, Karrie Clark, and Dan Yeater
    - Endowment Team – Dan Yeater, Shawn Brace, and Tony Bennett
- Building and Grounds Manager position – Jason has been let go from this position as his actions were not in line with our mission as a church. The church will need to be rekeyed as part of security protocols. The safe combination has already been changed as well. Dr. Hirth asked Dennis Imbrock to lead the team to hire a new manager.
- Security grant – David Clark reported that he is continuing the process to apply for a grant to help offset the cost of upgrading certain security features, following an event that was put on last year to highlight how organizations can be more secure.

- Meeting Dates – The council decided to continue to meet on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 pm. Dr. Hirth distributed a schedule for leading prayer/devotions at each meeting.
- Background checks – Dr. Hirth noted that the constitution requires background checks of officers and council discussed who else generally gets a background check and who should. Dr. Hirth motioned to make it our policy that those who work with youth and the property manager should have a background check every two years. Teresa seconded the motion. There was some discussion and the motion passed. One point of discussion was that we may want to consider ordering higher level checks for some positions or at beginning of employment. This can be discussed further at the next meeting after researching options. Pastor Patti will ask Jamie about the background check options and send it to the officers.
- Congregational meeting dates – these are mostly set by the constitution. The dates for the next year are quarterly meetings on April 26, July 26, and October 25, 2026. The next annual meeting is set for January 24, 2027.

Congregational concerns:

- Amy brought up a concern about who should be responsible for tasks during a funeral. She observed that Christina Allman had worked on many tasks during a recent funeral and was concerned she wouldn't have that time for youth tasks. Pastor Patti explained that there is someone who helps with many of the tasks related to the worship and clean up aspects and that generally the funeral home or the family are responsible for other tasks. Bonnie mentioned that the bereavement team may be able to look into adding a team member dedicated to liaising with the family as necessary. Pastor Patti also said she would talk to the staff about distribution of tasks.

Adjournment: Dr. Hirth motioned to adjourn, Pastor Patti seconded, and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned following saying the Lord's Prayer together.

ACTION ITEMS:

All council members - Review the minutes and respond to Secretary Rachel Katterhenrich within 48 hours with corrections as necessary

All council members – send any reports to President Hirth 7-10 days before the next meeting

Abby and Teresa – research the designated funds for missions and who controls them

Teresa – look for descriptions of the designated funds, is there more info on what each can be used on other than the name of the fund?

Teresa – report back to property team about the approved motions for cabinets and divider

Teresa – prepare slate of audit team to be ratified at next meeting

Pastor Patti – talk to Jamie about the broader scope of membership reports and ask her to send the background check information to executive council

Pastor Patti – talk to staff about funeral tasks

Rachel – send descriptions of liaison networks to all council members

Dennis – form team to hire new Building and Grounds Manager

Amy – talk to youth staff and Sunday school superintendent about background check policy

Rachel - send meeting dates to Kathryn

Next meeting: Monday, March 16, 2026 at 6:30 pm in room 103/104