

St. John's Congregational Council Meeting

June 15, 2026 Room 103/104

Members present: President Dr. Scott Hirth, Vice President David Clark, Treasurer Teresa Orahod, 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 6:30pm.

Opening prayer and devotions: Cindy Gonsowski led a devotion from James 3:1-10 focused on how to handle change and transition in a Godly way.

Approval of May minutes: Dr. Hirth acknowledged the minutes from council's May meeting and they were approved.

Donation: A basket was passed around to collect a donation for Lutheran Social Services.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Patti reported on the following:

- She has met the candidate that the youth search team has been in contact with and has been involved in meeting with the chair of the team, the candidate, and the finance team.

- very busy with hospital visits for 12 different people and attending families through two recent deaths in the congregation.

- continuing weekly staff meeting with Bible study

- some guidance on devotions at council meetings: Pastor Patti emphasized how transformative time in the Word is and how spending time to enter into the Word can actually make the business of the meeting go faster. She does have books available that can help give a starting point for anyone who would like to use them.

- Organist Mark Meuser will take some extra time off this summer to come back more refreshed. This will not have a financial impact on the congregation.

Youth Director search committee: Chairperson Amy Wanner reviewed the process that the team has followed so far. The team was formed almost two years ago before Laurie Pecuch and Diana Imbrock retired. Despite seeking candidates through many different avenues and hiring a national firm (Slingshot) to help in the process, a suitable candidate had not been found by the time Pastor Seth retired. A decision was made to put the search on hold, as most candidates would not want to start at a transitional time.

In March, a potential candidate connected with the team through Pastor Jeff Morlock and Pastor Patti. The chairperson, committee, and Pastor Patti have conducted multiple interviews with the candidate. She was found to be very qualified, experienced, and with many qualities that would make her a good fit with our community. A pay package has been worked out with the finance team.

The committee has proposed a plan for this candidate to work 32 hours/week with a focus on confirmation/middle school, youth spiritual development, relational ministry, visioning, and administration. Christina Allman would continue to work 15 hours/week with a focus on Adventure Club and elementary/family events. Donna Westerfeld would continue to work 15 hours/ week with a focus on high school and Wednesday youth group.

The current budget did not include a salary for a youth director, though monies are available. Teresa Orahod motions to bring a budget amendment before the congregation to use \$24,000 from the operating fund for the purpose of the youth director salary and benefits for the remainder of this year. Amy Wanner seconded. Discussion followed. One main question was why we would move ahead with this now, rather than wait for a new pastor to be called first as previously decided. The response from the chairperson was that although they were not seeking to hire at this time, we don't want to lose a God-given opportunity to hire a very qualified candidate, and the candidate is willing to enter into this transitional time with full understanding of the current situation.

The motion passed and the budget amendment will be on the agenda at the July quarterly meeting (July 12).

Finance Report: Treasurer Teresa Orahod distributed the monthly report and invited questions. None were given and the report was approved.

Membership report: Dr. Hirth summarized the membership report – 4 baptisms, 3 transfers out, and 2 deaths.

Prayer requests: Members shared personal prayer requests and follow-up from previous shared requests.

Unfinished business:

Call Team update: The pastoral candidate will visit on June 27-28. Council members should plan to attend a special meeting on Sunday to prepare to bring the vote for a call to the quarterly meeting in July.

Security update: David Clark reported that it's been hard to get quotes for the new door key system. Two quotes have been received and he and Jerry are working on getting a third.

Main sanctuary sound system: Dan Yeater is working on getting quotes for work on the sound system. Some adjustments were made that have helped in the meantime.

Safety policy: Still on hold

New Business:

Columbarium: The property team has been researching costs for an additional columbarium, as the current one is almost full. Teresa Orahood motions to move \$10,000 from the memorial unrestricted savings fund to the columbarium fund to cover the amount needed. Dennis Imbrock asked to amend the amount to \$9,750 based on his notes from the meeting. The motion passed.

Congregational meeting: Executive council requests to move the July quarterly meeting to July 12 at 9:15 (or when first service concludes). The motion passed.

Nursery staffing: Megan Grossman has asked council to consider how we can staff the nursery as she and others have noticed that there is more of a need for it. There is currently no money budgeted for paid staff, so the recommendation is to start with volunteers and possibly move to a paid person along with volunteers in the new year. A coordinator and volunteers are needed from the congregation!

Next meeting: Council will have a special meeting on June 28 and the quarterly meeting on July 12. There will be no July council meeting. The next meeting is August 17.

Congregational concerns: Dwight Henricksen is concerned about whether the church van will be kept, as it is an important resource for ministry, even though it has been underutilized in recent years. Pastor Patti spoke to this concern and said our building manager Jerry is looking into what is needed to get the van into good order and whether a different vehicle would serve the church better, but there is no plan to not have a church vehicle available.

Note from the property team that some handicapped parking signs were placed incorrectly but that has now been corrected. Also, the dishwasher is broken, but they are looking to lease a machine for the time being.

Action Items:

All members – send minutes corrections to Rachel

All members – attend candidate visit on June 27-28 and the quarterly meeting on July 12

Pastor Patti – give devotion books to leader for August

David Clark – follow up on quotes for rekeying and sound system

Dennis – report back to property team on columbarium

Rachel – support Megan to find coordinator and volunteers for nursery