

Council Meeting Minutes: August 10, 2026

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order by Dale Swenson at 6:34 PM on August 10, 2026.

Attendance

Present: Dale Swenson, Alan Beyer, Nancy Bruns, Heidi Christensen, Cheryl Boerjan, Darla Crosthwaite, Pastor Chad Whaley

Absent: Jessica Fonseca, Pat Cassabaum, Curt Casper

Visitor: Howard Moss attended to provide Building and Grounds updates and present proposal to repair bell tower and paint church exterior.

Devotion/Prayer

- Pastor Chad offered an opening prayer, thanking God for presence and guidance, praying for those absent, and asking for wisdom in discussion and decisions.

Pastor's Report (Pastor Chad)

Below is the report submitted by Pastor.

Joys and Thanksgivings (Too many to mention)

- Rest and Relaxation
 - Grateful for some Sabbath time away
- VBS
 - Another great week! Thanks to all who helped!
- Parsonage Updates
 - Your faithful and generous stewardship of your gifts has provided needed updates at the parsonage for Amanda and I and future pastors. We are so grateful!
- Pond Party
 - Great night. Great turnout. Great fishing.
- Baptism
 - Mackenzie W.

Ministry Happenings

- 11 visits
- ELCA Rostered Leaders Gathering
 - July 6-9, Indianapolis
- VBS
- Sabbatical Committee Meeting
- Parade Float Meeting
- Crestview worship
- Wednesday Faith Formation Planning
 - Conversations and Listening
 - Some changes are being implemented
- Baptism
- Attend Pond Party
- Attend graduation open house
- Attend a horse show two youth involved in
- Strategic Planning online meeting
- Tuesday Prayer Team (as available)

- Sermon and worship preparation
- Men's Bible Study
- Weekly Newsletter

Community

- Another year of announcing and running scoreboard for WB Bear baseball with Amanda
- 9th Annual Chip Away at Childhood Hunger golf tournament planning

Below are items Pastor expanded on at meeting.

- ELCA Rostered Leaders Gathering: A fabulous event with ~750 leaders, diverse worship experiences, and multilingual participation reminiscent of Pentecost. He briefly met the new bishop, Bishop Curry, and will check for availability of his recorded message to share.
- Property updates: Shared photos highlighting building/property updates at parsonage and his office. Significant work by Amanda on several projects.
- Sabbatical Policy: The sabbatical committee (Pastor Hougen, Jill Taylor, Cindy Knoop, and Al Beyer) completed the Sabbatical Policy to present to council. A proposed maximum cost of \$5,300 for a twelve-week sabbatical was presented. This most likely will be potentially reduced by lay help. Motion to approve the Sabbatical Policy as presented was made by Nancy and seconded by Heidi; passed unanimously. The council will table budgeting discussion until timing and plan are finalized.
- Scheduling: A council meeting with Pastor Stubbs from the synod office was rescheduled to October 12, 2026 (original September 23 date canceled due to her travel to Tanzania).

Secretary's Report

- Minutes from June 8 were presented for approval. Nancy corrected the internal ministries fund balance for the quilters' request.
- Motion: Al moved to approve the Secretary's report as amended. Cheryl seconded.
- Vote: Motion carried unanimously.

Treasurer's Report (Nancy)

- June 2026
 - Offerings below budget for the month; year-to-date just above budget.
 - Fund balance adjustments as previously approved: \$300 moved from internal ministries fund to Quilters; EWALU campership paid from the youth fund.
 - Motion: Made by Heidi to accept the June 2026 Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Al.
 - Vote: Carried unanimously.
- July 2026
 - VBS donations totaled \$740, offsetting expenses.
 - Month ended with ~ \$3,000 surplus, reducing YTD deficit to \$4,700.
 - Financial standing significantly better than previous year due to member generosity.
 - Angel Meals: \$750 donation received.
 - Motion: Heidi moved to approve the July 2026 Treasurer's Report. Seconded by Cheryl.
 - Vote: Carried unanimously.
- Funding overview for repair of bell tower and painting exterior
 - Balances: \$1,000 in capital improvement fund; \$33,175 in general fund; \$50,000 in mission investment fund.
 - Proposal: Transfer \$16,441 from general fund to capital improvement fund to cover repair costs, leaving approximately one month's expenses in the general fund. Confident funding can occur without a formal capital campaign; donations welcomed.

Building and Grounds Report (Curt)

In Curt's absence, Howard gave updates as member of Building and Grounds Committee.

- Cleaning and lighting:
 - Carpet cleaning scheduled August 11, 2026 for quilters' area, hallway, and pastor's office; next year plan to clean great hall, classrooms, and children's play area. Carpet is 24 years old; future replacement should be considered.
 - New five-lamp chandelier purchased for improved altar care area lighting; installation soon.
 - Permanent electric light to be installed on Jesus statue this fall.
 - All classroom lights planned for LED conversion.
- Of 41 projects identified five years ago, nine minor items remain. Thanks extended to contributors. Decisions made in consultation with committee: Del Hughes, John Black, Kent Kaufman, Curt Casper.
- Bell tower and stucco repairs:
 - Condition: Peeling paint, rotting wood; inspection with John Black confirms need for repairs.
 - Scope: Replace rotted wood with Azek composite, repair screens/louvers, address stucco damage on north and west sides.
 - Bid: Robertson's Painting (painted church in 1995/1996 and 2016) bid 17,441.08 (5,441.08 materials); can possibly begin in fall. Committee recommended Robertson's due to familiarity and quality; opted not to seek other bids to expedite repairs and challenges of finding contractor familiar with stucco repair.
 - Motion: Heidi moved to approve Robertson's bid and fund by transferring \$16,441 from the general fund to the capital improvement fund, with congregation donations welcomed to offset costs. Seconded by Al.
 - Vote: Approved unanimously. Motion carried.
 - Congregational approval: A special congregational meeting will be called for August 30, 2026, to approve the expenditure. Howard and his team will present the project.

Education and Youth Report (Jess / Al)

- Fishing Party: Held June 14, 2026, at Bonnie Connors' property; 19 attendees; every child caught at least one fish.
- Vacation Bible School (VBS): Approximately 40 children attended; lively event with strong volunteer support.
- Upcoming: Committee will meet to organize the Sunday School year for pre-K through second grade.

Evangelism and Missions Report (Darla)

- Hometown Days Parade Float
 - Float built creatively with minimal expense using paper mache, chicken wire, and an exercise ball.
 - 250 candy bags prepared with high-quality stickers designed/donated by Scott Marsh featuring church photo and Facebook info. Storms moved assembly indoors; bags included pullout sheet with church information. Distribution completed at parade; float well-received, with pride and emotion expressed, especially for the banner of VBS children's handprints.
 - Funding: Expenses for supplies (candy, bags) deemed appropriate for Thrivent Choice Fund/
 - Promotion: Darla posted thanks and photos on "Voices of West Branch" and personal Facebook pages to promote awareness.

- “God’s Work, Our Hands” Subcommittee:
 - Members: Darla, Kevin Crosthwaite, Dave Poppen, and Bruce Jeffries; met twice in past 1.5 months. Sign-up sheet in fellowship hall for volunteers; seeking names of community members needing assistance. Next meeting in two weeks.
 - Event coordination: Kevin will coordinate work teams; Darla will manage indoor support (lunches, water) and find tasks for those unable to do physical labor. Last year, children preferred outdoor jobs over making cards indoors.
 - Event T-shirts: Discussed ordering; last year cost was \$15 per shirt. Historically individuals purchase their own shirts. Pastor offered to place a bulk order using church credit card after funds are collected; order deadline mid-August 2026 to ensure delivery.

Fellowship Report (Pat)

- No report submitted.

Stewardship Report (Cheryl)

- Gift Policy:
 - Team met July 7, 2026 (Cheryl, Claudia, John Hiersman, Nancy) to review a new Gift Policy; earlier ELCA-based draft reviewed by council in May; updated policy distributed August 10, 2026 for council review.
 - Purpose: Guidelines for accepting non-cash donations (stocks, commodities, real estate, tangible property like vehicles).
 - Confidential review board: Pastor, Financial Secretary, and Council President to handle such donations.
 - Implementation: Policy to be posted on church website; highlights to be shared during stewardship campaign. Pastor and Claudia comfortable with workload.
 - Marketable securities: Plan to use ELCA Foundation’s Schwab account with an associated transaction fee; avoids opening a church brokerage account unless donations become frequent.
 - Motion: To approve the Gift Policy as written by Darla. Seconded by Nancy.
 - Vote: Passed unanimously by voice vote.
 - Action: Cheryl will obtain final signatures from Claudia and Dale, add Thrivent contact information, and provide the final document for posting on the church website.

Worship and Music Report (Heidi)

- New Paschal candle ordered. Heidi will pick up the candle and inquire about a new cloth with special colors and a potential Advent candle holder the owner may have in storage.

Old Business

- Sabbatical Policy (See Pastor’s Report section)
- Council Meeting at Synod Office (See Pastor’s Report section)

New Business / Other items

- Membership:
 - Per Constitution Requirement, Pastor requested Todd Alston be approved for membership.
 - Motion: Cheryl moved to approve membership request. Seconded by Al.
 - Vote: Passed unanimously.
- Library: Discussion on continuation of library ministry, which has lacked leadership since Frank Frostestad’s death nearly two years ago. Books on table have not been rotated/updated. Previous attempts to find leadership of ministry proved unsuccessful. Council will seek to identify an individual or group to manage the library and continue ministry.

Lord's Prayer**Adjournment**

- Motion to adjourn made by Cheryl and seconded by Heidi; passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Next Meeting Date

- Next regular meeting: September 10, 2026.