

Zion Lutheran Church, Minot  
Annual Meeting  
February 02, 2025

- After verifying that we had a quorum in attendance (more than 50 voting members), the Annual Meeting was called to order by President Rich Jensen at 11:10 am.
- Pastor Elaine Sweet led us in prayer.
- President Jensen called for a motion to accept the minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting. Luke Schaefer made a motion to accept the 2024 minutes, which was seconded by Harry Summers. Motion carried.
- Discussion went to Elections. There are two open spots on the Church Council needing to be filled. We have 4 people on the ballot for the Trust Committee and only 3 spots need to be filled at this time. There was a suggestion made to call those 4 individuals and ask them if one of them would consider serving on Council or the Nominations Committee (which needs to fill one spot) rather than Trust. Kortni Plorin volunteered to make those phone calls. We also need one Youth Council Member.
- While Kortni was making those calls, President Jensen asked the congregation to look to their annual report packets for review. He asked if there was anyone wishing to speak to the annual report. There was no response. Bruce McLean made a motion to accept the annual report. Myrna DeMers seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Discussion moved to the Financial Report. President Jensen shared that a draft budget was in the packet, while a new draft budget with a list of amendments was presented on the screen for viewing. Copies were also made for congregation members after a request was made for paper copies for better viewing. President Jensen reviewed the amended items, which totaled a \$30,558.00 decrease in spending, bringing the deficit down to \$28,930.48 (the carryover loss amount of \$19,602.17 bringing the total amount of deficit going into the 2025 fiscal year to \$48,532.65).
- President Jensen shared that there had been a dramatic drop in giving from what was anticipated for November and December, 2024 (a loss of almost \$20,000). For the year, we are looking at approximately a \$60,000 deficit in expected giving. We are hoping for an increase in giving in the first quarter of 2025, but that is not usually the strongest quarter for giving in the church. If there are no increases in giving, cuts will need to be made to the budget, most likely in programming and/or staffing.
- A question was asked wondering if our staff salaries are comparable to other churches in town. The reply from President Jensen was that, Yes, our staff salaries are comparable to other churches in town.
- At this time, Council, staff, and the congregation took time to celebrate Eric Burckhard for 10 years of service to Zion with a gift and round of applause.
- President Jensen opened the floor to questions regarding the budget.
- A question was asked about where the additional rent in the amendments is coming from. President Jensen shared that it is coming from a 10% increase in rent from the Preschool starting in April, 2025, as well as projected monies from hosting a convention and renting out the building for other groups and events during the year.
- President Jensen shared that we have two options at this time: 1.) accept the budget for this year in draft form at this time or 2.) continue to run on last year's budget and meet again soon to go over and pass a new budget.
- A question was asked about the decreases in staff salaries in the amendments. President Jensen shared that these decreases are coming from decreases in continuing education and a cut in the part time custodial staff which comes in to help Eric.
- A question was asked if staff contracts allow for continuing education at a certain level. President Jensen shared that staff contracts do allow for continuing education, but not a specific level or amount.

- A question was asked about the addition of fees for church school and confirmation. President Jensen shared that Council discussed this and felt that with the deficit budget, we needed to reinstate collecting fees for these programs and needed supplies.
- A question was asked about the possibility of scholarships for families that may not be able to pay those church school/confirmation fees. President Jensen said that Yes, we are hoping to have scholarships available through the help of the Trust Committee if they feel that is something they can fund.
- A question was asked wondering if it would benefit council to wait on a budget or if council would have any more ideas/knowledge on how to draft a better budget if we waited. President Jensen shared that with new council members coming on board, it would be beneficial to pass the budget today.
- A question was asked wondering if we approve the budget today with a large deficit, what that means going forward with having to pay staff and pay bills. President Jensen shared that this budget is not sustainable for the church and difficult decisions will have to be made, likely to cuts in programming and staff.
- A question was asked about cutting part time custodial staff and wondering if we need to bring in an outside source for that, won't it cost more. President Jensen shared that we won't be paying for outside sources to help with that. We are hoping for help from volunteers within the church to take that on.
- A question was asked wondering if we pass a budget today, if we can pass a new budget again in the near future and not have to wait until next year. President Jensen shared that it is possible to call a congregational meeting in order to revisit the budget; we don't have to wait until next year. However, if the Synod gets involved due to the possible cutting of any staff, that could be a lengthy process.
- A question was asked wondering if we could pass the budget today and complete pledge cards again, hoping the congregation would think about increasing their giving now that they know the state of the budget. President Jensen shared that there wasn't a reason we couldn't do pledge cards again; however, Amanda Babcock, Office Manager, shared that she didn't feel it would change much as she only received about 120 pledge cards from the roughly 500 members, so they are already overestimating giving from members based on the number of pledge cards returned.
- John Gruenberg spoke to the difficulty of figuring out a budget and shared that when we look at eliminating positions, he hopes the congregation will take a hard look at those families affected. He shared that Zion has had an associate pastor for a very long time and he feels that our Associate Pastor has been here for Zion and he hopes we will all take that into consideration.
- President Jensen shared that following his discussion with the Synod he cannot speak to that (the topic John Gruenberg was speaking to). He directed the focus back to the budget.
- A question was asked wondering if we pass the budget today, and if there are cuts in staffing, if those will come back to the congregation for consideration. President Jensen shared that it could be the case, that some of those matters could be brought back to the congregation.
- Harry Summers made a motion to approve the budget today, the way it is (and then try to fix it). Motion was seconded by Pat White.
- Before the motion was voted on, some comments were made regarding the by-laws, the Synod being involved in any staffing adjustments, and how different problems would be created if we try to solve a budget problem by cutting staff.
- Luke Schaefer then asked for clarification ~ if the motion to approve the budget was intended for the amended budget ~ and YES, Harry Summers indicated that it was.
- John Gruenberg wanted to provide the congregation with a piece of information and shared that Council recently purchased a \$50,000 CD at First Western Bank & Trust which could be cashed in and used. Even with any penalties assessed, he felt that could help going forward.
- President Jensen asked if there was any further discussion regarding the budget. There was none. He then asked for a vote. Those IN FAVOR of passing the budget ~ 43 members

present and 15 members present via Zoom. OPPOSED ~ 14 present members. Motion passed with a vote of 58 to 14.

- President Jensen brought everyone's attention back to the Ballot/Elections. It was announced that Rondi Deaver, previously on the Ballot for the Trust Committee, agreed to move to a 2 year Council position.
- Harry Summers nominated Rich Jensen, outgoing Council president, to another term. Rich declined due to other ongoing commitments at this time.
- There were no other nominations for the one year council position at this time
- The floor was now opened up for nominations for the Council Youth Member.
- Amy Edwards nominated Kinley Gruenberg for the Youth Council seat. Kinley accepted.
- There continues to be an opening on the Nominations Committee.
- The three nominations for Church Council are now: Harry Summers, Nicole Martin, and Rondi Deaver. Kinley Gruenberg is the nominee for Youth Council Member. Cindy Nordquist made a motion to accept the nominations for Church Council. Trisha Schaefer seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- The three nominations for the Trust Committee are: Zach Aller, Julie Huettl, and Doug Tiedman. Myrna DeMers made a motion to accept the nominations for Trust. Seconded by Jason Sundbakken. Motion carried.
- The two nominations for the Nominations Committee are: Jackie Smith and Kim Tiedman. A motion was made by Theresa Schaefer to accept the nominations for the Nominations Committee. Seconded by Joanne Hendrickson. Motion carried.
- Nominees for the following: Metigoshe Ministries Meeting Representatives ~ Katie Sundbakken and Kristin Sundbakken; WND Synod Assembly Reps ~ none at this time; MSU LCM Reps ~ Diana Stephens and Brooke Plorin. Bruce McLean made a motion to accept all nominees. Seconded by Harry Summers. Motion carried.
- President Jensen pointed out four outgoing members of Council: Melissa Helgeson, Gary Leslie, John Gruenberg, and Matt Stephens. President Jensen is also an outgoing member.
- Pastor Natasha led us in prayer.
- President Jensen adjourned the annual meeting at 1:01pm.

Submitted by Sherry Broderick  
Church Council Secretary  
Zion Lutheran Church