

Zion Lutheran Church, Minot
Church Council Meeting, December 15th, 2025

- Meeting called to order by President, Joe Stenvold, at 6:35pm.
- In attendance at this meeting: Joe Stenvold, Harry Summers, Rondi Deaver, Amanda Winkels, Sherry Broderick, and Pastor Elaine Sveet
- Visitors were recognized: Chris Torgeson and Mike Uran (Treasurer) were in attendance. Joe Stenvold introduced Bruce McLean, spokesperson from the Finance Team.
- Chris Torgeson led everyone in prayer.
- Bruce McLean shared a summary of the Finance Team's recent meeting:
 - Greg Tschetter from Edward Jones was there to talk to them about some options for Zion's investments. The Building Fund investment is at approximately 1.8 million dollars; it has grown by almost \$800,000 since its' inception. Our investment is currently at a 60/40 percentage of equity. Greg Tschetter suggested that if this is a fund that is going to be around for awhile, we should look at adjusting how it is split to a 75/25 equity income. This would mean added income, but some added risk. The Music/Organ Fund is at \$173,000. This fund has been used more heavily starting in 2022 to cover some shortfalls. It is currently at a 56/44 split, which is less aggressive. It was also recommended that we adjust this fund to a 75/25 split. We are hopeful that we won't need to use money from this fund as much going forward.
 - Zion currently has a \$50,000 CD in our portfolio. When that matures, the Finance Team recommended that the funds go back into the Edward Jones Building Fund. We are able to access the funds easier from the Building Fund than the funds in a CD. The funds can be accessed from the Building Fund in 24-36 hours.
 - Bruce also shared that the Finance Team is starting to look at the budget. They will look things over and give Council their recommendations for the budget. He shared that right now, we are about \$12,000 in the black. Giving in December has been lower than budgeted in recent years. If so, that \$12,000 could go away fairly quickly.
 - Bruce McLean then left the meeting.
- No executive session needed tonight.
- Agenda: Items C-G, were added to the Agenda under New Business ~ C. Bylaw Changes, D. Nominating Committee/Chair, E. Edward Jones, F. Pastor's Housing Allowance, & G. Busy Bags. Harry Summers made a motion to approve the updated Agenda. Seconded by Amanda Winkels. Updated Agenda approved.
- The Consent Agenda was reviewed, including meeting minutes from November, the pastor's report, faith formation report, and any staff/committee meeting notes.
 - Amanda Winkels made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda without the Financial Report at this time. Seconded by Rondi Deaver. Consent Agenda approved.
- Discussion was held regarding the Financial Report: Mike Uran shared hi-lites from the Financial Report.
 - November Total Income was approximately \$4,300 above budget
 - Expenses were \$14,000 under budget
 - YTD Offering, item #401, was almost \$4,000 above budget
 - YTD Total Income was \$517,930 vs. a budgeted amount of \$482,741

- Total Income (minus expenses) showed a surplus of \$12,477.04 without the Building Fund transfers for the past two months. It was recommended not to do the transfers again for the next month.
- Amanda Winkels made a motion to approve the Financial Report. Seconded by Harry Summers. Financial Report approved.
- New Business:
 - A. 2026 Budget: Mike Uran reported that he has gotten input from all staff and Pastor Elaine in order for the Finance Team to begin working on the budget. Pastor Elaine sent the payroll report to the Personnel Committee via text as Amanda Babcock has been out ill. The Finance Team plans to finalize their plan/draft budget by January 16th. Council meets January 20th and will need to review and finalize the budget at that meeting.
 - B. Building & Grounds: Building & Grounds has about \$14,000 in anniversary appeal funds to use for new carpet and sign refurbishment at some point. Otherwise, nothing new to report.
 - C. Bylaw Changes: We currently need 10% of confirmed members present/voting at annual and/or congregational meetings to have a quorum. In order to change that number, we would need to present a new recommendation at the annual meeting for congregation approval. After brief discussion, it was agreed that we would table this for now.
 - D. Nominating Committee/Changes: Pastor Natasha was the head of this committee last year. Pastor Elaine would like someone from Council to head this. There is a committee to help with this, but they haven't been organized. It would be nice to have a committee together and ready to meet by the beginning of January if possible. Amanda Winkels agreed to look at the binder of information and see what's involved.
 - E. Edward Jones: Bruce McLean's recommendation on the investments was reviewed. Mike Uran's opinion was to go ahead and do the recommended 75/25 split. Harry Summers made a motion to move to the 75/25 split for the Building and Music/Organ Fund investments. Seconded by Rondi Deaver. Motion approved.
 - F. Pastor's Housing Allowance: A portion of Pastor Elaine's salary is for housing. Pastor Elaine can decide how much of her salary goes into her housing allowance. Pastor Elaine shared that there is an issue with the shingles on their house, and they will likely need a new roof. For this reason, she would like to increase her housing allowance to \$40,000 of her salary. **Amanda Winkels made a motion to approve this increase in the pastor's housing allowance ~ \$40,000 of salary to the housing allowance. This was seconded by Sherry Broderick. Motion approved.**
 - G. Busy Bags: Amanda Winkels wanted to bring up this topic as she feels the Busy Bags, which contain coloring and fidget items for children's use during church, are looking pretty sad. She was wondering how often they are checked and replenished. Chris Torgeson shared that she has a volunteer that does this, but that it hasn't been done in awhile. Chris said that part of her December purchase items will be for supplies for these bags. We also talked about possibly putting a request in the January newsletter for items ~ board books, fidgets, quiet blocks, etc. for these bags. Chris also shared that the worship team is also working on a worship dry erase sheet to follow along with worship to help kids stay engaged. The busy bags should be checked every two weeks if possible. There was discussion about having confirmation students, with adult supervision, help with the bags if needed.
- Joe Stenvold brought up something he heard about not having people's names attached to motions in the meeting minutes. Amanda Winkels shared that they are required to include names with motions at other meetings she attends. Amanda said she would check into this and see if she could find out more specifics for us going forward.

○ Old Business:

A. Staffing Needs:

- Pastor Elaine shared that Luke Schaefer contacted the person that had been interested in the part time admin assistant position. Her employer countered with a better offer that she couldn't refuse, so we are starting over and continuing to look for someone interested in this position.
- Our current PT custodian, Jodi, put in her resignation as the work has become too physical for her. She will be done the end of December. She currently works 10 hours/week. We do have some congregation members with custodial experience, so the plan is to start with them and see if there is any interest.
- We need to start advertising in house for the Youth Leader position which is 3/4 time (9-10 months/year).
- The plan is to first look to fill all positions in-house. If there is no interest, Luke Schaefer (Personnel Committee) would be the one to post the job openings. We will need to look outside for these positions soon if there is not interest in-house. Chris Torgeson will also be contacting people she knows that might have an interest in some of the positions.
- Pastor Mike Parker, who was hoping to help out part time with pastoral care, now has a health diagnosis and will not be available. Pastoral care is still a big need per Pastor Elaine.
- Pastor Daren Erisman will start his Pulpit Supply duties in January.
- Pastor Rachel is currently serving Zion one week per month.
- There is a need for musicians for Christmas Eve services, specifically the 5:30 service which is in need of a pianist. Any ideas should be given to Pastor Elaine.

B. Exxon Oil: Mike Uran shared Zion's anticipated expenses for the well drilling project.

- Zion will be billed approximately \$877/month starting in January. Exxon Oil will invoice monthly or quarterly. We will need to decide where this money will come from. It was suggested that we start a new account just for this purpose and not run the expenses through the regular checking account. Other than this initial money for drilling the wells, the operating expenses should be relatively small.
- It was suggested that we move money from the Building Fund into a new account for all expenses and income relative to this project. The Finance Team would need to oversee this account and monitor it closely. At some point, once there is income coming in, we will need to pay back that initial seed money to the Building Fund.
- Exxon Oil also told Mike that they offer some type of account for expenses/revenue purposes. Mike will try to find out more about this option. He would prefer to think about this and find out more information before making a decision. We will have further discussion and make a decision at the January Council meeting.
- The first production from the wells is anticipated to be by the end of 2026.
- Just to note in the minutes, **Zion Trust's North Dakota Tax Free Fund is eligible for contribution again this year, 2025.**

C. Christian & Vendor Book Fair: No news at this time.

D. Annual Meeting ~ Feb 22, 2026: Already scheduled

E. Council Meeting ~ Feb 24, 2026: Already scheduled

F. Preschool Payoff: We need to get the exact amount that Children's Garden Preschool paid for the handicap accessible door, so we can pay off the balance of what we owe them. It is approximately \$1,900, but we need to get the exact dollar amount and will then proceed with paying off this balance.

G. Food, Faith, Family Community Meal: We are not able to continue at this time due to limited staff, etc.

- Pastor Elaine shared information about the 'F5 Project' which would involve hosting monthly re-entry meals for individuals that have been incarcerated and are

coming back into the community. Trinity Lutheran Church in Bismarck currently does this, and they reached out to Zion. These meals would be separate from FFF meals, not including church members or youth on these evenings. Other community organizations (police, parole, etc.) would likely be involved. There shouldn't be much, if any, expense involved for Zion. Pastor Elaine was wondering if Council would support her getting more information about this program. Council was interested in Pastor Elaine gathering more information.

- Meeting adjourned at 8:31pm
- The next council meeting is scheduled for January 20th, 2026, at 6:30pm.

Submitted by Sherry Broderick
Church Council Secretary
Zion Lutheran Church