



## **2/26/2026 – COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**7:06 p.m. Meeting called to order by Mikel Jones, President**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mikel Jones, Pastor Reggie, Sherri Eriksrud, Ashley Pederson, Kate Peterson, Deb Mangen, Bob Chinnock

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Eric Larson, Kristi Kirsch, Bill Tyler

**7:08 p.m. Devotional:** Deb Mangen (John 3:1-17)

**7:13 p.m. Approval of January 27 Council Minutes**

- Bob Chinnock made the motion to approve the minutes, and Deb Mangen seconded the motion.
- All in attendance at the January meeting approved. No one objected.
- Motion carried.

**7:14 p.m. Pastor Report**

### **Pastor Reggie**

- We are in the process of “offboarding.” Laura had started this process before her departure. Reggie and Sara are now finishing the process of changing logins and references to her. We are trying to figure out what her keys had all been used for.
  - Mikel: How about the Google Account?
  - Reggie: It remains active but has a message communicating that she is not here and redirecting.
- Building update:
  - Carbon monoxide detectors have been updated throughout the church side of the building. Thank you to Bob Chinnock.
  - I installed the new sensors for the Water Heater and Boiler in the Mechanical room, offered by our insurance company, Church Mutual. The sensors are a required monitoring system for our insurance coverage.
  - The alarm had been going out quite a few times in the past few months. Silent Knight was bought out by another company, and the new digital system was not connecting to our lines. The new company has been converting their signals to our mainframe, and the system is required to be reset. They dropped our regular lines and converted to the cellular line. When Cris Nies (electric company) comes again to review the entire board, he will do the hard connection.
- Pastor Reggie and Gretchen Mitcham, SPARK Director, put together a letter for parents and youth regarding behavior. Running can be a safety hazard for others. Gretchen questioned if it was OK

to address children other than our own and the response was, "Yes." An idea to reinforce non-running behavior is to have an area monitor at the office desk for an hour on Wednesday nights.

- We are in an agreement with a Bridge Pastor (Peter Samuelson). He will preach or assist on Sundays for the next 8 weeks. This will allow Reggie to not have to preach all 8 weeks. We have three upcoming baptisms. He will also be here on Tuesdays. His fee is \$400 on weeks he is preaching and \$300 on weeks he doesn't preach. He will be a contractor and has requested mileage. Pastor Peter starts on March 8.
- There have been four memorial services in the past two months (3 in January). Several have been long-time members, including Butch Thompson.
- Pastor Stephanie Luedtke has accepted the Interim Pastor position effective April 21. We are in the negotiation phase of medical and other expenses. The call is for 6 months with the potential of a 2-month extension. The estimated end time is October if we extend a call after the first round of interviews. There are a lot of churches in need of a Pastor so it is possible the process will take longer.

#### **Discussion about medical insurance as part of compensation**

**Reggie**-Pastor Stephanie has asked that we cover a share of the insurance for her entire family. Her husband is also a pastor and his congregation covers half. She is requesting that we cover the other half, estimated at an additional \$3,500 in compensation cost/month. COG has practiced providing medical insurance for the pastor, which is required, but not for other members of their family. It is encouraged (by the Synod) that we also offer medical insurance for family members. Offering insurance for the family has become more common. Pastor Jen Collins had indicated that it is now an expectation that insurance is provided for the entire family and if not, it is often a deal breaker. Pastor Stephanie has a child and when learning that we don't offer full family medical coverage, said that it is a deal breaker for her. Pastor Jen suggested we look at our ceiling and make the top offer we can afford. Using himself, Reggie called Portico and got a quote for reference in checking pricing.

**Mikel**-We need to think about this in the plan for the future Associate Pastor.

**Sherri**-Pastor Laura did not have challenges about compensation in her exit interview other than the fact that we didn't offer full family medical coverage and that was difficult for her when she originally accepted our call.

**Reggie**-If we offer benefit coverage for the family, the expected difference from what was budgeted for the Associate is \$24,000/year.

**Sherri**-Ashley, can you calculate the savings in having a Bridge Pastor for a while before the Interim Pastor and the additional cost of covering full family insurance for Pastor Stephanie and potentially an Associate Pastor? It would be good to see the total change in pastoral compensation from the original budget with all the new information.

**Mikel**-Bringing it back to Pastor Stephanie, we didn't budget for this, but what is the cost of not doing this?

**Bob**-We need to go insurance shopping. He has an independent insurance agent in Chanhassen.

**Sherri**-Are we required to use Portico and do they have levels?

**Reggie-** Portico is suggested by the ELCA but I believe we have the option to use other avenues. There are levels and we use the top (most expensive) level. To cover Pastor Stephanie's compensation including insurance will cost us \$2,000 above our budget. Another option is to give the top amount we can offer but less than her request for insurance.

**Sherri-**Reggie, what would you suggest?

**Reggie-**I would like to offer her \$3,500 maximum towards insurance. There doesn't need to be a rush and Pastor Stephanie indicated we could take some time.

**Kate-**Some of the Council won't be in the discussion at the next meeting as they will be rolling off. She pointed out that we need to think about the budget. If offering goes down and expenses are up, we need to review the budgets before fall programming. If we had known this at the time of budgeting, we might have made adjustments and cuts.

**Sherri-**Agreed that we need to look at the financial data from the total budget impacts of the staff compensation changes and potentially decide where to make cuts.

**Reggie-**The Council has the ability to vote to spend more on a staff member's compensation than what was budgeted (up to 10% than what was written in the budget).

#### **Conclusion of the Discussion**

- Ashley will work out the spreadsheet for us to review and then we will make a decision.
- Reggie will follow up with Pastor Stephanie to let her know we are working on the benefits consideration and present an updated contract.
- We will need to consider changing our compensation to include benefits coverage for an entire family for pastoral contracts.
- To keep the budget on track, we will need to consider Associate Pastor candidates with 1-5 years of experience.
- We will want to look at other insurance coverage options in addition to Portico going forward and consider which tier level we cover.

#### **8:24 p.m. Financial Updates: Ashley Pederson**

We kept this discussion abbreviated because of the length of time spent on the pastoral benefits. The group was encouraged to reference Ashley's financial report.

#### **Questions from the financial report**

**Mikel-**Why are we out of money for Confirmation and Connect?

**Ashley-** They already spent the money on Fall programming, and we did not budget for more.

**Sherri--**What are the remaining expenses?

**Reggie-**Buck Hill tubing trip, End of year party, Feed My Starving Children benevolence. We will be over by \$1,000 before the end of the program year.

**Sherri-**We should remember that and budget for the entire year accordingly next year.

**Bob-**Why did we charge less of a rent increase for Preschool Place than what was expected in the budget?

**Ashley**-We used an estimated consumer price index and it ended up being higher than the actual index. It varies up or down at the end each year.

**Bob**-A contract needs to be established for the next 3 years.

**Ashley**-We are meeting with Bank Vista to have lunch (Reggie and Ashley). Ashley will ask for a resource for a lawyer to help us write the contract.

**Mikel**-Reggie has an interim Building Coordinator coming to help us set up the structure for the position. She can help with the website, planning, and pricing. Sara Wheeler is the candidate. She was a referral from a member and has experience in this type of work. She had rented space at our church for a birthday party and thought it was underpriced. Reggie is going to meet with her next week, and we will hire her as a contract employee. She will only be in the position a short time to help us get it set up. She is in the current hourly rate and will work approximately 6 hours/week.

**Sherri**-Are we raising building rates?

**Reggie**-That will be one of the things she gives us a recommendation on.

**Mikel**-Will the web platform she suggested be a recurring fee? Will she suggest costs we haven't planned for?

**Reggie**-There shouldn't be an additional platform fee? This is what she does so I expect a full recommendation of the structure and costs.

Mikel has volunteers ready for a building use committee as well.

**8:35 p.m. Old Business:** Mikel Jones, President

#### **Solar update**

- We are not pursuing solar because we would need to input more money than feasible.

#### **New Member Support**

- Mikel and Ashley are finalizing a financial report overview for new Council members. This document will be sent to new members once completed.
- Reggie is sending out the Job Description and Ground rules.
- Sherri suggested sending both of those documents out together to be streamlines.
- Reggie shared that we used to use a binder. Several members had interest in that going forward.

**8:42 p.m. New Business:** Mikel Jones, President

#### **Call Process**

- Several people have come forward to Mikel and Reggie to express interest in participating.
- Mikel found 5-7 as the ideal Call Committee size in his online research.
- Reggie thinks 9-10 is a good size.
- Deb-We need an odd number.
- Mikel-Reggie has a vote that weighs more than the regular vote so we can have an even number.
- Reggie-I suggest we let the spirit move the process. If there are more volunteers than we want, we sit down and meet with people to let them know that we have too many participants and cover the time requirements.
- Mikel-Is it true that no one on Council should be on the Call Committee?
- Reggie-That is not a hard guideline that he knows of.

- Deb thinks that the three people leaving council have great insight and hopes they would consider being on the Call Committee. Kate has already volunteered.
- Bob-Question on demographics. Need a wide span of demographics. If we get too many people and we cut the group, please make sure we keep a demographic spread.
- Reggie-We did that when looking for Council members and it worked great.
- Mikel is making a spreadsheet for that process.
- Reggie-Knowing that Pastor Stephanie doesn't get here until April, we need to discuss what this means for the current Call Committee process. We are inviting Pastor Jen to come to the March Council meeting to discuss this. After we have the Bridge Pastor in place, I will be more able to focus on this process.
- Kate-When calling the last Senior Pastor (Reggie), there were several listening sessions in advance to establishing the Call Committee to hear from a bigger group on ideas of what we need. She suggested that we do that process right now.
- Reggie talked to Pastor Stephanie about this, and she shared that a suggested practice is to conduct round tables. The focus is "who are we calling."
- Bob has heard about the process in the past that there is first a large group to discuss what we need and the Call Committee might come out of that.
- Reggie would like to ask Pastor Jen and Pastor Stephanie what they would suggest in these next two months as next steps.
- Bob asked about utilizing our Bridge Pastor for this process.
- Mikel wants to make sure we communicate the timing of the process to the congregation.
- Kate is concerned about waiting until Stephanie starts to begin the process.
- Bob-When we called Pastor Laura, he recalls that we had two outstanding candidates and wants to know if we can track the other candidate down.
- Reggie said she is no longer in the Synod.
- Sherri asked if recruitment is allowed since Pastor Laura was recruited.
- Reggie clarified that Laura was allowed to go because she had a past relationship with the calling congregation. The Synod does not like it when churches go out looking on their own and want churches to follow the rules.
- Sherri said that the synod already broke the rules.
- Bob indicated that Laura shouldn't have been able to leave so close to the end of her sabbatical and that was allowed so another rule was broken.
- Mikel added that we need the support of the ELCA in this process so we should stay in the good graces of the synod.
- Reggie-When we were interviewing for Pastor Laura's call, Reggie had calls from several colleagues in ministry about the interview and were interested in being candidates so he thinks our congregation will be appealing to a candidate pool.

### **Dishwasher**

- Mikel-There will be a dishwasher proposal that Mikel will help with.
- Bob-Can we affirm that we actually need a dishwasher?
- Reggie-If we had a dishwasher, we could cultivate rent from professional bakers who would work here from 4:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m. but we can't without a dishwasher.
- Bob-Are there potential renters?
- Reggie-Yes there are potential people who would move forward.
- Mikel-It is just a proposal. We have a gift on the table that could be used for it.

**Pastor Reggie Annual Review**

- Pastor Reggie has asked for an annual review.
- Mikel will send out a request for feedback.
- It will be scheduled in March.
- Sherri will be involved.

Reggie highlighted the Worship Arts team and a donor who purchased purple cloths.

**9:16 p.m. Closing**

**Next Meeting:** A Doodle Poll will be sent out to determine the date of the next meeting. He will refer to the March 2025 meeting minutes to know the order of transition during the meeting. He will provide group updates via email.

**Devotion for the March meeting:** Mikel Jones

**Closing Prayer:** Pastor Reggie

**Motions:**

- Kate moved to close the meeting.
- Sherri seconded the motion.
- No discussion.
- All members present approved the motion.

*Submitted by Sherri Eriksrud 3/15/2026*