



September 2025 Council Meeting Minutes **DRAFT**

Date: 09-09-2025	Time: 6:30 PM	Location: Fellowship Hall and Zoom
Those present are indicated in bold: Pastor Steve Olson, Pastor Dan Nelson, Deacon Savannah Olaphson, Kelly Meyers (Church Administrator), Tom Getchius (President), Julie Maes (Vice-President), Kirsten Stenoien (Treasurer), Rick Ites (Financial Secretary), Kim Whalen (Secretary), Jennifer Johnson (Adult Faith Formation), Emily Sienkowski / Karina Nelson (Children's Education), Amanda Ropchak (Evangelism), Bev Osekowsky / Ruth Lunde (Parish Fellowship), Jolene Engler / Nicole Seieroe (Middle School Youth), Ellie Scheler (High School Youth), Lou Hernandez (Property), Kelly Robert (Social Ministry), Jim Andreen (Stewardship), Eric Lovestrand (Worship, Music & Arts)		
Call To Order: 6:35 PM	Devotion: Tom G.	Adjourned: 8:27 PM Jim motion Eric 2nd
Approval of August Minutes: Bev O. motion, Kirsten S. 2nd, all voted to approve		

Action Item	Who	Status	Expected Completion
Update the proposed motion not to allow non-member use of space (that is not non-profit or for-profit)	Kelly M.	In Progress	September 2025
Write a proposal for an updated slate of bylaws, including a change to the Service & Justice name. Pastor Steve is helping look at the constitution	Kim W.	In Progress	November 2025
Gather volunteer information for your committee, including whether chair(s) will be open next year	All	In Progress	Sept 2025
Propose Bingo callers, especially local celebrities	All	In Progress	Sept 2025
Talk to your committees about ideas for using Memorial funds and other relevant funds	All	In Progress	Sept 2025
Communications re: income concerns	Rick, Jim, Kirsten	In Progress	Nov 2025
Work on 2026 budgets	All	In Progress	Oct 2025

CHURCH CONSTITUTION (Pastor Steve)

- Pastor Steve has proposed edits to align Immanuel's constitution with the 2022 model constitution.
- Additional work is required to ensure alignment with ELCA 2025 model constitution, which was just updated this week.
- The most significant proposed change is allowing for the office of the Deacon. Other changes are relatively minor.
- Approval steps for updating the constitution:
 - (1) Approve edits by the council (today)
 - (2) Review by the Synod and adjust if needed
 - (3) Approval by the Synod
 - (4) Congregational forum plus two meetings to vote (one to approve, and one to ratify). Since we deviate from the model in some cases, we need a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority vote.

MOTION: Jim A. moved to approve the constitution as amended, with the adjusted language to 11.0.3., Lou H. seconded. Amanda abstained due to arriving late, and everyone else voted to approve.

CALL COMMITTEE UPDATES (Kim W.)

- The call committee anticipates two interviews with Pastor Dan, and has scheduled the first one for the first week of October.

MEMORIAL POLICY APPROVAL (Kirsten S.)

- The memorial policy will establish a committee to report to the Financial Secretary and assist in managing memorial giving and purchases.

MOTION: Kim W. moved to approve the new Memorial policy as written. Eric seconded, and all voted to approve.

ATTENDANCE AND FINANCIAL UPDATES

Attendance - Rick I.

- August had the highest in-person attendance percentage for the year.
- We had the highest attendance for a 12-month period since 2021.
- Attendance has been rising for 4 years in a row.
- Pastor Steve mentioned that continued strong attendance after the retirement of a beloved pastor is a strong indicator of a healthy congregation.
- See attached attendance and giving documents.

Giving - Rick I.

- Looking at a 12-month rolling period, we are about \$28,000 lower than the previous 12 months.
- Based on analysis of 12-month rolling periods, giving seems to be trending downward.
- Rick I. and Jim A. are planning Temple Talks to help shore up giving.
- We had some discussion about whether Amplify migration has affected giving, but Kelly M. shared that everyone has been successfully migrated.
- Kelly M. offered to pull some reports comparing pledges with giving.
- Pastor Steve suggested including a letter with the 3rd quarter giving statements.

Financial Statements - Kirsten S.

- Expenses are easier to predict, but lower Income makes it look worse.
- We are over budget in benevolence and building, and under budget for personnel.
- We expect to be over budget in utilities this year, so we will need to consider this when budgeting for 2026. Need to consider 3 years prior instead of 1 when budgeting.
- Kelly M. suggested committees take the time to look at their departmental reports through August, and ask for additional details if they have questions about any numbers. Pay attention to monthly differences in expenditures as you plan your budget for 2026.

VOLUNTEER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT (Tom G.)

- Tom will engage with the nominating committee. Trying to get out ahead of it.
- The nominating committee will reach out to people ending their first term to see if they are interested in serving a second term.
- Adjustments to the Bylaws are in progress and will likely be proposed at the next meeting.

WELCOME WEEKEND (Amanda R. and Pastor Dan)

- It may be a little light in volunteers, but they seem to be filling in.
- If you are around Saturday or Sunday, please wear your name tag and find ways to jump in and help.
- It's the first time doing Bingo and Tent Meeting without Paul and MaryKay, so there will probably be unanticipated needs.
- Council is asked to help with Tent Meeting ushers.
- Still need Bingo callers.
- We will do a vigorous debrief after the weekend to help plan better for next year.
- Invite your neighbors!
- Working with Prop to collaborate on last-minute publicity.
- Grace P. is planning fun family activities.

- There will be a staffed area for children during worship.
- We need more volunteers to serve the meal after the service on Sunday.

STAFF AND PASTORAL UPDATES

Kelly M.

- Amplify has over 75 members who have requested an account.
- Everyone, go to Amplify page, request account, and download new App.

Deacon Savannah

- A new, expanded care team comprised of staff and lay leaders is anticipated to help us do a better job with visits and caring ministry.

Pastor Steve

- Thanks for the time off to go to the Black Hills with family. They also have a Joshua Tree trip planned for MEA weekend.
- Pastor Steve and his wife Diane are grateful for the welcome they have received at Immanuel.
- Pastor Steve is excited to jump into Evangelism once we get past the Tent Meeting weekend. He encouraged council members to watch for visitors and help make them feel warmly welcomed, as this is a good time of year for growing membership.
- The all-clergy conference is coming up for Pastor Dan, Pastor Steve, and Deacon Savannah.

Pastor Dan

- See the welcome weekend information already shared above.

OTHER TOPICS (VOLUNTEER NEEDS)

- Need volunteers for Welcome weekend
- Need more volunteers in general.
- Reach out to Kelly M. with any issues related to volunteering. As a team member, if you need to see who has volunteered, Kelly can help set up your access.

WRITTEN REPORTS

Adult Faith Formation - Jennifer J.

- Wednesday evening Adult Ed begins after Welcome Sunday, using a Dr. Molly Worthen study with a video component. This study is intentionally ecumenical and brings understanding to who we are as Christians across the denominations.
- Prayer and Praise will resume meeting on Tuesday mornings after Welcome Sunday. They are reading Falling Upward by Richard Rohr.
- Wednesday morning women's Bible study begins September 10 with 1-2 Peter: Living Hope in a Hard World by Lydia Brownback.
- Saturday morning Bible study continues to dig deep into Acts.

- SALT has a joint meeting with Social and Justice on advocacy in September.
- Book Club meets monthly with 5-10 people who come and go, and don't attend every time. Christianity isn't the focus, but is a shared connection between members. The group chooses the books.

Children's Education - Emily S. / Karina N.

- Sunday School Registration Counts:
 - PreK-K: 22 kids
 - 1st-4th: 51 kids
 - God Squad: 23 kids
 - 10:30am: 11 kids
 - Not registered: 12 kids (these are kids who have attended in the past and will likely show up / register late)
 - This is made up of about 50 families, with 3-4 of them being new!
- Trunk or Treat is planned for November 1st, but it isn't being promoted much yet.

Parish Fellowship - Bev O. / Ruth L.

- Extensive planning/preparations are underway for the Sunday picnic that follows the Tent worship service, Welcome Weekend. Efforts are being made to recruit enough volunteers. A grill was purchased, which is an improvement over what was a rented grill in previous years.
- Planning is underway for Wednesday Cafe, which begins Sept 10. We are still trying to find a leader for the team that earlier was led by Karen Nelson. We also need more volunteers for each of the four teams.
- Working on getting volunteers to serve Beverages on Sunday mornings (coffee, lemonade, etc) and to provide Treats.
- Planning is underway for the Smorgasbord, which will be Friday December 5th.
- After a review of electrical, two heavy duty extension cords were purchased, which are important when there are large food events at Immanuel.

Social Ministry - Kelly R.

- We are planning a Game Night for November 1 (after trunk or treat) as a benefit for Cristo Obrero. We will have beverages there from the Lions Club, Everything Bundt Cake, and Hot Dog dinners for sale (all proceeds will go to CO). We are hoping to do a match for donations as well with S+J funds designated for Immigration but that is TBD
- We updated committee job descriptions
- We just started the process of creating a ministry assessment tool as the next step in being intentional and strategic in the ministries and champions we partner with. An "intake" form/process will be the next initiative.
- Survey results will be a part of the annual report. We also requested they be a part of Stewardship month

Worship, Music & Arts - Eric L.

Worship Service & Music

- **Reformation Choir** began rehearsals on Tuesday, September 3, at 7:30 pm, in preparation for singing at the September 7, 9:00 am service.
- **Special music groups** are becoming more common in our services thanks to Kyung's outreach to members with God-given musical gifts. Examples include our brass trio with an additional trombone, as well as solos by our wonderful newer member, Ryan Swanson.
- **Volunteer awareness**
 - Discussion about expanding awareness of volunteer opportunities for Altar Guild, Ushers, Communion Helpers, etc.
 - I now have access to the church app to see who has signed up or where there are openings.
 - A "vendor fair" was discussed (tables in the Narthex hosted by key longtime volunteers). Date TBD.
- **Music rehearsal schedule** is set for Reformation Choir, Cornerstone, Epiphany Choirs, Servant Song, and Holy Communion Bands.
- **Plants for the front altar** are being purchased this week or next. A fund to support these purchases was discussed but not yet decided.

Art and Event

- **Community Mural** – We are planning to hang the mural in the Fellowship Hall next week. I am working with Darl on the best way to hang and protect it.
- **Future Events & Exhibits** – Ongoing discussions include hosting events and art exhibits, organ concerts, along with community music and art outreach in partnership with other churches.

ATTENDANCE								
(1)	2025		IN PERSON	LIVE-STREAM	TOTAL	IN PERSON	LIVE-STREAM	
		JAN	1,126	735	1,861	61%	39%	
		FEB	1,137	629	1,766	64%	36%	
		MAR	2,204	1,003	3,207	69%	31%	
		APL	2,688	1,125	3,813	70%	30%	
		MAY	1,145	549	1,694	68%	32%	
		JUNE	1,687	1,068	2,755	61%	39%	
		JUL	910	468	1,378	66%	34%	
		AUG	1,143	414	1,557	73%	27%	
		SEPT						
		OCT						
		NOV						
		DEC						
	YTD	JAN	1,126	735	1,861	61%	39%	
		FEB	2,263	1,364	3,627	62%	38%	
		MAR	4,467	2,367	6,834	65%	35%	
		APL	7,155	3,492	10,647	67%	33%	
		MAY	8,300	4,041	12,341	67%	33%	
		JUNE	9,987	5,109	15,096	66%	34%	
		JUL	10,897	5,577	16,474	66%	34%	
		AUG	12,040	5,991	18,031	67%	33%	
		SEPT						
		OCT						
		NOV						
		DEC						
	2024					63%	37%	
(2)		AUG	MONTH	3 MO	6 MO	12 MO	2 YR	12MO/2YR
		2020	2,054	6,057	12,926	27,306		
		2021	2,081	5,219	13,915	33,384	60,690	0.55
		2022	1,388	4,432	13,332	28,114	61,498	0.46
		2023	1,446	4,194	12,565	26,415	54,529	0.48
		2024	1,244	4,772	12,317	26,814	53,229	0.50
		2025	1,557	5,690	14,404	29,181	55,995	0.52

AUGUST		AUG					
MONTH		BUDGET	ACTUAL	DIFF			
WEEKLY	4000	\$ 90,800	\$ 63,708	\$ (27,092)			
LOOSE	4010	\$ 1,600	\$ 552	\$ (1,048)			
SPECIAL	4020	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -			
MISC	4030	\$ -	\$ 957	\$ 957			
THRIV.	4050	\$ 150	\$ 55	\$ (95)			
FACILITY	4070		\$ -	\$ -			
FID DIV	4090	\$ 667	\$ 826	\$ 159			
FID STOCK	4091		\$ -	\$ -			
THRIV INT	4100		\$ -	\$ -			
		\$ 93,217	\$ 66,098	\$ (27,119)			
YTD		BUDGET	ACTUAL	DIFF			
WEEKLY	4000	\$ 777,000	\$ 828,849	\$ 51,849	(1)		
LOOSE	4010	\$ 10,800	\$ 10,539	\$ (261)			
SPECIAL	4020	\$ 6,346	\$ 6,129	\$ (217)			
MISC	4030	\$ 33,550	\$ 41,491	\$ 7,941	(1)		
THRIV.	4050	\$ 3,800	\$ 3,226	\$ (574)			
FACILITY	4070	\$ 520	\$ 150	\$ (370)			
FID DIV	4090	\$ 5,336	\$ 6,502	\$ 1,166			
FID STOCK	4091	\$ -	\$ (744)	\$ (744)			
THRIV INT	4100		\$ -	\$ -			
		\$ 837,352	\$ 896,143	\$ 58,791			
			\$ 870,340	\$ 59,790	(1)		
			\$ 25,803	\$ (999)	OTHER		
12 MO		2025	2024	2023	25 VS 24		
WEEKLY	4000	\$ 1,209,781	\$ 1,238,283	\$ 1,175,163	\$ (28,502)		
LOOSE	4010	\$ 15,331	\$ 25,515	\$ 8,335	\$ (10,184)		
SPECIAL	4020	\$ 11,981	\$ 22,933	\$ 20,367	\$ (10,952)		
MISC	4030	\$ 43,180	\$ 53,053	\$ 53,527	\$ (9,873)		
THRIV.	4050	\$ 3,869	\$ 3,957	\$ 1,327	\$ (88)		
FACILITY	4070	\$ 150	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 150		
FID DIV	4090	\$ 8,878	\$ 1,993	\$ -	\$ 6,885		
FID STOCK	4091	\$ 14,618	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,618		
THRIV INT	4100	\$ 53	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 53		
		\$ 1,307,841	\$ 1,345,734	\$ 1,258,719	\$ (37,893)		
12 MO	AUG				\$ (37,893)		
	JUL				\$ (26,542)		
	JUNE				\$ (21,193)		
	MAY				\$ (3,452)		
	APL				\$ (34,348)		
	MAR				\$ (37,291)		
	FEB				\$ (49,341)		
	JAN				\$ (33,773)		