



ATONEMENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

Annual Congregational Meeting

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2026

Reschedule Note

The Annual Meeting was originally scheduled for Sunday, January 25, 2026 at 12:00pm, but was rescheduled due to snow and cold weather for the following week, Sunday, February 1st.

Welcome

Cathy Dykman-Acinger opened the meetings with a welcome at 12:05 p.m. and Pastor Zac Sturm delivered an opening prayer. A quorum of at least 80 voting members was verified.

Atonement Foundation Meeting

Greg Smith (Atonement Foundation President) called the Atonement Foundation Meeting to order, received approval for last year's meeting minutes, gave an update of the increased financial position including the contributions to the Foundation and the grants awarded over 2025, and then closed the meeting. The Foundation Meeting minutes were recorded separately by David Lind (Atonement Foundation Secretary).

Atonement Congregational Meeting

Cathy Dykman-Acinger (Atonement Council President) called the Atonement Congregation Annual Meeting to order.

Approval of Meeting Minutes — Neil Pfeiffer (Secretary)

The minutes from the previous four congregational meetings were included with the 2025 Annual Report for review. May (05-18-2025) minutes pertained to the Atonement's annual Election Meeting. For the June (06-22-2025) special meeting, the congregation voted to approve contracting with Horizons Stewardship for strategic plan development and stewardship coaching using the Next Level Generosity program. In October (10-26-2025), the Congregation voted to update the Welcome Statement and become a Reconciling in Christ

(RIC) partner congregation. And the November (11-16-2025) special meeting approved securing a renovation loan with Mission Investment Fund plus to extend our contract with Horizons Stewardship to also include a capital campaign.

Motion to Approve Congregational Meeting Minutes

RESOLVED, to approve the Congregational Meeting Minutes from four (4) meetings, including the Election Meeting on May 18, 2025, and three Special Congregational Meetings on June 22, October 26, and November 16, 2025, as submitted to the congregation in the 2025 Annual Report.

Moved by: **Keith Mundy**

Seconded by: **Curtis Klaassen**

No discussion. Voting was conducted by voice vote: **all Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carried.**

Treasurer's Report — Mike Daley (Treasurer)

On balance, the financial position as we closed 2025 and moved into 2026 was solid and is a great place to start from as we launch the broader financial initiatives that Atonement has planned for 2026.

At year-end for 2025, the ending operating deficit was only \$5,000, which was the lowest in recent history for Atonement. We fell short of budgeted general giving by 2% when not including direct giving to Campus Sustainment, called out on a separate line. Including both together, giving was higher by \$116,000 — which is remarkable and we really appreciate everyone's efforts and commitment to your pledges and going above and beyond in 2025.

Expenses for 2025 were managed extremely well and we stayed \$8,000 less than budget.

Campus Sustainment is being managed extremely well, and we were able to handle major repairs needed in 2025. The year started with a balance of \$190,000, with direct contributions plus our budgeted \$150,000 savings for the year, minus major repairs to the Fire System, the Building Automation System, and gas & water lines, we still were able to end with an increased balance of \$200,000.

Benevolence for 2025 also was strong, when adding together all dedicated gifts like Lenten giving to the Lutheran Disaster Fund, Project 1020 matching, MLM, etc. plus our line items for the Central States Synod and general outreach & benevolence, we totaled an amount of over \$127,000 (over 9% of total annual giving) that went beyond the walls of Atonement.

A new change for 2026 is the constitutional requirements for the Audit Committee, specifically the period they have complete the annual financial audit, with the changes shown on page 47 of the 2025 Annual Report. These changes were recommended by the Treasurer and Finance Committee, helping extend the deadline from the first 14 days of January to complete the audit before the January Annual Meeting, instead to 120 days after (May 1st) the end of the previous fiscal year, with 30 days following (May 31st) to submit the audit to the congregation. Extending the deadline to match standard corporate reporting helps to alleviate stress on the Finance Team; they will still endeavor to provide the congregation with unaudited financials in January and the completed Audit Report each year in a timely & secure manner. This change was unanimously approved by the Atonement Council on December 18, 2025.

For the 2026 Budget, the presented expense amounts are \$57,000 higher than 2025, which includes the one-time Horizons cost of almost \$33,000, reduced overall cost of salaries due to not replacing the Director of Outreach, and increased individual salaries and benefits to match inflation. Pledges for 2026 were up 5% over 2025, which allows for planned giving to also increase by \$57,000 and for the council to present a balanced budget.

Motion to Approve 2026 Budget

RESOLVED, to approve the proposed 2026 Operating Budget for Atonement Lutheran Church, as submitted to the congregation in the 2025 Annual Report.

Moved by: Randy McColley

Seconded by: Brad Anderson

No discussion. Voting was conducted by voice vote: **all Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carried.**

Synod Delegates — Cathy Dykman-Acinger (President)

This year's Central States Synod Assembly will be held online via Zoom for one day on June 6th. The floor was opened for individual to volunteer who would like to attend on behalf of Atonement. Cathy and Neil volunteered as members of Council, with Lyn Bowers and Beth Eland volunteering as members of the congregation. Kay Linney also volunteered as an alternate should anyone not be able to attend.

Motion to Approve 2026 Synod Delegates

RESOLVED, to approve Cathy Dykman-Acinger, Neil Pfeiffer, Beth Eland, and Lyn Bowers as the 2026 delegates to attend the Central States Synod Assembly.

Moved by: Shari Ommen

Seconded by: Greg Smith

No discussion. Voting was conducted by voice vote: **all Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carried.**

Open Questions

What is the status of the line of credit with Mission Investment Fund, ELCA?

Mike Daley gave the update that Atonement is in the final stages of the closing of the loan and he doesn't foresee any issues with finalizing the paperwork and getting the loan finalized.

One of the recommendations from Horizons Stewardship was changing the timing of the Fiscal Year from Jan-Dec to something more aligned with the program year of the church. Is that moving forward and what can we expect in the coming months?

Mike Daley responded with the benefits of starting the year in June or July, plus that we have done early planning and that it is not a small amount of work, so didn't want to rush into it. The finance team is continuing to investigate lining up all the details needed, including amending the constitution, preparing a 6-month or partial year budget, adjusting the financial reporting – the congregation can plan there will be more details to come as it progresses.

How has our membership and worship attendance been doing over the past year?

Pastor Zac responded that, like our balanced financial position at the moment, membership and attendance are also balanced, with slightly positive numbers of growth. Attendance is almost matching pre-pandemic in-person levels, which is encouraging. Including livestream and online, total engagement is higher than pre-pandemic.

The staff offices moved from the 1962 building up into the main portion of the building, how has that gone and is there more left to do?

Pastor Zac answered that the overall impact has been very positive and creates flexibility for what to do with the space from the old offices and original Sanctuary going forward. Mostly the move is complete, everyone is in their new spaces, with only minor items left to repair or finish.

How are we managing the water issues with the bridge and parking lots?

Toni Pearson responded that the water issues are planned to be addressed with the parking lot repairs and improvements during the capital campaign.

How are we proceeding with Strategy, outreach, and collaboration with other Churches?

Pastor Zac responded with those are great questions that transition nicely into covering them in his Pastor's Remarks.

Pastor's Remarks — Pastor Zac Sturm (Senior Pastor)

The engagement with Horizons Stewardship has three prongs: Next Level Generosity, the Capital Campaign, and Strategy. The Next Level Generosity team at Atonement is fully trained and operating, they are wrapping up their consultation period with Horizons, and the congregation should start seeing their efforts at work soon. The behind-the-scenes and pre-work for the Capital Campaign has already kicked off and is gearing up for the full campaign work that the congregation will experience in the spring, starting around April and May. The Strategic team has done quite a bit of work, broken into different areas of focus including communications, the Sunday morning experience (what someone new experiences from the first time they pull into the parking lot, enter the building, participate in worship, and the personal engagement after service), plus furthering develop the characters of Sam & Emma and what Atonement is doing to attract them and address their needs. In March, there will be a one-day retreat for the Strategy team and Council to come together and start to converting ideas into a plan.

A second thing we have been looking at is collaboration with other congregations that are also looking to increase our collective mission and outreach. A congregation with which we are in very early collaboration is Salem Lutheran Church, and we will be bringing more information and ideas to the congregation as the year progresses—most likely starting with some shared collaboration between congregations for the Lenten Midweek services leading up to Easter.

A third thing that is wonderful to share is that during the early partnership with Horizons, they sent out a survey of how our members feel about our staff and lay leaders at Atonement. The responses were 100% positive, which is wonderful. Horizons had never seen that before, so kudos and deep gratitude to our staff and leaders for all their dedication and passion.

President's Remarks — Cathy Dykman-Acinger (President)

Cathy continued with her thanks in that “one the blessings of serving is receiving”, and in servicing as your council president, she has received so much. She sent out the call that for anyone called to serve, to say yes and you will get back everything that you give.

Cathy followed with saying thank you to everyone in the congregation for their generosity. She is so blessed and thankful to be apart of such a giving group of people with an abundance of generosity. She has been a member of this congregation for many years – and this past year, the congregation made three significant decisions in the past year: to become an RIC congregation, we decided to hire Horizons to help us look at ourselves, and that we decided to stay in this place and make the needed capital improvements and repairs.

As Cathy has gotten to know each of the staff more personally — she has become even more thankful for each person, for all they do and the gifts they bring to Atonement each day. Cathy encouraged each of us to thank the staff and pastors ourselves, and to share our appreciation and the courage they demonstrate every day.

“Rooted and Relevant” is an appropriate mission for us this next year—that even though it is a great time, it is a time of continuing change and reflection which may be uncomfortable but will lead to great things. With that, Cathy thanked everyone and encouraged everyone to continue finding new ways to celebrate and to be church together.

Closing

Cathy Dykman-Acinger (President) closed the meeting and asked **Pastor Jordan Stone** to end the meeting in prayer, Pastor Jordan invited the congregation to cross the aisles, join hands, and recite the Lord’s Prayer. The meeting ended at **12:50 p.m.**

Recorded by Neil Pfeiffer, Secretary: 02/01/2026

Approved by Congregation: 05/17/2026

