

Palm Valley Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes April 15, 2026

Attendees: Dave Smith, Sue Rue, Susan Ames, Vince Brunssen, Carolyn Koehn, Linda Reed, David Beck, JB Getz, Rick Salvo, Mary Wallin, Kathy Erwin, Jane Baxter, Scot Donovan, Anita Hulsman, Pastor Dave Koppel, Jen Kendrick, Executive Administrator

Excused: Barry Hamilton

Guests: Joy Kovar, Deborah Franke, Otto Pfahl, Laurie Denchik

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Dave Smith at 6:29 pm followed by Pastor Koppel offering a prayer

2. Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda

- Vince Brunssen motioned for the agenda to be approved and JB Getz seconded the motion. Following questions concerning inclusion of Fall Fair on the agenda. It was decided to discuss it later in the meeting. **The motion carried.**
- Carolyn Koehn motioned for the consent agenda to be approve and JB Getz seconded. **The motion carried.**

3. Devotion

Vince Brunssen provided a devotion based on Luke 12:13–34 (“Where Your Treasure Is”), emphasizing heart posture, trust over fear, stewardship, unity, and avoiding division/mistrust.

Reflection question posed: If the council truly trusted God’s provision, what would they do differently?

4. Minutes, reporting cadence, and committee updates

- Council Secretary Susan Ames shared a plan to get council minutes to the congregation in a timely manner.
 - Plan: Members of council will receive minutes by email Friday night to read over the weekend and send edits.
 - Minutes will be posted by Tuesday/Wednesday after council.
- Carolyn Koehn motion for the minutes of the Called Congregational Meeting of April 12, 2026 to be approved JB Getz seconded. **The motion carried.**
- The council expressed appreciation for staff/volunteer reports, especially Kelley’s detailed work and the “Grace in Action” brochure-style document.
- Concern was raised that Kelley (part-time staff) has been stepping in to chair committees lacking volunteer leaders (notably Funeral Committee and Community Care.) The council discussed the need for volunteer leadership.
- The President reminded members that they should serve on teams but not as the leaders.

- There was a request to receive GRACE night team reports the week after the meeting so council and the congregation can stay informed on team concerns and actions.

5. Executive Administrator and Financials - Jen Kendrick

Finance report highlights: March attendance slightly up vs last year; giving/income strong and above budget; expenses through February slightly over budget.

- Sue Rue motioned to approve the financial report as presented and Anita Hulsman seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**
- Personnel contra accounts will be trued up by the end of April once staff raise amounts are finalized. Jen clarified that raises were not yet reflected in either expense lines or contra.
- Unrestricted fund snapshot (as of April 10) was reviewed with a current total just over \$2M. Items already allocated/committed from unrestricted funds included: remaining sanctuary/CLC refresh
 - \$450k associate pastor allocation
 - \$191,960 for budget support
 - \$29k regular maintenance support
 - \$30k external audit.
 - Remaining unallocated amount cited around \$871k (approximate due to interest/growth).
 - A question raised about investment growth/interest since funds are invested with Davidson; Jen to follow up and provide figures.
- A member group presented concerns to the Executive Team about budget discipline, report structure, oversight, and contra accounts.
 - Staff and Executive Board analysis concluded most concerns are already addressed or reflect philosophical differences.
 - Contra accounts defended as proper reporting and helpful for non-finance audiences. Methods to avoid double-counting income in budget reports were explained.
 - Recommendation: make no reporting/process changes until external audit results.
- Audit proposals are being solicited and one proposal has been received from (Ratliff & Associates.) Additional proposals are pending (Dunagan/Jack and Somerville & Associates, plus other referrals). Emphasis will be on finding a high-quality, independent, church/nonprofit-experienced firm and avoid a “rubber stamp” audit.

6. Policies, special funds, facilities, and operational decisions

- Benevolence policy presented was to close an audit observation regarding lack of process and requirement documentation for internal (ex: church staff or congregational members) benevolence awards. was clarified as an internal policy requested by the prior audit and is focused on handling requests from members/friends/staff for assistance
- Telander fund was clarified as the funding source and not restricted to internal-only benevolence. External/community requests have been funded historically.

- Council requested a complete policy to review that included policy and process for both internal and external awards including frequency limits for staff requests. It will be carried forward as continuing business.

7. Cemetery operations policy

- Linda Reed motioned to approve the Cemetery Policy with revisions and Carolyn Koehn seconded. **The motion carried.** The revision included an update to prevent block/multi-plot purchases for resale).
- Cemetery coordinator: Jan Cleveland volunteered to serve as cemetery coordinator. She is a retired licensed funeral director. Her background check has been completed. Follow-up items include providing her with a computer and email setup.

8. Special funds clarity

- Jen presented fund-type definitions (restricted, designated, special, endowed) and a color-coded inventory.
- Cemetery fund research Jen reported minutes trace back to 1894 in Swedish. In 1972 actions suggested the cemetery fund became principal-protected/interest-only and renamed as an endowment-type fund. Jen requested Davidson calculations on current spend availability.
- Discussion noted cemetery road project needs may be constrained if principal-protected. The council and cemetery team will pause until numbers are confirmed.
- Trinity Place fund: Documentation indicates donor restriction is “care of seniors,” but principal-protection/interest-only status is unclear in the document. Council acknowledged there is an institutional memory vs written record gap. Next step proposed was update or generate an accurate governing funds document (the one on the council website is acknowledged as incorrect) and bring it to council for review/approval.
- Council discussed the frequency and value/tranches that we should follow to move funding from our unrestricted funds to church money market. This allows us to cover operating fund requirements as approved in our 2026 budget. While the total amount approved is \$192,000, Council agreed that we will make quarterly transfers with the latest information for quarterly estimates. Quarterly estimates allow us to consider variances in revenue and expense as well as timing variances. Vince Brunssen motioned to transfer funds from unrestricted for budget balancing on a quarterly basis based on need, not to exceed the annual amount (~\$192,000) Carolyn Koehn seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

9. Facilities urgent maintenance

- HVAC replacement (two units) and rusted gas line under sanctuary presented as safety/continuity risks; total quoted ~\$48,314.
- Carolyn Koehn motioned to fund first ~\$4,697 from the Isadore & Pauline Wallin/Yardley major maintenance interest (income-only) and the remainder from unrestricted funds JB Getz seconded the motion. **The motion carried.**

10. AI team update

Proposed creating an online presence for event rentals using a commission-based platform (no upfront cost; commission taken only when bookings occur.) Coordination will be needed with office staff workflow, website link and banking setup. Since this was for information only no vote was taken.

11. Strategy, congregation engagement, stewardship, and dates

- Celebrations highlighted: strong Easter services (including indoor move), cross-service musician collaboration, and combined confirmation service.
- Discussion on reshaping council agendas to align more explicitly with strategic priorities (one body, small groups, supporting people) rather than leading with financial topics.
- Desire expressed for more outward/community focus (benevolence/loving neighbor) and prioritizing a smaller set of aligned outreach activities.
- Council President encouraged members to attend different worship services (traditional, Rejoice, and Hispanic service) to strengthen unity.
- Stewardship conversation: Council members expressed interest in communicating financial giving encouragement across services. Anita Hulsman offered to explain the importance of connection cards and their purpose.
- Proposal discussed to model leadership in giving by reporting the council's total pledge/giving (aggregate) during stewardship season through the Echo's lite publication.
- Jane Baxter suggested tithing/giving away a portion of estate/unrestricted funds to community organizations. A short discussion identified the need for a selection process.

12. Key dates

- Senior Banquet May 3 (council expected to attend; spouses welcome)
- next council meeting May 20 at 6:30
- May CIC roles Early Anita Hulsman; Late Susan Ames
- Devotion Rick Salvo.

13. Adjourn

Sue Rue motioned to adjourn the meeting and Carolyn Koehn seconded. **The motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned 8:26 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted April 17, 2026,

Susan Ames

Palm Valley Lutheran Church Council Secretary

Approved through digital communication 04/19/2026