

Palm Valley Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting Minutes

July 15, 2026 | 6:30 p.m.

Attendees

Susan Ames, Jayne Baxter, David Beck, Vince Brunssen, Kathy Erwin, Barry Hamilton, Scot Donovan, Anita Hulsman, JB Getz, Linda Reed, Mary Wallin, Rick Salvo, Dave Smith, Sue Rue, Pastor Dave Koppel, Jen Kendrick (Executive Administrator)

Excused Absence

Carolyn Koehn

Guest (Zoom)

Joy Kovar

1. Call to Order

President Dave Smith called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Pastor Dave Koppel opened with prayer.

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion: Kathy Erwin motioned and Sue Rue seconded to approve the agenda.

The motion carried.

3. Devotion

JB Getz shared a devotion about faith, hope, and patience, reflecting on Psalm 40 and God's faithfulness through difficult seasons. He shared a personal testimony emphasizing that God answers prayers in His timing. Council members were encouraged to continue trusting God as they make decisions for Palm Valley Lutheran Church.

4. Consent Agenda

Motion: Rick Salvo motioned and JB Getz seconded to approve the Consent Agenda.

The motion carried.

5. Executive Administrator Report

Executive Administrator Jen Kendrick presented attendance and financial reports.

Attendance

- Worship attendance continues to exceed 2025 numbers.
- Attendance has increased for approximately thirteen consecutive months.
- June 7 showed particularly strong online participation.
- Council discussed possible reasons for unusually high attendance in 2023, concluding that online participation following COVID likely contributed.

Financial Report

Executive Administrator Jen Kendrick reported:

- Member giving through June is approximately \$24,000 below budget.
- Early July giving has been encouraging.
- A one-time gift of \$17,000 was received in July.
- Major maintenance continues to reflect delayed air-conditioning replacement expenses that are scheduled for completion in July.
- Preschool operating funds required a transfer from Preschool Savings to Preschool Operating to offset expected summer cash-flow shortages.

Donor Restricted Gift

Council was informed of an anonymous donor restricted gift totaling \$50,000:

- \$25,000 designated for the Cemetery Team.
- \$25,000 designated specifically for Traditional Worship & Music.

A new donor-restricted fund has been established to properly account for the gift.

Financial Discussion

Council engaged in an extensive review of June financial reports.

Discussion included:

- The Council reviewed a variety of financial and accounting matters as part of its regular oversight responsibilities. Discussion included the timing of building rental income and credit card processing transactions to ensure revenue is recorded in the appropriate accounting period. Council also received clarification on the use of contra accounts and how they are used within the church's financial reporting.
- Additional discussion focused on personnel and operational accounting, including retroactive salary adjustments related to recently approved staff raises, payroll allocations for cemetery employees, and the distinction between operations and ministry personnel expenses. The Executive Administrator also provided updates regarding outsourced accounting services and ongoing efforts to maintain accurate and transparent financial records.
- Council reviewed designated funds and ministry-related expenditures, including major maintenance funding, Trinity Place expenditures, memorial fund balances, endowment disbursements, youth camp funding, and flower fund accounting. Other items discussed

included Council support expenditures and registration costs for the Global Leadership Summit. These discussions were informational in nature and were intended to provide Council with a clear understanding of the church's financial position and accounting practices.

- Following discussion of existing monthly reports, Vince Brunssen stated that current reporting was not sufficient for Council's needs and requested development of an additional financial dashboard, including the current unrestricted fund balance, activity within major funds, significant fund transfers, overall financial position, and expenditures related to major projects. Jen Kendrick agreed to look into the request for future Council consideration.
- Executive Administrator Jen Kendrick reported the final payment from the Lange Trust of \$349,500.00 has been deposited in unrestricted funds.
- Budget templates for 2027 will be prepared and distributed to ministry leaders during the August GRACE night.

Council members expressed appreciation for the detailed financial explanations.

6. Budget Actions

A. Sanctuary/CLC Refresh Expense Reallocation

Council discussed expenses of \$2,340.00 for 12 in-ear monitors at \$195.00 each, purchased for each member of the Rejoice worship team. Council agreed they should be paid from the previously approved Sanctuary/CLC Refresh allocation rather than the Rejoice Team operating budget.

Motion: JB Getz motioned and Sue Rue seconded to reallocate \$2,340.00 for Rejoice in-ear monitors to the previously approved Sanctuary/CLC Refresh project funding.

The motion carried.

B. Xperience Tour Hospitality

Council discussed meal expenses incurred while hosting the Xperience Tour ministry group. It was determined these hospitality expenses more appropriately fit Community Care funding.

Motion: Vince Brunssen motioned and Rick Salvo seconded to reallocate \$314.17 in Xperience Tour meal expenses to the appropriate Community Care/Missions fund.

The motion carried.

7. Celebrations

Pastor Dave Koppel shared a number of encouraging signs of growth and engagement within the life of the congregation. Members gave thanks for three recent baptisms, celebrating God's work through the sacrament and the opportunity to welcome new members into the faith community. Vacation Bible School was recognized as a tremendous success, with strong participation from

children, volunteers, and families. Council also celebrated Palm Valley's presence in the community through its participation in the local parade, noting the positive visibility it provided. Several visitors have since attended worship after seeing the congregation in the parade, and new families continue to visit and become engaged in the life of the church.

Council also discussed opportunities for future ministry and outreach. An additional mission trip to Puerto Rico is being explored in partnership with Cross Trails Ministry, providing another opportunity for members to serve and build relationships through mission work. Adult faith formation continues to grow as well, with the Monday morning Bible Study expanding to fourteen regular participants, reflecting a strong desire for ongoing spiritual growth and fellowship.

Council welcomed Pastor Dave Koppel back following his vacation and expressed appreciation for the ministry provided during his absence. Members shared positive feedback received from the congregation regarding guest preacher Rev. Jennifer Obermueller, whose message and leadership were warmly received and appreciated by worship attendees. Overall, the Council celebrated these milestones as evidence of God's continued blessings and the congregation's growing impact within both the church and the surrounding community.

8. Associate Pastor Call Process

Pastor Koppel reported that the Call Committee has completed and submitted all required paperwork to the Synod, marking an important milestone in the call process. The position has now been published nationally, expanding the search for qualified candidates. The committee has already received two candidate profiles for consideration, and a third prospective candidate has indicated an intention to submit an application. Pastor also shared that one potential candidate chose not to pursue the opportunity after declining the bishop's invitation. To ensure the process continues without delay, the Call Committee has scheduled regular meetings through November, if needed, to review candidates and conduct interviews. The congregation will continue to receive updates on the progress of the call process through Echoes, providing ongoing communication while maintaining the confidentiality appropriate to the search.

9. Financial Administrator Update

Executive Administrator Jen Kendrick reported Becky Bannister started this week serving as the Financial and Administrative Assistant.

Jen reported:

- Becky has begun training successfully.
- She has completed initial deposit processing.
- She is assisting with audit preparation.
- Staff integration has gone very well.

Council welcomed Becky and expressed appreciation for her work.

10. Sanctuary & CLC Refresh Update

Council reviewed the Sanctuary and CLC Refresh project status.

Discussion included:

- Remaining project balance
- Carpet installation schedule.
- Remaining contingency funds.
- Volleyball use within the Christian Life Center.
- Protection of newly installed LED screens.

Property Committee Referral

Council discussed possible methods to protect the screens, including:

- Heavy retractable curtains.
- Protective screens.
- Plexiglass alternatives.
- User liability agreements.

Consensus was reached to refer the issue to the Property Committee for recommendations before any further action.

Jen Kendrick also noted that insurance coverage will be reviewed with the church's insurance carrier during the upcoming annual renewal meeting.

11. Appointment of the Treasurer

Motion: Rick Salvo motioned and Mary Wallin seconded to extend profound thank you to Mike Koehn for serving as our congregational treasurer for the past eight years.

The motion carried.

Motion: Dave Smith motioned and David Beck seconded to appoint Kathy Erwin treasurer for the congregation effective August 1, 2026, until a new treasurer is appointed by the elected council in 2027.

The motion carried.

12. Synod Mission Support Discussion

Council reviewed information concerning previously budgeted Synod Mission Support and other benevolence payments that had not been distributed during 2025 due to an accounting oversight at multiple levels including Executive Administrator, the Finance Team, the Executive Board, and the Council. The Council discussed the distinction between mission support funded through the Endowment and mission support included in the church's annual operating budget. The Executive Administrator presented the review of the matter, explaining how the omission of certain mission support commitments occurred during the budgeting process. Susan Ames

encouraged the Council to view the financial gifts as gifts for God's kingdom. She suggested the Council consider supporting the non-profit organizations who rely on charitable donations and were accidentally omitted from the budget, noting that Palm Valley Lutheran Church can do so without compromising its long term financial stability. The Council discussed a proposal to use unrestricted funds to fulfill the missed mission support obligations, ensuring that the designated organizations would receive the intended financial support.

Motion: Sue Rue motioned and JB Getz seconded to transfer \$60,000 from unrestricted funds to fulfill Palm Valley's 2025 and 2026 Synod Mission Support obligations.

The motion carried.

Motion: Susan Ames motioned and Sue Rue seconded to pay the \$7,000.00 to five non-profit ministries, from unrestricted funds. The specific ministries are: SWTX Synod - Campus Ministry TLU (\$1,400.00), ELCA - World Hunger (\$1,300.00), RR Area Serving Center (\$1,300.00), Meals on Wheels (\$1,300.00), and WELCA - Lutheran World Relief (\$1,700.00).

The motion carried.

13. Adjourn

Motion: Sue Rue motioned JB Getz seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

Minutes respectfully submitted July 16, 2026,

Susan Ames

Church Council Secretary

The minutes were provided electronically for Council to review, and edits were made as needed.

Motion: JB Getz motioned to approve the minutes as edited, and Sue Rue seconded.

The motion carried July 26, 2026 through an online vote of the majority of council members.