



Council Budget Meeting Minutes

Jan. 4th, 2026 @ 10:15 AM

In Person/Zoom Option

1. Call to Order: Michelle Rhodes – Vice President
 - a. Vice President calls the meeting to order: Time_10:13 AM_
 - b. Take Attendance.
Diane Herron (President), Michelle Rhodes (Vice President) Kent Mueller (Treasurer), Rich Tarter (Secretary), Jeff Tisdell, Renee Stafford, Pam Johnson, Bonnie Brix, Don Streiff, Sally Rakovec, Alivia Schiferl, Pastor Heather Brown
 - c. Handout Financial Review from Kent.
2. Devotion: Rich Tarter: Proverbs 16:9
3. Opening Statements: Michelle
4. Financials: Kent – Summary 2025:
 - a. Financial Status Overview – Due to end of year giving, FLC met and exceeded its budgeted and actual expense amounts for 2025: Contact Kent for the 2025 financial documentation for a comprehensive breakdown. A few items are pending and will be added into the documents as they are received. This was great news given that the 2025 budget was a “deficit” budget.
 - i. Kent will provide a 2025 financial summary report for the February Congregational meeting.
 - ii. December general giving was very strong at \$56,455. 2025 general giving was \$315,936, an \$18,928 increase over 2024. With this strong giving, the 2025 income exceeded operating expenses by \$20,751.
 - b. The Capital Campaign gains met its goals for the year. This was also great news.
 - c. Thank you notices recommended to be published in the bulletin in upcoming services thanking the congregation for their generosity for both the general giving and for the capital campaign gains.
 - d. A balanced budget, and not another deficit budget, for 2026 is recommended to be presented to the congregation at the February Annual meeting.
5. Financials: Kent – Budget 2026
 - a. Where are we at? How much is needed to balance? – We ended up with an actual-expenditure balanced budget for 2025. Discussion items include:
 - i. Giving increased approximately 6% last year.
 - ii. Budgeted expenses came in lower-than-expected last year
 - iii. Concerns discussed for possible infrastructure acquisitions and available avenues/accounts for payments, i.e. elevator maintenance, gray water uplift pump, snow plowing and removal, new and replacement computers as well as AV and media equipment needed for performances and streaming, etc.
 - iv. Discussion on licensing requirements for software/computer needs, internet access, and music/choir performances.
 - v. Discussions on service and sacrament needs for the year, to include interim pastors, travel, bulletins, etc.
 - vi. A review of each team’s 2026 budgeted needs.

- b. Groups Creative Ideas:
 - i. Discussion items include:
 1. Thrivent card usage by teams.
 2. Other funds, i.e. Undesignated Memorial/Endowment funds, outreach.
 3. Bulletin Sponsorship – Outside entities advertising in the bulletin and pre-service slide shows.
 4. Encourage more online giving – More consistent monthly acquisition pattern.
 5. Requests for overall increase in congregational giving.
 - a. Review of giving patterns and amounts, by specific groups such as age.
 6. Cut ELCA yearly contribution – Currently giving is at 8.5%.
- 6. Review: Maintenance Sheet, Personnels Recommendation to Council on Budget Deficit, Capital Improvement Fund Policy, Strategic Growth Committee.
 - a. Further Discussion:
 - i. A 5-10 yr FLC planning committee was recently voted into existence at the end of 2025.
 1. Possibly have this group manage the overall Capital Campaign across all groups for better coordination and consistency.
 2. Possibly study and proactively work with congregational giving trends and inconsistencies across age groups.
- 7. Finalization of a Balanced Budget:
 - i. Anticipated expenditures for 2026 - \$333,878, which is about a 6% increase from 2025 actual expenditures, with council aiming for a \$315k budgeted amount for 2026.
 - ii. Recommendations for FLC to reach this goal:
 1. Have teams continue to utilize and enhance the use of Thrivent card rewards.
 2. Encourage a slight increase in congregational giving:
 - a. If each giving family/person were to increase their giving amount by just \$2 per week, or about \$100 per year, we would meet our budgeted goal.
 3. Reduce the ELCA contribution percentage from 8.5% to 5% - Project approximately an \$11k yearly FLC budget savings.
 4. Plea/information to members who are not giving yearly to consider starting a giving plan for FLC.
 5. Continue the Capital Campaign events. This was a 3-year trial, which ends this year.
 6. Publish overall offering trends to the congregation. Information would not target individuals or families, but would provide information such as overall top ten or 15 dollar amounts given by age group, normalized dollar amounts given by age group, etc. Information that would be helpful for a person or family to decide what a good amount might be to give for a church offering. To be published semi-yearly or quarterly in the newsletter and/or bulletin; or sent with quarterly or yearly statements.
- 8. Adjourn: I, Pam motion to adjourn this meeting. 2nd Don
- 9. All in favor? Aye All, Nay 0 Motion Passes