

**New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Congregational Council Meeting Minutes**  
**December 19, 2024**  
**6:30 pm**

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1. Call to Order at 6:41 p.m.
2. Attendance: (\* = excused absence; <sup>o</sup> = late arrival)

Becker, Edward	Gross, James	Staub, Pastor Scott
Becker, Monique	Hauser, D. Martin *	Wise, Jeff *
Eisenhart, Steven	Peto, Yvonne *	White, Nancy
Geiser, Scott	Rothermel, Todd	
3. Devotions
  - a. Pastor Scott opened the meeting with a prayer.
4. Approval of Minutes from the November Regular Council Meeting  
The minutes were unanimously approved: Monique Becker motioned; Jim Gross seconded.
5. Approval of Minutes from the December 8 Special Congregational Meeting  
The minutes were unanimously approved: Monique Becker motioned; Pastor Scott seconded.
6. Committee Reports: (\* = report on file; <sup>o</sup> = no meeting/no report; <sup>+</sup> = no report submitted)

a. Audit <sup>+</sup>	h. Fellowship <sup>+</sup>	o. Mutual Ministry <sup>+</sup>
b. Building Fund <sup>+</sup>	i. Finance <sup>+</sup>	p. NYG <sup>+</sup>
c. Cemetery <sup>+</sup>	j. Flutter <sup>+</sup>	q. Personnel <sup>+</sup>
d. Christian Ed <sup>+</sup>	k. Garden of Hope <sup>+</sup>	r. Property <sup>+</sup>
e. Constitution <sup>+</sup>	l. History & Archives <sup>+</sup>	s. Stewardship <sup>+</sup>
f. Endowment <sup>+</sup>	m. Memorial Fund <sup>+</sup>	t. Swamp Picnic <sup>+</sup>
g. Evangelism <sup>+</sup>	n. Mission Svc/Social Min. <sup>+</sup>	u. Worship & Music <sup>+</sup>
		v. 325th Anniversary <sup>+</sup>
5. Steve noted that the Memorial Fund has approximately \$800-\$900 of undesignated funds that have been designated by the families “to help others” and for “the greatest need” and asked where it should be directed. After some discussion, a motion was made that it be moved to the General Fund Benevolence for disbursement per recommendation by the Mission Service Board.  
The motion was unanimously approved: Ed Becker motioned; Monique Becker seconded.
6. Steve requested if it was acceptable to have the balcony rail polished in anticipation of the 325<sup>th</sup> anniversary. After some discussion about where the money might come from, it was determined that with the 2025 anticipated deficit, now is not an appropriate time to spend money on a non-urgent matter.
7. Property
  - a. Jim reported that he will be getting three comparable quotes for replacement for the sanctuary air conditioning system.
  - b. Jim reported that the Storage Room leak will be investigated by a gutter contractor in the near future.
  - c. Jim reported the Property Committee elected to discontinue the mowing of the baseball field

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and the lot between the former parsonage and the Feick property. Jim asked Pastor Scott to let the farmer know that he can mow these areas along with the other fields he currently mows.

- d. Jim reported that the committee will be investigating the current facility use policy.
- e. Several thermostats will be replaced with lockable ones to prevent tampering.

8. Committee Action Items

- a. Committees - please work with your Council liaisons/chairpersons to bring Council pertinent information to meetings.
- b. Please provide all scheduled meeting information (onsite, offsite/online) to Susan Gutshall or Todd Rothermel to add to the church calendar (Google Calendar)
- c. If your Committee/Board has a recommendation for Council, or something that needs to be discussed with the Council, please let Todd Rothermel know in advance of the meeting. He will add it to the agenda.
- d. Keep Committee work at the committee level. Council meetings are not where Committee/Board work should be performed.

9. Staff Reports

- a. Pastor noted that during his November vacation the staff was instrumental in keeping things running smoothly. He is pleased with the fact that the current staff can step in when other staff needs to be out for various personal reasons.

The minutes were unanimously approved: Monique Becker motioned; Ed Becker seconded.

10. Treasurer's Report

- a. Ed reported that the total deficit as of November 31 was \$71,600.00.
- b. He also noted that income at the end of November (92% of the year) was at 100.6% and expenses were at 95%.
- c. Ed noted that the current value of the Endowment Fund is \$1.16 million dollars.
- d. Todd shared that there will be more of an effort to keep the financial situation in front of the congregation, noting that there has already been an increase in giving since this has been a priority.

The treasurer's report was unanimously approved for audit: Steve Eisenhart motioned; Scott Geiser seconded.

11. Unfinished Business and Prior Meeting Action Items

- a. Parking Lot:
  - i. Food Ministry Space Usage (Jim)
  - ii. Additional Sound System Training (Steve)
  - iii. Benevolence vs. Debt (Finance)
  - iv. Directional Signage (Steve)
  - v. Reconciling in Christ (Pastor)
  - vi. Solar Energy research (Property)
  - vii. Unconventional Building Usage Requests (Jim)
  - viii. Pictorial Directory (Nancy)
  - ix. Historical Record Digitization (Steve)

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- b. Completed Recently:
  - i. Congregational approval of 2025 proposed General Fund budget
  - ii. Congregational approval of a loan up to \$680,000 to initiate the Learning Center ministry
- c. Ongoing Actions:
  - i. Learning Center
    - Todd reported that since the New Hanover Township Board of Supervisor's waived the traffic impact fee and the favorable congregational vote on December 8, the project is moving forward. Steve is in the process of securing the building permit and finalizing the contract for construction and Ed is working to finalize the loan.
  - ii. Food Ministry Board
    - Todd reported that the Loaves and Fishes budget is moving into the red and that the NAP grant is expected late this year.
  - iii. Reconciling in Christ
    - Todd reported the following events:
      - Sunday January 12 - "Taking a closer look: What the Bible does and doesn't say about homosexuality"
      - Sunday January 19 - "Allyship"

12. New Business

- a. Todd noted that there will be three existing council members going off at the end of 2024 (Jim, Steve, Jeff) and reported that the following have agreed to serve:
  - i. Brian Tracey
  - ii. Adam Hubley
- b. Todd raised several issues related to the Cemetery including equipment maintenance, new equipment purchases and the attitude and demeanor of the caretaker. Some discussion ensued about the existing policies and procedures that are in place and it was decided to continue the discussion at the Executive Committee level as more information becomes available. Jim noted that there is a meeting scheduled in January to review the Cemetery board finances.
- c. Todd noted that in 2025 constitution updates will be required. He is working with Harry White on this and will send his suggestions to the council.
- d. Todd shared that Maria Boyer was requesting guidance on how the Pastor's salary and housing are split. Pastor requested that the housing portion be \$44,000 and the salary be \$39,289. These amounts were unanimously approved: Pastor Scott motioned; Ed Becker seconded.

13. Council Highlights (from this meeting)

- a. Finance continues to monitor the 2024 Annual Budget against actuals. Currently we are running a total deficit YTD as of November 30 of \$71,600.00. Total income at the end of November (92% of the year) was at 100.6% and expenses were at 95%.
- b. The approved 2025 General Fund budget is a *deficit* budget of ~\$60,000. In order to eliminate the deficit, provide for timely benevolence payments, continue programs, and maintain our staff the Council is strongly encouraging each giving unit to increase giving to the extent possible by 20%. On average across all giving units this equates to \$7/week, \$30/month, or \$361/year. Please consider your giving for 2025. The Council has committed to giving increases by a majority of its members.

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- c. A Special Congregation Meeting was held on Sunday December 8th immediately following the worship service. Congregation approved the 2025 Proposed General Fund Budget as well as and the Learning Center initiation/loan approval.
- d. The election of new members to the 2025 Congregation Council will take place at the congregational meeting on February 23, 2025. If you are interested in serving, please notify any present member of council.
- e. If you unlock a door for church access, lock the door behind you. Doors have been left open causing a security risk.
- f. Giving/offering envelopes - if you do not need offering envelopes please see Scott Geiser or Susan Gutshall (Simply Giving, other electronic giving)
- g. Space utilization - please let Susan Gutshall know if you are planning to use any church space for events and meetings

16. Next Council Meeting: Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 6:30 pm.

17. The Council Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The adjournment was unanimously approved: Nancy White motioned; Monique Becker seconded.

18. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.