

New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2025
6:30 pm

1. Call to Order at 6:34 p.m.
2. Attendance: (* = excused absence; ^o = late arrival)

Becker, Edward	Gross, James	Staub, Pastor Scott
Becker, Monique	Hauser, D. Martin	Wise, Jeff
Eisenhart, Steven	Peto, Yvonne	
Geiser, Scott	Rothermel, Todd	
3. Devotions
 - a. Pastor Scott opened the meeting with a prayer.
4. Approval of Minutes from the January Regular Council Meeting
The minutes were unanimously approved: Todd Rothermel motioned; Marty Hauser seconded.
5. Committee Reports: (* = report on file; ^o = no meeting/no report; ⁺ = no report submitted)

a. Audit ⁺	h. Fellowship ⁺	o. Mutual Ministry ⁺
b. Building Fund ⁺	i. Finance ⁺	p. NYG ⁺
c. Cemetery [*]	j. Flutter ⁺	q. Personnel ⁺
d. Christian Ed ⁺	k. Garden of Hope ⁺	r. Property ⁺
e. Constitution ⁺	l. History & Archives ⁺	s. Stewardship ⁺
f. Endowment ⁺	m. Memorial Fund ⁺	t. Swamp Picnic ⁺
g. Evangelism ⁺	n. Mission Svc/Social Min. ⁺	u. Worship & Music ⁺
		v. 325th Anniversary [*]
6. 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.
7. Standing Board Officers Approval
 - a. Todd reviewed several but not all of the Standing Board liaisons, chairpersons and officers and the following was determined:
 - Building Fund:
 - James Gross - President, Steven Eisenhart - Secretary, Scott repa - Treasurer
 - Food Ministry Board:
 - Stieven Weidner - President, Sharon Tracey - Secretary, Todd Rothermel - Treasurer
 - Picnic Grove Board:
 - Sally Sugita - President, Sally Sugita - Secretary, Kelly Hauser - Treasurer

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- Memorial Fund:
 - Steven Eisenhart - President, Jo Anne Wirt - Secretary, Jo Anne Wirt - Treasurer
- Mission Service Board:
 - Scott Geiser - Treasurer
- Peer Support Fund:
 - Monique Becker - Treasurer

The board officers were unanimously approved: Ed Becker motioned; Scott Geiser seconded.

8. Staff Reports

- a. Monique thanked Pastor Scott for his staff coordination during this time of construction.
- b. There was no further discussion on the staff reports.

The staff reports were unanimously approved: Marty Hauser motioned; Yvonne Peto seconded.

9. Treasurer's Report

- a. Ed reported that the deficit as of January 31 is \$13,486.51.
- b. Ed reported that as of January (8% of the year), the income was at 7.9% and expenses were at 9.3%.
- c. Ed noted that the Finance Committee will be including financial information in the weekly bulletin.

The treasurer's report was unanimously approved for audit: Monique Becker motioned; Jeff Wise seconded.

10. Unfinished Business and Prior Meeting Action Items

- a. Parking Lot:
 - i. Food Ministry Space Usage (Jim)
 - ii. Additional Sound System Training (Steve)
 - iii. Directional Signage (Steve)
 - iv. Solar Energy research (Property)
 - v. Unconventional Building Usage Requests (Jim)
 - vi. Pictorial Directory (Nancy)
 - vii. Historical Record Digitization (Steve)
- 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. Cemetery Endowment Fund
 - Todd noted that he provided the Board with the job descriptions and informed them that they need to reorganize and provide the names to the council.
 - Todd also shared that he will be attending the next Board meeting in an attempt to get them moving in a positive direction.
 - Jim noted that the Cemetery Board met with Cornerstone and the meeting was positive. They will be applying policies similar to the Endowment Committee.
 - Jim reported that he got a list of equipment, but it is not complete. There is no recommendation at this time for a new tractor.

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- ii. Property
 - Jim reported that the committee is still working on pricing for the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall AC units.
 - The gutter on the South side of the storage room and West side of the Fellowship hall will be replaced in hopes of solving the leak in the Storage Room.
- iii. Learning Center
 - Steve noted that construction is going well, in spite of a few surprises always uncovered during demolition in an existing building. Now that demolition is over and new work is beginning, the surprises should be over.
 - Steve also noted that his effort to obtain the building permit exhausted his already-low proposal for construction phase services. Steve explained that the plan reviewer was very thorough and raised several questions which required Steve to do extensive code research in order to prove that the building is in compliance with the current code. This research ultimately saved the church a lot of money in unnecessary work. Steve requested an additional \$3,800 to cover this extra cost, bringing the total for his services to \$13,800. Marty suggested that it be extended to \$15,000 to make sure there were sufficient funds to cover Steve's services. All were in agreement. The increase was approved: Marty Hauser motioned; Monique Becker seconded; Steve Eisenhart abstained.
 - Todd asked about how to pay the Mininger first invoice since the loan has not been finalized yet. Answer = from the General Fund; it will be tracked in the LC account and paid back when the loan is finalized.
 - Ed noted that the Truist loan should be finalized by next week.
- iii. Food Ministry Board
 - Todd reported that the Loaves and Fishes budget is in the red and that the NAP grant (\$25,000) was received earlier this month.
 - Todd noted that grant writing continues in hopes of increasing funds.
- iv. Reconciling in Christ
 - Pastor noted that there is a need to listen more to the concerns of folks who think the program is being "forced" upon the congregation.
 - He also noted that the emphasis is on simply loving people, not requiring that one agree with an alternative lifestyle.
 - Pastor shared that a survey will be included in the bulletin this Sunday to understand the congregation's feeling about the program. He read the survey questions to the group and the survey form collection process was reviewed.
 - Todd noted that eventually this process will culminate in a congregation vote.

11. New Business

- a. Todd reported that the Learning Center Team would like to establish a Learning Center Board of Directors approval. The board has established the following positions:
 - i. New Hanover Family Center Director
 - ii. Educator (preferably early childhood)
 - iii. Accountant or business manager
 - iv. NHELDC Director of Children, Family and Youth (or proxy)

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- v. NHELCC Pastor
- vi. NHELCC Church Council Liaison
- vii. NHELCC Property Committee Liaison
- viii. Two members at large (preferably a student's parent and a church member who is not a parent)

The Board positions were unanimously approved: Todd Rothermel motioned; Monique Becker seconded.

- b. Todd reported that the Learning Center Team would like to get approval of the Learning Center Director Job Description, which was provided to the Council prior to the meeting.

The Learning Center Director Job Description was unanimously approved: Todd Rothermel motioned; Marty Hauser seconded.

- c. Todd asked for approval of the 2024 Annual Report to take to Annual Congregation Meeting. The Annual Report was unanimously approved: Todd Rothermel motioned; Monique Becker seconded.

- d. Todd asked for approval of the of nominations to be on the ballot for the 2025 year:

- i. Andy Van Dyke
- ii. Edward Becker

The nominees were unanimously accepted; Todd Rothermel motioned; Yvonne Peto seconded.

- e. Todd requested that the following be approved for membership:

- i. The Singley family (Dee, Kyle and children Alivia, Cady)
- ii. James Dawson
- iii. Carolyn Springer

The prospective members were unanimously approved; Monique Becker motioned; Ed Becker seconded.

- f. Todd shared that Director of Children, Family and Youth timeline toward pastorship

- i. Her Clinical Pastoral Education will be completed in May 2025
- ii. She will develop a Child Safety policy in concert with the Learning Center Team.
- iii. January 2026 Synod/ELCA endorsement possible (to officially administer sacraments)
- iv. June 2026 classes complete, enter internship (local, but maybe not NHELCC)

- g. Todd noted that Pastor Scott wishes to retire at the end of 2025 and that we need to begin planning for our future pastoral needs. He suggested that an Ad Hoc Transition Committee be formed to begin to study and search for the next Senior Pastor candidate. He suggested that this occur by March 2025 for Council approval.

- i. He noted that through initial conversations with the Synod, there are no Interims or Bridge Pastors available. Therefore, we'll be charting our own course in the search for a pastor.
- ii. Todd asked how to communicate this to the congregation? Answer = a letter sent to each member. Pastor will write the letter.
- iii. Monique Becker agreed to chair a Transition Committee. Steve Eisenhart suggested he would support the committee. A minimum of 5 to 6 members representing a good cross-section of the congregation demographics should comprise the committee.

12. Correspondence

- a. Thank you letter from the Gemma Services for our \$500.00 check. (December 18, 2024)

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- b. Thank you letter from the Frederick Living for our \$500.00 check. (December 18, 2024)
 - c. Thank you letter from the ELCA for our \$1,643.94 donation to Lutheran Disaster Response (December 26, 2024).
 - d. Thank you letter from American Foundation for Suicide Prevention for our \$500.00 check.
 - e. Thank you letter from Family Services for our \$250.00 check.
 - f. Thank you letter from the ELCA for our \$1,537.00 donation to ELCA ministries. (February 7, 2025)
 - g. Thank you letter from the ELCA for our \$1,854.00 donation to Lutheran Disaster Response (February 7, 2025).
 - h. Thank you letter from the American Heart Association for our \$500.00 check.
 - i. Yearend giving report from Bear Creek Camp showing \$1,000.00 in donations during 2024.
 - j. Yearend giving report from “41 Days” showing \$500.00 in donations during 2024.
13. Upcoming Events
- a. Congregational Meeting and Dinner: Sunday, February 23, 2025 following worship.
 - b. Picnic Grove Spagehtii Dinner: Saturday, March 15, 2025
 - b. Council Reorganization Meeting: March 20, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
14. Council Highlights (from this meeting)
- . Finance continues to monitor the 2025 Annual Budget against actuals. Currently we are running a total deficit YTD as of January 31 of \$\$13,500. Total income at the end of January (8.3% of the year) was at 7.9% and expenses were at 8.3%..
 - a. The recently 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 in 2025. The Council has committed to giving increases by a majority of its members.
 - b. The 2025 Council will have 8 Councilmembers out of 12 expected positions. Council members may be appointed by the standing Council at any time of the year to 1, 2, or 3 year terms. If you have interest in serving as a Councilmember please talk to any current Councilmember.
 - c. The Council has approved the creation of a new standing board - the Learning Center Board. This board will have oversight of the operations of the Learning Center and report to the Council. The new board will organize, finalize the job description, and begin the Learning Center initiation process immediately.
 - d. The Council approved and welcomed new members at the February Council meeting:
 - . Kyle and Dee Singley, and daughters Alivia and Cady.
 - i. James Dawson
 - ii. Carolyn Springer
 - a. If you unlock a door for church access, lock the door behind you. Doors have been left open causing a security risk.
 - b. Giving/offering envelopes - if you do not need offering envelopes please see Scott Geiser or Susan Gutshall (Simply Giving, other electronic giving)
 - c. Space utilization - please let Susan Gutshall know if you are planning to use any church space for events and meetings

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- i. Construction for the Learning Center has begun and is going well. It is expected to be completed in mid-April.

16. Next Council Meeting: Thursday, March 20, 2025 at 6:30 pm.

17. The Council Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

The adjournment was unanimously approved: Yvone Peto motioned; Jeff Wise seconded.

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