

**New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Congregational Council Meeting Minutes**  
**December 18, 2025**  
**6:30 pm**

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1. Call to Order (6:33pm)
2. Attendance: (\* = excused absence; ° = late arrival)

Becker, Edward	Staub, Pastor Scott	James Mack
Becker, Monique	Hauser, D. Martin*	Peto, Yvonne
Geiser, Scott	Rothermel, Todd	Andy Van Dyke
Nikki Young		
3. Devotions (Pastor)
4. Approval of Minutes of the November 20, 2025 Council Meeting. Motioned by Scott Geiser, seconded by Todd Rothermel. The motion passed unanimously.
5. Approval of the Minutes of the December 14, 2025 Special Congregation Meeting. Motioned by Todd Rothermel, seconded by Scott Geiser. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Staff Reports: All staff have been busy this season and have stepped up to get all the work accomplished with grace. Pr. Scott asks that in the future the Council is cognizant of having a united and consistent staff policy and payroll/benefits between the office staff, and Learning Center staff. The Personnel Committee will add this to their discussions. He also recommends the Council continue to work on church-wide communication methods. Council thanked Pastor Scott for his service, dedication, and guidance to the congregation. Motioned to approve staff reports by Jim Mack, seconded by Ed Becker. Approved unanimously.
  - a. Special Dispensation Letter from Bishop Penman - Nikki Young has been officially approved to serve as the “Vicar” of NHELIC starting January 1, 2026. Our local “Vice-Pastor” is Mark Singh-Hueter from Advent Lutheran in Harleysville. Nikki is authorized to provide ministerial services including: preaching and presiding at Eucharist, baptisms, and funerals.
7. Treasurer’s Report (Ed)
  - a. Ed reported that the total surplus/deficit YTD as of November 28 was \$-6,000. Currently waiting for income to be recorded due to bookkeeper transition.
  - b. He also noted that total income by November 28 (91.6% of the year) was 129% of budget and expenses were at 96.4% of budget
  - c. Extrapolating through the end of year suggests a ~\$10-15,000 deficit for the year. (For reference: The 2025 budget included a deficit budget of \$60,000.)
  - d. Pr. Scott motioned to approve Treasurer’s reports for Audit. Seconded by Andy. Approved Unanimously.
  - e. Budget Update: Motion to approve minutes from Special Congregational Meeting by Todd. Seconded by Scott. Approved Unanimously. Budget passed unanimously with 21 Ayes. (Low meeting attendance due to weather.)
  - f. New Bookkeeper updates - Dorothy Brower is our new contracted bookkeeper. She has jumped right in with learning the CDM program, and has begun paying invoices and getting checks out. Recording the income side of the balance sheet is the process she’s beginning to learn in CDM.
  - g. Credit Card Policy and Procedure document – Motion to approve updated credit card policy by

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Todd. Seconded by Pastor Scott. Discussion by Andy explaining the new process: A Board or committee requesting CC terms should be agreed upon by the Executive Committee. It allows boards and committees to set limits for CC use while still under the umbrella of Council approval. Ed wanted to make sure that as part of the process the Treasurer is informed of the credit terms to track overall church credit limit. All current card holders should sign the updated documents. Card holders should submit NHELCC Credit Card Purchase Form with receipts attached. Card Holders should make sure to label purchases with CDM codes on this form so the bookkeeper knows how to record expenses in CDM software. Motion approved unanimously.

- h. (Reminder) Expenses (other than previously approved for recurring invoices) need to be approved by Committee, Board, Staff, or Council before the Bookkeeper makes payment.

8. Unfinished Business and Prior meeting Action Items

a. Ongoing Actions:

1. Property (Marty)

- a. Sanctuary A/C project (cut and paste from Steve's report) Existing equipment removed and new equipment loaded into the attic; Yeakel has not been back to install the new equipment because of scheduling interruptions. Waiting for word on when they'll return to finish.
- b. Cleaning contracts – selected TLC @ \$36k/year for the Learning Center. They will collaborate with Jenn Boyer as needed.
- c. Finalized sale of land deed with Browns.

2. Learning Center (Todd)

a. Status Update

- i. Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> opening
- ii. Grace Lutheran Church's Learning Center is entering into partnership with Sunshine Learning Center. They will finish their term through May 2026 at Grace Lutheran to finish the school year. Beginning in June they will move their location to NHELCC. The two school boards will merge. The partnership will bring 70+ students, teachers, and administrators from Grace to SLC. Over the next few months the details of the partnership will be forthcoming. This partnership is a blessing as it will help SLC jumpstart its program and begin generating income.

3. Food Ministry Board (Todd)

- a. Pounds of produce harvested and donated 6500 lbs for season
- b. Number of volunteer hours worked 1021 hrs for season
- c. Grant Writer consultant - CDM+ information needed
- d. NAP Grant with Martin Stone
- e. Budgets squarely in the black through November 2025

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4. 325th Anniversary Committee update (Yvonne) - digital version of history book requested from Barb Eisenhart
5. Pastor Retirement Activities (Yvonne) - in place and moving forward
6. Constitution Bylaw/Continuing Resolution updates (Andy)
  - a. Constitution review - Synod's comments should be received by the first week of January 2026.
  - b. Timeline for ratification - Andy would like to be able to call an approval meeting in January, but needs to wait until Synod feedback is received to set an official date. Congregational Dinner may or may not be held at the same time, but would be the most convenient option.
7. Transition Committee (retirement - 12/31/2025) (Monique)
  - a. MSP submitted, Synod comments received (minor updates)
  - b. Next Steps: Once revisions are submitted, the Synod begins its own internal process of review, checking references, and fielding new candidates.
8. Communication Manager
  - a. gap analysis completed – minimal input suggests we need a comms manager
  - b. Hold until office manager/administrator role is re-defined
9. Organ refurbishment project
  - a. Steve Eisenhart presented quotes/timeline/financing as requested by Council. Ed made a motion to complete the organ project through Emery Brothers in two phases over three years as the funds become available. Monique seconded. Designated funds are available for organ update and refurbishment. Two quotes have been received. The donor wants to cover the total cost of the project using the lowest responsible bid. Council discussed the merits of completing the project and timeline considerations. The project will include: replacing and painting a donated console; overall repairs, releathering, tonal regulation, and digital sound additions. Updates/repairs to the organ will be needed within the next 10 years. Council felt it was advantageous to accept the generous donation to continue with organ maintenance and upkeep.  
Motion approved unanimously.
10. New chairs (36) and tables (4) for SLC wing - \$3,000 approved, need to be ordered, but on hold due to pending partnership with Grace Lutheran as they may be providing furniture/equipment.

9. New Business

- a. Nominations for Council persons (by February 15th)
  - i. Scott Geiser - term limited - must go off Council for 2026
  - ii. Todd Rothermel - end of 1st term, can be nominated
  - iii. James Mack - end of appointed term (Nancy White resigned term), can be

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- nominated.
  - iv. Steve Eisenhart will run. Dee Singley has indicated an interest in running. Council is encouraged to ask congregational members if they are interested in serving.
  - v. Nikki will move from a non-voting to a voting role.
  - b. Personnel Committee
    - i. The Executive Committee acting as the Personnel Committee will manage staff until a new Senior Pastor is called.
    - ii. Next focus is to rethink the Office Manager/Administrator position. Determine what we need (next 2-5 years), what skills do we have, revamp job description.
  - c. Scouts have run a successful pilot program to combine the boys and girls troops into a single troop. NHELCC will now have a "Family Troop" and a Cub Scout troop. Andy made a motion to accept the charter as a Family Troop. Todd seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
10. Correspondence - Nominations for 2026 SEPA Synod Assembly. An open call for nominations to various positions is due on February 15th. The information will be posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall.
11. Congregational Feedback - Ed held two Budget information sessions. Questions regarding itemized budgetary line items were answered and clarified.
12. Upcoming Events
- a. Pastor's Retirement Service – Dec. 28
  - b. Sunday School Christmas Pageant - Dec. 21
13. Council Highlights
- a. Finance continues to monitor the 2025 Annual Budget against actuals. Currently we are running a total deficit YTD as of November 28 of \$6,000. The total income at the end of November (91.6% of the year) was 129% of budget (91.6% offerings) and expenses were at 96.4% of budget. The projected deficit for the end of year is \$15,000 once the bequest funds are transferred to the Endowment Fund.
  - 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 in 2025. Thank you for your continued support!
  - c. The Council will hold a "Coffee with the Council" open informational session on January 18th immediately following the 9AM worship service in the Fellowship Hall. NHELCC has a lot of activity and projects moving forward in 2026 and the Council would like to share information, listen to feedback, and answer questions. Plan to grab a cup of coffee and join the conversation
  - d. The Council has approved a compensation package for Nikki Young starting January 1, 2026

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(as part of the 2026 Proposed Budget). Nikki will be our Vicar and part-time Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry until a Senior pastor is called. We are blessed to have Nikki as part of our transition between Senior Pastor to help maintain continuity of our worship and ministries.

- e. The Synod has assigned Vice-Pastor Mark Singh-Hueter from Advent Lutheran in Harleysville to NHELC. Pastor Mark will support Vicar Nikki on an as needed basis. Pastor Mark will also oversee Nikki's Internship as part of her seminary journey.
- f. The Finance Committee recommended and the Council approved the contracting of new NHELC Bookkeeper Dorothy Brower.
- g. The Property Committee is overseeing a HVAC project to replace the 35 year old air-conditioning system that services the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. The total cost is estimated at \$80,000. The Capital Campaign funds will partially cover the expense. Watch for a campaign announcement to request additional capital funds for this much needed project.
- h. The Council approved an organ remediation project (the organ is 40 years old this year!). All funds to support this project are being provided by an anonymous donor.
- i. Councilmember nomination cycle for the 2026 Council are now open. If you have an interest in serving as a Councilmember please talk to any current Councilmember for information. The current 2025 Council has 9 Councilmembers out of 12 expected positions.
- j. All meeting and event requests by committees, members or non-members are to be communicated to the church office manager. Susan Gutshall, NHELC Office Manager, manages the master calendar for all activity and facility use to support minimizing conflicts. Committees and boards - please be sure to notify Susan of all activities planned at the church. This is especially important during the Sunshine Learning Center renovation process.
- k. If you unlock a door for church access, lock the door behind you. Doors have been left open causing a security risk.
- l. Giving/offering envelopes - if you do not need offering envelopes please see Scott Geiser or Susan Gutshall (Simply Giving, other electronic giving)
- m. The next Council meeting (open to all members) is scheduled for January 15, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

14. Next Council Meeting: Thursday January 15, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

15. Adjournment - Motion to adjourn by Yvonne, Seconded by Ed. Approved unanimously.

16. Lord's Prayer