

New Hanover Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Meeting Agenda
February 19, 2026
6:30 pm

1. Call to Order (6:37pm)
2. Attendance: (* = excused absence; ° = late arrival)

Becker, Edward	James Mack	Nikki Young
Becker, Monique	Hauser, D. Martin	Peto, Yvonne
Geiser, Scott	Rothermel, Todd	Andy Van Dyke
3. Devotions (Vicar Nikki)
4. Approval of Minutes of the January 15, 2026 Council Meeting Motion: Scott Seconded: Andy. Approved unanimously.
5. Approval of Minutes from Feb 8, 2026 Special Congregational Meeting. Motion by Todd: Second: Andy. Andy said to follow Robert's Rules of Order this approval of Minutes should technically be approved by the Congregation. Motion tabled until next Congregational Meeting so minutes can be sent to the congregation.
6. Staff Reports Motion to discuss: Marty Seconded: Jim. Nikki said everything is going well. She's spending a lot of time getting used to worship planning. She's working with her advisor to learn the process. Approved unanimously.
 - a. Staff Reports received:
 - i. Nikki Young
 - ii. Susan Gutshall
 - iii. Patricia Nyce
 - iv. Lindsay Waltermyer
 - v. Barbara Eisenhart
 - vi. Chris Fatzinger
7. Treasurer's Report (Ed). Motion to approve for audit: Ed Seconded: Andy. Approved unanimously.
 - a. Ed reported that the total deficit 2025 YTD as of December 31, 2025 was \$9,468. The Budgeted deficit was \$59,185.
 - b. Ed noted that total income at the end of December (100% of the year) was (104.54% offering) 144.58% of budget and expenses were 127.39% of budget.
 - c. Ed reported that the total deficit 2026 YTD as of January 31, 2025 was \$3,100
 - d. Ed noted that total income at the end of January (8.33% of the year) was 7.9% of budget and expenses were at 7% of budget.
 - e. Todd suggested we return to presenting the budget financials in the weekly bulletin Andy recommended that specifically the weekly offering amounts be published. Nikki suggested encouraging more signups for Simply Giving.
 - f. Bookkeeper updates - Dorothy Brower – compensation change in agreement to be increased from 24 hours to adding additional hours as worked. Dorothy will track hours and will submit an invoice for the equivalent hourly rate.
 - g. The Finance Committee and Audit Committee recommends engagement of Barbara Akins,

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CPA from Bechtelsville PA for Audit services for the years of 2024 and 2025. Her services will include the auditing of the General Fund only, since all other treasury records are audited by members of the Audit Committee. Scott Geiser and Donald Wirt met with Barabra Akins Feb. 13, 2026 and outlined the extent of services needed and the information available to perform the audit. Barabara Akins will send the Church an Engagement letter outlining the services, the timeline and cost of such services to be performed. The tentative start date is June 8, 2026. Cost of service will be confirmed in the Engagement letter but is estimated to be \$6000.

- h. Audit Committee - 2025 Fund reports (excluding the General Fund) are completed. Motion to approve Fund Reports: Todd, Seconded: Scott. Yeas: 8 Abstain:1 Motion approved.
- i. Endowment Committee discussion with Council - With respect to utilization of Endowment Funds for fiscal support, amounts, timing, options that have been explored, or could/should be.
 - i. Review of Endowment Committee policy for use of funds.
 - ii. Need for funding for the new HVAC system, upcoming bills for the Learning center that need to be paid prior to the estimated cash flow positive date in June.
 - iii. How does the church encourage the congregation to be more invested in donations? Stewardship Committee needed. Nikki is interested in doing a special project on stewardship for her internship. **Action: Nikki will recruit members to help with the project.**
 - iv. Possible open line of credit (HELOC) with Truist secured against the Endowment cash.
 - v. Appeal to donors within the congregation, or request loans from the congregation.
- j. **Action: Finance Committee/Board will review accessible cash available, and determine possible HELOC strategy. Determine a bill payment/cash flow schedule through Fall.**
- k. (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. Parking Lot:
 - i. Food Ministry Space Usage (Jim)
 - ii. Additional Sound System Training (Steve)
 - iii. Directional Signage – on going (Steve)
 - iv. Solar Energy research (Property)
 - v. Unconventional Building Usage Requests – on going (Jim)
 - vi. Historical Record Digitization (Steve)
- b. Completed Recently:
 - i. Pictorial Directory
 - ii. Pastor Scott Retirement Activities
 - iii. 325 Anniversary Activities
- c. Ongoing Actions:
 - 1. Property (Marty)

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- a. Sanctuary A/C project – Fall 2025, ~\$80,000
 - i. Building Fund - \$25,000
 - ii. Endowment Loan - \$56,000 holdback from recent bequest
 - iii. Capital Campaign Fund - \$15,000+ (may need to be used to pay back the GF)
 - iv. Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary HVAC should be completed by March.
 - b. Learning Center EDU costs reprieve until June by Township.
 - c. Ad Hoc Building Use Committee - Scott Repa chair, Steve Eisenhart deputy chair. Waiting to hear back from the committee on their action items.
Decisions need to be made prior to the learning center merger.
2. Learning Center (Todd)
 - a. Status Update
 - i. 11 students
 - ii. Board/Merger updates
 - iii. Cash flow shortfall (~\$50,000)
 3. Food Ministry Board (Todd)
 - a. \$10,000 donation from Jackie Shoemaker
 - b. Budgets in the black through January 2026
 4. Constitution Bylaw/Continuing Resolution updates (Andy)
 - a. February 8- Special Congregation Meeting (3 unanimous votes)
 - b. February 22 - Annual Congregational Meeting (single $\frac{2}{3}$ majority ratification vote)
 - c. Tasks Needed Post Constitution Ratification
 - i. Minor CR updates
 - ii. Remote/electronic voting process (persons/committee?)
 - iii. New Councilmember orientation and Council Reorganization combination meeting (early March)
 - iv. Ministry Focus Board Chairpersons and Council liaisons job descriptions need to be specified and brought to the Council for approval. **Action: Andy will work on those descriptions.**
 5. Call Committee (Monique)
 - a. In candidacy phase awaiting candidates
 6. Communication Manager
 - a. Hold until the office manager/administrator role is re-defined. The Personnel/Executive Committee is working on this.
 7. Organ refurbishment project
 - a. Agreements signed (Dieffenbach Pipe Organ, Walker)
 - b. Review updated timeline of work, expected fee

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8. Nominations for Council persons. Motion to approve below nominations: Todd, Seconded: Marty. Approved unanimously.
 - a. Todd Rothermel - end of 1st term, can be nominee
 - b. James Mack - end of appointed term (Nancy White resigned term), can be nomination
 - c. Dee Singley
 - d. Steve Eisenhart

9. New Business
 - a. New member approval – Dot Reinert, Cathy Laudato – Rick Hausch, Jeff Renninger will shepherd. Bethlyn Bechtel, Daria Cardillo - Nikki will keep her updated on church activities. Motion to approve new members listed above: Yvonne. Seconded: Scott. Approved unanimously.
 - b. \$250 continuing education expense request for Nikki Young - Prepare/Enrich certification - used to provide support for marriage counseling and issues (pre-marital or marital counseling). Approved via email vote.
 - c. Member roles - 190 letters mailed each occurrence, only 62 have contributed this year or last year. Now that we're tracking communion we won't be able to review membership roles until after 2027. The Evangelism Committee (defunct) should be in charge of reviewing those who haven't contributed to welcome them back to the church, or determine if they are inactive members.
 - d. Improve communications, track actions using a kanban board tool for Council (Trello).
Action: Council will implement on a small scale to try it out.

10. Correspondence
 - a. Thank you letter from Silver Springs School for our donation.

11. Congregational Feedback
 - a. Why don't we have TV monitors at the front of the sanctuary so people in the balcony can see what's happening in the front of the church? Council discussed possible Samsung picture frame TVs mounted on the sides of the balcony.

12. Upcoming Events
 - a. February 22 - Annual Congregational Meeting (ratification vote)
 - b. Synod assembly (May 29 & 30) - Nikki will go as a member. One more person is needed.

13. Council Highlights (December 2025 here for reference)
 - a. Finance closed out the 2025 Annual Budget against actuals. We had a total deficit YTD 2025 as of December 31 of \$9,468. The total income at the end of December (100% of the year) was 144.58% of budget (104.54% offerings) and expenses were at 127.39% of budget.
 - b. The 2025 total deficit (\$60,000 projected) was offset by generous donations, bequests, and Endowment interest funding. Relying on these funding sources is a risk to sustained income

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- to meet operational expenses. Please consider increasing your General Fund giving in 2026.
- c. Finance reported that the total deficit 2026 YTD as of January 31, 2025 was \$3,100. The total income at the end of January (8.33% of the year) was 7.9% of budget and expenses were at 7% of budget. February giving is projected to be decreased due to weather related cancellations of two workshop services. Please make an effort to “catch up” on your giving in 2026.
 - d. The approved 2026 General Fund budget is a *deficit* budget of ~\$90,000. The deficit will vary depending on the timing of a new Senior Pastor and the compensation package. 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!
 - e. The Council will hold a "Coffee with the Council" open informational session on March 29th 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
 - f. The Council has approved Nikki Young as 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.
 - g. The Synod has assigned Vice-Pastor Mark Singh-Hueter from Advent Lutheran in Harleysville to NHELCC. 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.
 - h. 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. The Council is asking for directed donations to help offset this capital expense.
 - i. 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.
 - j. The congregation ratified the NHELCC Constitution at the February 22nd Annual Meeting. A copy of the new constitution can be found on the NHELCC website.
 - k. All meeting and event requests by committees, members or non-members are to be communicated to the church office manager. Susan Gutshall, NHELCC 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.
 - l. If you unlock a door for church access, lock the door behind you. Doors have been left open causing a security risk.
 - m. Giving/offering envelopes - if you do not need offering envelopes please see Scott Geiser or Susan Gutshall (Simply Giving, other electronic giving)
 - n. The next Council meeting (open to all members) is scheduled for March 19, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

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14. Next Council Meeting: Thursday March 19, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.
15. Adjournment (9:34 pm) Motion to adjourn: Yvonne. Seconded: Jim. Approved unanimously.
16. Lord's Prayer