

St. Paul Lutheran Church
CONGREGATION MEETING MINUTES • August 31, 2026

Call to Order: President Tom Splittgerber called the meeting to order at 6:45 p.m.

Opening Prayer: Pastor Kyle Backhaus

Secretary's Report - Minutes of June 16, 2026 Congregation Meeting: *A motion was made by Dave DePagter and seconded by Dave Weinhold to approve the Secretary's Report from the June 16, 2026 Congregation Meeting. Motion carried unanimously.*

July 2026 Treasurer's Report: Donna Felch presented the financial reports. One month into the year we have a deficit of \$58,669. This is primarily due to a three pay period month, along with lower offerings in the summer. Giving is ahead of last year, but behind budget. Dedicated accounts were reviewed and are strong, as a reminder these are earmarked for specific things and cannot be used for the operating budget. *A motion was made by Margaret Hand and seconded by Christine Perronne to approve the July 2026 Treasurer's Report. Motion carried unanimously.*

Donna also reviewed the Capital Improvement 5 year plan which has a balance of \$351,875.

Fellowship Hall Condenser: Chad Berke explained that one of the two compressors in the fellowship hall is no longer working. Due to the age of the system, the entire condenser unit needs to be replaced. Two quotes were sought and Shaus Mechanical from Manitowoc was selected. This is the same vendor that replaced the Worship Center Condenser earlier this year.

A motion was made by Jim Sloma seconded by Collin Berke to approve the Fellowship Hall Condenser Replacement not to exceed \$60,000 to be paid from the Capital Improvement Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

Security Facility Improvements: Stefanie Trakel shared that throughout the county there is now a Church Security Network, that brings local churches together to discuss and learn about ways to keep their churches safer. Violent acts are rare, so the Council is looking at finding a balance. Churches are a target because we have known schedules, lesser police presence and are a welcoming environment that is often unprepared for threats. The most common cause is domestic disputes. Amongst church shootings, 97% are in Christian churches and 22% occur in rural towns. In the last 23 years there have been 6 shootings in Wisconsin where at least one person was killed, including LaCrosse, Oconto, Brookfield, Milwaukee, Oak Creek and Kenosha. Both large and small towns.

The Council requested the Sheriff's Department to do a walkthrough of our building. The top recommendation was to lock our doors once worship begins, which we started doing earlier this summer. They also went through our medical procedures, AEDs and recommended a LifeVac (device for choking) which we now have in our kitchen. Both fire and tornado plans have been recently reviewed with ushers.

Bollards were recommended for our entrances, primarily for unintentional events. The glass doors throughout the building are not recommended, as the glass can be broken to gain access. Steel doors or doors with steel in the glass are preferred. Finally, security cameras are recommended. In the past couple of months, Stefanie has received 4 requests for camera footage. Upon reviewing these recommendations, the Council moved forward on several of the recommendations, again trying to balance the risk with the cost.

A Congregation member cautioned that we not go overboard with security, as incidents are rare.

Bollards: John Rische shared that 2 concrete posts will be installed at each of the following entrances: main, rotunda and entrance 3. He shared a picture and the locations with the Congregation. These will not be in the driving area, just the walkways to prevent cars from hitting the building, either intentionally or unintentionally. There have been instances in the area of people hitting buildings due to a medical issue or mixing up the gas/brake. This will be an unintrusive way to keep people safer.

Main Entrance Replacement: Our main entrance is 32 years old. This includes the 4 doors and the window panes above them. They are rusted, leaking and in need of repair. The Council used this as an opportunity to also improve security by placing crosses in the glass. A picture was shown. The new entrance will be aluminum, which if properly cared for, should have a longer lifetime. Two quotes were sought and Falls Glass was selected. The new doors will still have a removable mullion.

A motion was made by Jim Sloma seconded by Shelly Strains to approve the Front Entrance Replacement not to exceed \$45,000 to be paid from the Capital Improvement Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

Security Cameras: Our current cameras no longer work as they are very old technology. The police recommended coverage on exterior doors, the parking lot and interior primary entrances. We have had recent incidents where cameras would have been helping, including a parking lot accident, bathroom vandalism, an individual trying to get into the building and an ATV/Snowmobile driving recklessly throughout the property. Two quotes were sought and Pros4Tech, a local trusted vendor, was chosen. They currently do all of our IT work as well. This will be server-based, with no annual license. A map of the camera coverage was shared.

Discussion was held. It was suggested we include a camera for the Columbarium, which we will look into. We decided not to place cameras on the light poles as the cost was extreme. A policy was suggested in terms of when, who and how video footage will be released. The playground will also be recorded so we will talk with our Director to see if releases are needed by parents. The cameras will have a battery backup and 30 days or more of storage, which is the recommendation of the police and vendor. If there is a need for footage, that section of film can be snipped and downloaded to be kept permanently if needed.

A motion was made by Rosalie Miller seconded by Jake Baus to approve the Security Camera Project not to exceed \$36,000 to be paid from the Capital Improvement Fund. Motion carried unanimously.

Congregation Question Submissions:***Will the 11 am service be continued or evaluated on an annual basis?***

This is evaluated annually. We do need the service because of the size of our Congregation. We have 70-100 people that typically attend the 11 am service. If that service were removed, those attending would most likely attend the 9:30 service. Once Sunday School is back in session, that service is very full and doesn't have the ability to comfortably absorb the extra people. In addition there is no room for growth.

How are we growing as a Congregation?

Pr Kyle has been cleaning up the membership, removing individuals that we have no contact information for or that no longer attend, so membership is decreasing. We do have 30-50 people joining through AIM Classes each year. Our average worship attendance over the past 4 years has gone up by about 200 people. We are not back to pre-Covid attendance, but we are getting closer.

We have several new ministries that have started recently, including VBS which had 99 kids this past summer, Table of Grace which kicks off this fall and a new podcast that will be launched in January, which will have Bible Studies and Daily Devotions. Our YouTube Ministry also has a much wider reach than people realize, with an average of 140 people viewing it weekly.

Congregation Listening Session:

None

Adjournment: *A motion was made by Christine Perronne and seconded by Deb Hand to adjourn the Congregation Meeting at 7:35 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.*

Closing Prayer: Pastor Adam Wolfe

Attendance: 51