

# King of Kings Lutheran Church

## Church Council Minutes

January 21, 2025

### **Attendance**

#### Members in Person

Jen McKinnon, President  
Tricia Dege, Vice President  
Todd Dexheimer, Member at Large  
Rebecca Kurtz Schwanke, Member at Large  
Kevin Schwartz, Finance - 6:33  
Jen Krumrie, Treasurer  
Tami Olson, Secretary  
Pastor Jon Larson, Lead Pastor – 6:33  
Pastor Amelia Houdek, Associate Pastor  
Dianne Johnson, Executive Director

#### Members Excused

Jason Livingston, Vice President

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Jen McKinnon presiding.

### **Role of Council:**

We empower staff, committees and volunteers to make necessary day to day operational ministry decisions. The role of Church Council therefore is to focus on more strategic visioning that will seek to further enhance and move ministry forward.

**Opening Prayer** – Pastor Amelia

### **Approval of Prior months Meeting Minutes**

Jen moved to accept the meeting minutes  
Todd moved to accept the minutes of the last regular meeting.

**Motion passed (CC.25.01.01)**

### **Approval of Agenda – Jen**

Jen moved to accept the agenda.  
Tami seconded the motion.

**Motion passed (CC.25.01.02)**

**Guest Presentation:** None

**Past Business:** None

**Strategic Planning:**

**1) Finance Update**

- a) Dianne handed out 2024 summary paperwork to review.
- b) Jen K. said we ended 2024 coming in about 86,668 short, and we had expenses savings in personnel. The council reviewed net operating expenses, other revenue and expenses. We paid out Benevolence of \$140,000, our investment income and other income are not in budget, but the investment income let us end up in the positive for the year.
- c) For December comparing this year to last year, we had 8,697 less in giving, and 26,714 more in operating expenses.
- d) We had contributions of over 2M for the first time.
- e) Nothing related to the organ in budget.
- f) Benevolence year over year is about the same.
- g) Jen M. said thank you, appreciate the work you do and getting them out timely.
- h) Jen K. I am looking at operating funds, once we get the new budget updated and approved, we will update the projections.
- i) The last page is the cash flow, a good amount is designated for the organ and the pipes,
- j) Jen K. said I will turn it over to Dianne if there are no more questions.

<b>2024</b>	<b>December Preliminary</b>	<b>Year-to-date</b>
<b>Contributions</b>	257,036	2,028,530
<b>Expenses</b>	187,042	1,785,488
<b>Net</b>	69,993	243,042

**2) 2025 Budget Review / Vote**

- a) Dianne, the budget for 2025 this almost mirrors what we spent in 2024.
- b) Todd asked won't our payroll be higher.
- c) Dianne said Patty's position went from FT to PT and we went up slightly for expenses.
- d) Dianne said I completed the whole budget at 2.2 and we got our financials in, I went back. Worship and Music, moving some things from one budget line to the next.
- e) Jen M. commented, "I like seeing we are paying more for principle that interest.
- f) Dianne said we look at tithing and we give 10% but what we get in is less, I have talked to other churches, and they are waiting to the end of the year to determine benevolence payments. If people see a net each month, I would rather budget and pay for benevolence quarterly.
- g) Kudos to the mission team they have put time into looking at partners to either not support this year or reduce giving.
- h) We will have the mortgage until 2037 at 4 percent.
- i) Salaries, SS allowance etc., are in personnel line.
- j) The monthly mortgage passed the threshold to pay more for principal than interest. We run on a small staff; we won't be hiring more FT unless to replace existing.
- k) Budget amount we hope to allow for salary increase, would love to see them get recognition. Salary adjustments. It's tough with inflation out paces salary increases

- l) We will get hit with increased payroll taxes.
- m) Building and property is what it is. We paid off the sanctuary lighting loan in 2024.
- n) We did get a lot of building projects done in 2024; there is also a chance for things to come up. Roof top is still working, but aging.
- o) Office expenses line increase due to property insurance, I will break down this line in the budget for the Annual Meeting. There is a slight increase in paper cost and postage, and negotiations for copiers, looking at Comcast and Verizon moving everything to Comcast and getting better speed for less expense. Staff using own phones except Pastor Jon. Live streaming cost vs. worship and music, Charlie asked to break down. Technical Arts includes streaming and equipment. We did complete upgrades in 2024 including the sound board, hearing devices, and 2 additional cameras. We refurbished all off the bells and music library, don't know if we will go over the budget. Then we got into the new drum cage.
- p) The marketing outreach budget, where the advertising, app, I was reading an article that churches cut this and hurt them in the, I negotiated with Gemini and should save 5,000. Jake and Isabelle are doing great with videos, with Instagram account for the younger members.
- q) Mission, this line will increase, Pam will go to Tanzania in August to cover her cost.
- r) Fellowship, if we have a funeral and we get a kitchen fund, we put this back into the pantry expenses. We will be cutting back on this, try to buy as much nonperishable items, coffee is costing us between 300-400 a month, we have to support. We need to buy what, Fellowship, soup suppers can come out of this.
- s) Personnel background checks for new employees.
- t) Stewardship will do in-house; with Jake and Isabelle we have a way to make a video.
- u) It may be prudent to use an outside company as we get prepared for our long term projects.
- v) Next area goes line by line with benevolence partners. Jen M. asked, are these all the same, new or less? Dianne, we did not add new partners, adjusting who needs it the most. Making sure global and local are represented equally.
- w) The final line is special projects, 3500 to 2300.
- x) Jen M. asked what we were giving to Synod, this year that amount is decreased.
- y) Pastor Amelia responded we increased in 2024 and cut this year. Dianne said my recommendation is the 2025 is to cut, 2025 not starting well we had a sewer line break; \$900, thank you to Pastor Jon for identifying it.
- z) Jen asked for commentary, thoughts:
  - aa) Todd said I like the idea of watching our expenses, what I don't like is our goal in 2025 is less and it feels like we are going backwards. Jen said you are saying from optics.
  - bb) Pastor Jon said understanding we did better for receipts, one of the pieces to look at, it's sad we are adjusting some things, what council and finance sees, some of this stuff in people hearts.
  - cc) Todd if you add in the organ donations, we brought in 2.3 in 2024 we brought in extra 270,000, one donor brought in majority.
  - dd) Dianne said we noticed some gifts moving from Operating to Organ. You have people who gave more in 2024 who can't give as much in 2025
  - ee) Dianne, the 18 years I have been here, if they have a cause, they will give. We need to better in telling the story, even a small increase is multiplied.

- ff) Jen M. said even with the Organ, seeing enthusiasm for the projects, and try to make every day giving that exciting.
- gg) Pastor Jon said the recommendation from the finance council is the cut budget.
- hh) Jen said from a story honesty is best policy, they need to know background of why.
- ii) Pastor Jon said I want to know the visual of what you are seeing Todd.
- jj) Todd said when they see we need to cut, why are we going backwards, does that make people worried? If we have a goal to do special things, we are going to increase our marketing budget so we can get better impact. If things are tight, we need to hold our pennies. I look at this can we reach what we budget in 2024, yes, we hit 2.28 in 2024 with the organ fundraising. We hit 2.3 can with hit 2.9 without a cause. Creating special events at church to bring in people to raise dollars.
- kk) Jen said if we are looking at this, we need to bring in other people than staff.
- ll) Todd said this is stretch goal to raise things at special events to get people excited inside and outside of church.
- mm) Pastor Jon said what I am hearing you saying, I think we can go with cut budget.
- nn) Todd said I am optimistic. We are going to get there are we can do awesome things because of it.
- oo) Jen said can we live under the cut budget. Todd said we are going to live under the cut budget, we sell the vision on what we want to do within the church and the community. What are we going to do with it. But everyone needs to be comfortable with it. I knew 2024 was going to be a huge stretch, I was pleased we got what we got. People want to designate giving to a certain line. We are losing some and people are retiring later, I would love you to do a Ted Talk Todd as I love your enthusiasm. Jen said we want Todd to come in with his enthusiasm. Pastor Jon said what it comes down to what Finance has recommended. Todd, how do we tell the story? What I am hearing you say based on where we are, we celebrate what was given and organ and as we look in 2025, this is what we can do if we reach this goal, how we create the story, what we feel comfortable presenting to the congregation. You want to set up people for success.
- pp) Todd said the budget cut is what we are doing, but this is what we are doing. Pastor Jon said as eluded as cut budget, what is perception along with budget. Jen K. said, “do we present last year’s budget? Dianne replied “we present 2024.
- qq) Todd, I would like not to show that. Dianne is still showing the bottom line. Todd said I want to see 2024 actuals. Jen said I like what was showing last year. Pastor Jon said we had a deficit before we started last year. Jen K. asked what the reason for the increase was last year. Pastor Jon said staff was the reason. Jen M. asked, does finance have to have a meeting first?
- rr) Kevin said Dianne has received it and is reviewing it.
- ss) We have other projects like fire suppression and parking lot.
- tt) We must be aware that if we go to the well too many times things will dry up.
- uu) I am in favor of the cut if more comes in, we can celebrate it.
- vv) Jen M. said we put in budget in the bulletin at the end of the year.
- ww) Pastor Jon said to move our time forward, where does council sit on the recommendation, do we need finance to come in.
- xx) Jen M. said I think the budget cut is realistic, after hearing Todds input, how do we take that story telling the day to day, Dianne you can present both.
- yy) Todd what I would love to hear are some of the ideas, if youth ministry what would you do with it. That gives us a story, music and marketing, there are things people would love to do at this church,

what cool I am good with the 2025 budget if we continue call it that. After the dream budget do we updated MPR, have we used it. Youth ministry would like to take more missions trips with chaperone trips to pay for. Tech, you need to get rid of the front wall and projectors. I could spend a million in the room today.

zz) Todd what are the coolest ideas the most relevant. We must be realistic. We need to know what people want. Pastor Jon said for time's sake, we are going to approve and take narrative.

aaa) Rebecca said I make a motion to approve the 2025 budget.

### **Approval of 2025 budget recommended by the Finance Committee**

Rebecca made a motion to approve the 2025 budget.

Kevin seconded the motion.

### **Motion passed (CC.25.01.0.03)**

### **3) 2025 Stewardship Campaign Update**

- a) Jen said speaking of money, any updates on stewardship campaign, quarterly statements go out his week.
- b) Pastor Jon said to bring back from council, the campaign has been whittled down due the organ campaign, to keep it simple, we have been doing some updates, some tick points on some ask, what is the best venue to create space to communicate. Keeping is simple.
- c) Rebecca, would there be a benefit with the list of things you listed, making sure we do it know and is summer.
- d) Pastor Jon said I brought up most recent one. You will see around Easter and graduation. We will space out ask throughout the year.
- e) Jen said the organ updates, thank you Dianne for going through contracts. Special shout out to Steve.
- f) Pastor Jon said Jen wrote a wonderful presidential report.
- g) Jen will do Pep Rally, 12:15 pm.
- h) Dianne will work on the agenda; we will work on getting out communications for the meeting.
- i) Pastor Jon said checked with exec time to discuss memorial portrait for Pastor Ralph 20x24 wood with plaque with dates. Will be on brick wall by welcome desk will not be moved. We wanted a place to call home with a nice seating area. Will be his wall; the family will cover the costs.
- j) Jen said thank you for your work for that.
- k) Jen noted two positions will be open, Tricia will not be doing another term.
- l) Pastor Jon said you can be on council for your whole life, we had people interested some last year, we will be reaching out to those people.

### **1) Tricia – Strategic Plan Measures (Due in February)**

- a) Jen said that Tricia wanted to remind us that the measures are due before the next council meeting.

### **Church Life:**

1. Organ Pipe update
2. Q1/Q2 programming review
3. Annual Meeting Review (Feb 23, 12:15 PM)
4. Pastor Ralphs memorial portrait

**New Business:**

1. Council Positions up for re-election (Tricia and Todd)

**Staff Updates:**

1. Monthly Staff Updates

**“On our Radar”**

1. Holy Grounds Café
2. Ready Set Grow Preschool
3. Project Needs
4. Church Directory

**Upcoming Events and Meetings**

5. February 6<sup>th</sup> - Monthly Community Dinner
6. February 11<sup>th</sup> - Exec Team Meeting 6:00 PM
7. February 18<sup>th</sup> - Council Meeting 6:30 PM
8. February 23<sup>rd</sup> - Annual Congregational Meeting 12:15 PM

Adjourn Meeting – Jen

The meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Closing Prayer & Prayer Requests – Pastor Jon

**Appendix A: Staff Reports****Church Council Staff Reports****January 2025 Staff Updates****Pastor Jon**

## Leadership:

- Due to timing and the emphasis on the Organ Pipe Appeal, we have opted for a more simplified stewardship campaign. The hope is “short and sweet.” A letter will be going out to the congregation in the Quarter 4 Statement letters. As special projects and appeals arise, we need to be mindful of how they may work in tandem with the annual stewardship campaign and overall congregational goals.
- Over these past few months, we have been creating stewardship content for the bulletin that coincides with the seasons of the church year and other giving opportunities. We are in the process of discerning what format would best suit these updates and asks in order to get them in front of the larger congregation.
- We have been utilizing the revised Quarterly Planning Sheets for a little over a year and while we have been taking time to evaluate past ministry events, it is now time to shift gears and focus on long range planning to set ministry goals and objectives. One of the highlights from December was the conversation surrounding the Children’s Christmas Program and how we can best uplift our students. A statement that is driving our ministry focus is, “Why we do what we do and why it’s important.”

## Worship:

- The alignment of the ChirstMess worship series and Advent devotional went well.
- The Lenten Sermon Series and Devotional (The Tomorrow Devotion - working title) is about complete. Our goal is to incorporate the season of Lent into a congregational challenge like the Elevate 8 to 8 challenge. The final selecting of scripture passages and titles is taking place. The devotional goes from Ash Wednesday through Easter with daily themes and content for Midweek and Weekend Lenten services – approximately 47 days of content. The next steps will be to engage congregation members to provide additional prayers and connection points where applicable. Laurel will take the lead once again with her ministry teams. Once the Lenten devotional is complete, preaching themes will be set through August 2025.

## General:

- I officiated funerals on November 11, 13, 18 and on December 9 and January 18.
- Met with Pastor Ralph Olsen’s family to discuss a portrait to honor Ralph’s ministry as the founding Pastor of King of Kings. The portrait will be 20 inches x 24 inches with matting and dark wooden frame. There will also be a plaque that reads “In Memory of Rev. Ralph H. Olsen, Jr., founding pastor of King of Kings Lutheran Church, Woodbury, Minnesota, serving from 1980-2010. To God be the Glory. The picture is to be placed on the brick wall by the welcome desk and couch area.

## Nominating Committee

- We are in the initial stages of the process with communication going out in the bulletin and job descriptions on the website. This year we are seeking one member of the Executive Committee (3-year term), one Member at Large (2-year term) and three members of the Nominating Team (1-year term). We are in the process of reaching out to those who expressed interest in previous nominating processes as well as the information received from the Skills and Interest booklet.

## Pastor Amelia

### Celebrating:

- Meaningful XMAS eve services! The entire worship ministry team provided stellar services! This includes Jim Lindstrom and his musicians. Sam Johnson and his musicians. The extra brass and strings. Jake and the AV tech team. Worship Coordinators and their teams! Communion coordinators and their teams. Kathy Becher and her amazing talent at organizing our hospitality crews! [Annette Sherrill](#) and the decorating crews. Jason Livingston and Scott McKinnon for the beautiful (and modified) stable. Wow. Thank you to all.
- The overwhelming response of our congregation to serve on the hospitality crew for Christmas eve! We experienced super early filling of all spots! This in turn, gave us time to hold an equipping event before the actual services. Thanks to Keith Weber for working with the ushers for the 3:00pm service. Mike Engh provided excellent leadership for helping attenders find spaces to all could fit in the worship space.
- Jake Pickett and team and the work to get the new sound board and mics programmed and ready to go. That was an undertaking and he executed wonderfully.
- Implementation of the XMAS eve hospitality crew training event. We are hearing how helpful it is for our crews to feel prepared to do what we have asked them to do. I am working on debriefing the process and planning tweaks to the format to make the training more streamlined and informative. I am encouraged by the welcoming of these trainings and plan to do more in 2025.
- Advent/Christmas is very busy in and of itself but during this time we often see pronounced numbers of critical illness and funerals. Thank you to our funeral crew and Patty Bishop, Jim Lindstrom, and our custodial crew for the extra effort to meet people in such difficult times to provide Gospel Hospitality and Christian comfort amidst all the other responsibilities.
- CARE MINISTRY engagement. Visitation ministry and prayer ministry are coalescing and pieces are falling into place. Looking to expand monthly gatherings to include St. Therese as well as Stonecrest. Connie Dagford is doing an excellent job leading this. The residents of Stonecrest are responding to her presence and leadership. I am so grateful for her partnership. The visitation team continues to be of great support to Pastoral Care. Thank you to them.
- Pam Hoeffle's ministry at King of Kings. She is officially 1 year in. She has learned so very much and is ready to lead our community engagements with confidence, passion, and the ability to bring others with her. This year one of her goals is to focus on intergenerational and student community service opportunities. We still have a global presence, and she will lead a team to Tanzania 2025, but is **committed to**

local focus. Please let her know you appreciate her hard work and dedication. I never imagined she would move this ministry forward in such a powerful and profound way. Thank you PAM!

**Working On:**

- Updating Explore Membership material
- Expanding use of the new Baptismal liturgy. I still need to refine it but I like the direction.
- Extending engagement participation for our members. I am grateful to Scott Borchert and [Steve Schwanke](#) for coming alongside me to move this process forward. Their insight and leadership are proving invaluable to me as I manage a very large portfolio.
- Lent/Easter Wednesday services. Considering introducing alternative worship style using a more calm, communal, and intimate setting. My working thought is “space”. It’s still in process but should have a plan soon. Working with Jake, Sam, Jim and Pastor Jon to make the vision happen.
- Staff year in review and 2025 goal setting. I plan to have those completed by FEB. 1 2025.
- Effective ways to share weekend worship service leadership with the congregation. We need to work on equipping and caring for the crews that serve. This is a tougher nut to crack but I am up for the challenge.

**Praying For:**

- Stamina and wisdom and creativity and patience for me.
- Our church leadership
- Our church staff as responsibilities increase while staffing FTE decreases. Ministry is challenging and changing and this demands exploring new ways to meet the needs of our congregation and changing ways of engaging, specifically digitally. Fluidity in what we consider our ‘portfolios’ is important during this era of trial and error. It’s fun but prayer is needed.
- Healthy work/life balance for all (congregation members and church staff everywhere.)

**Isabelle**

**Jake**

**Michael****Laurel**

- All of our adult Bible studies are underway as of January 20. Topics include Esther, Acts, Romans, and The Chosen series. One of the groups will also be studying Luke later this spring semester. Isabelle Hammond is leading a new group for women in their 20s. They will meet off site once a month and talk about their readings for The Bible in 52 weeks.
- Men's Ministry hosted Wes Farrow, president of WorkLight.org this past Saturday. 40 men registered to hear Wes's presentation on faith in the workplace. Becky Hagen generously made egg bakes to go along with the traditional bagels, donuts and fruit served at monthly meetings. I'm encouraging the Men's Ministry to schedule a group service opportunity in the next few months.
- Working with our Drop In Play leaders (Mary Owen and Cindy Saarela) to organize our new series of sessions beginning Thursday, March 13 and ending May 15. Last year we had 11 families participate over 11 weeks.
- Preparing for next week's Women's Ministry Team meeting to further plan our April 26 RefresHER event. The speaker will be Nancy Zugschwert - she'll be talking about communication.

**Pam**

Celebrating- one year! Celebrating the support, guidance and trust the staff and congregation showed and gave this past year.

Celebrating - connections made in our church community, local community and our global partners. Looking forward to making more meaningful connections with the families of King of Kings - my goal is to involve families and youth in planning and implementing the events. (March Food Share month, School Supply Drive, Skoolie Bus, Community Dinners and Giving Tree)

Community Dinners are held once a month - January 2nd - we had 30 people attend. We had the regulars along with 4 new people. These dinners are evolving. Each dinner has a unique story. There is always a connection made. We have given out bibles, prayers, clothes, school supplies, and food. We have connected people to support their new business... learn a new language... They have provided a community for people who are new to "the empty nest"...Volunteers are invested in these dinners. We are working on updating the value/mission statement for these dinners.

Looking forward to Tanzania trip in August with 3 - 5 members of King of Kings.

Looking forward to March Food Share Month - theme: Family Favorite Recipes

Working on- connections and relationships with our Global partners: Tanzania, Guatemala and Honduras.

**Paula**

**Andrea**

**Dianne**

- I have been adjusting the [2025 budget](#) in the last month and the [budget narrative](#). Discussed at the Finance Committee meeting and then sent via email to the complete Finance Team for their approval. Most have approved the CUT version of this budget, this CUT budget is \$158,700 less than the 2024 budget yet is still requesting an increase of \$105,770 more than what we brought in for 2024. Charlie recommended updating some budget lines such as showing property/liability insurance as a separate line rather than in the office line. Yet, the breakdown is shown in the itemized spreadsheet below. These adjustments can be made in the annual report to further clarify the costs. I will have some paper copies available for tonight's meeting.
- Organ Update: all pledges/gifts were received by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Contract was signed for the pipes on January 8<sup>th</sup> accompanied by a check for \$148,000 which includes the down payment on the pipes \$ 85,500 and the final payment of the organ \$ 62,500.
- The contract with Scarfone was signed today after a meeting to discuss details of the contract last Friday. Payment was sent today of \$10,188.

**Schedule of payments Scarfone:**

\$10,188 on January 21st

Upon approval of permit \$30,567

Upon completion of Rough-in inspections \$30,567

Upon completion of painting and trim v. \$20,379

Upon completion \$10,188

**Schedule of payment for Rodgers**

Down payment paid on January 5 \$85,500

25 % due in April \$42,750

25% due upon completion of installation \$42,750

- Renegotiated copier lease with Loffler- not a big savings yet still an annual savings of \$400.
- Renegotiating contract with Comcast and Verizon- moving mobile phones from Verizon to Comcast which will provide a significant savings (still working on final details)
- Interviewed 3 candidates for Patty's position after working on the job description with Pastor Jon- position was reduced from FT to PT hours are 9:00-1:30 M-F
- Kathy Becher accepted the position as Front Desk Administrator which is a blessing as she knows many of the components of this position having worked mornings prior to Covid in this role.
- 2024 statements are printed and are using this as a stewardship drive letter to be included along with a plan for giving card- hoping to have these mailed out by the end of this week.
- Special thank you to Bert for helping update the computers (that are able) to Windows 11.