

Church Council Minutes
September 8, 2026

We Gather as God's People

- **Lighting of the Candle** > 6pm
- **Sharing Highs and Lows**
- Devotional: George Vasquez

Aligning with our purpose

Our Vision: *Following Jesus – Loving All*

Our Mission: *Jesus calls us to be a community, embrace
nourishing mind, body, and spirit.*

Our 2024-2025 Commissions:

Reverent Worship *Nurture a culture of expectation, experience,
experimentation, and excellence.*

Spiritual Growth *Open opportunities for all ages, abilities, and affirmations to
expand their understanding and faith.*

Community *Expand opportunities for authentic relationships in and
outside the congregation through activities and experiences
of fellowship and service.*

Welcome *Cultivate a culture of radical hospitality and affirmation.
Break down hurdles to belonging.*

Celebration *Recognize the gifts and milestones of life gathered by God
into this fellowship*

We Gather Needful Information

Roll Call All Present except for Ann

Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting:

Busy with Church Council Work Day

- **Action Items from Director**
- **Andrew Lockhart >**
 - **Missions >**
 - Cont with Gulf Breeze, ACCT
 - Good communications with office, congregation
 - More involvement
 - Prepare for the upcoming Missions Team meeting to discuss
shifting sponsorship targets from Austin Middle School to
Hitchcock ISD's Crosby Middle School considering supply needs

- **Parish Life>**

Men's Club does most of the cooking

Need Coffee hour, maybe game night in PM

Birthday Cards

Coffee Bar in Narthrex > \$2,000

Back of church > keep Kids Corner, Set up tables for coffee

Bake & Bible > bake before Church & serve after

- **Faith Formation >**

More involvement

Increase attendance

Goal: kids being vessel bearers/more involvement

- **Nancy Carpenter**

- **Worship team >**

- Need new people

- Music > drums, pastor singing

- Continue to bring change

- **Archives>**

- Krista updated Facebook, website > doing more on line

- Fellowship team restructuring is underway, with Lucy Pedley leading the transition and building a new team for kitchen and event supplies.

- **George Vasquez >**

- **Property**

Jim >

- See Financial Report

- **Stewardship>**

- Organize a thank-you dinner and storytelling campaign; continue developing strategies to improve congregation financial health and stewardship

Cont with >

- Work with Church Council on finances
- Talk to congregation regarding donations and participating in fundraising activities
- Stewardship & Church Council to meet annually

○ **Senior Pastor's Report > see attached**

○ **Youth, Family & Communications Coordinator's Report> see attached**

- Ongoing retreats, confirmation classes & new infant & kid's curricula.
- Develop children's & youth even plans including possible fundraising opportunities so youth can earn camp credit
- Recent Luther Hill confirmation retreat was well received
- Youth activities include sleepovers & outdoor adventures.
- Krista launched a Frolic Bible class for infants
- Godly Play curriculum for older children is fully planned through 2028
- Proposal to offer children wage credit for Octoberfest > \$10.00/hour toward camp fees, pending fund availability.
- Current youth funds hold approximately \$4000-\$5000, enough to support several campers at about \$135 per child.
- Adult groups watching the series the Chosen with social events such as bowling, & themed outings to foster community.
- Special events are planned including a Reformation polka service, Trunk or Treat, Thanksgiving Potluck, & Advent Crafting event.

○ **Presidents Report>**

- **The council received detailed insight into the multi-year RIC inclusion process showing how intentional community**

engagement fosters acceptance and celebration of LGBTQ+ members

- Stephen to write the council corner article for the upcoming newsletter

- **Vice President's Report > nothing to report**

- **Financial Officer's Report >**

- Financial Stability: Church has \$17K reserves, \$30K checking; \$10K used for bills; early August giving aids cash flow.
- Loan and Payments: SBA loan one month late; catching up to avoid fees; IRS help ongoing with \$1,200 monthly payments.
- Financial Controls: Checks written by Krista and signed separately; use of Realm and Vanco tools for reporting and oversight.
- Budget Constraints: Year-to-date giving \$433,838; limited expense cuts possible; outreach giving fixed at \$1,800 monthly.
- Staffing Needs: Hiring financial support discussed to ease workloads, improve controls without losing oversight.
- Community Focus: Attendance growth linked to sustaining giving; youth and mission programs funded through grants and endowments
- Financial Status: \$300K Moody grants plus \$100K PEF secured for HVAC; \$88K IRS tax debt in plan; donation declines prompt fund withdrawals
- Property Upgrades: \$65K approved for electrical and HVAC upgrades; project completion expected by late fall/winter; archives reorganized for fundraising
- Financial Status: \$300K Moody grants plus \$100K PEF secured for HVAC; \$88K IRS tax debt in payment plan; donation declines prompt fund withdrawals.

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- Continue managing IRS payment plans related to back payroll tax issues and provide updates on meeting rescheduling and tax reconciliation progress

Old Business >

Fund raiser activities

- Council Members to get their pictures taken for Newsletter.

New Business

- The council discussed adapting Pastor Sean's gradual, story-driven approach locally, emphasizing engaging members with personal connections to LGBTQ+ people first.
 - Private, well-prepared conversations with congregation members are preferred to public storytelling to respect privacy and comfort.
 - It was proposed to begin structured RIC sessions in January with intentional planning, allowing space for organic growth and community readiness.
- Pastor offering 4 week class on prayer
 - Set up small section in newsletter entitled Council Communicator. > to give a monthly overview of what the council is working on.
 - Challenge to attract and retain new families and younger generations amid congregation fatigue
 - How to increase giving beyond current 130 contributors and improve participation?
 - How to get people to attend stewardship focus groups?
 - Should church pursue direct stewardship communications or continue indirect approach?
 - Continue coordinating and publicizing parish life fellowship activities;

We Gather Discerning God's Direction at First Lutheran

Where do we perceive God is nudging us (What is going well)?

More out in the community

Grief Share

More programs offered for Adults, Youth and Family > for Church & outside Church

Budget, Website

Family Ministry

What might we need to reconsider (What is not going well)?

Worship Team. > Different views for services is difficult > tradition is good. Maybe piano, etc.

Certain individuals doing everything

Fema

Credit Card

What is something new we perceive God is prompting us to consider?

Classes

Get new members more involved

Kids Corner cont

Involvement in community

We Prepare to Depart

What do we need to communicate to the Congregation? >

Upcoming events

Recognizing New Families

God is nudging us to go forth in the community

Call for volunteers to relay notes to the Congregation

Reminders of items to be followed up on > see new business

Closing prayer for the Congregation

Lord's Prayer