

Holy Cross Lutheran Church (HCLC)
Minutes for Council Meeting – January 19, 2025

The January 2025 Church Council meeting was called to order by President Wendy Lambeth on Sunday, January 19, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. (There was no Council meeting for December 2024.) Pastor Berggren opened with a prayer.

In attendance were: Pastor Jim Berggren, Wendy Lambeth, Jay Byerly, Ricki Finstad, Julie Kilkenny, Warren Schick, Stephen Schulze and Hans Sunder. Leigh Rothharpt and Stephanie Walton did not attend.

The minutes from the November 2024 meeting were submitted by Secretary Julie Kilkenny and were approved by Council.

The **Treasurer's report** was presented by Ricki Finstad. December 2024 offerings were \$42,804, (*November offerings were \$15,394*), as compared to \$24,559 in October. Year-to-date 2024 offerings were slightly higher than 2023 (\$1,105); he noted that average monthly offerings for 2024 were short of budget amounts by \$9,200/month. Expenses for the month of December were \$34,586, (*November expenses were \$23,410*), as compared to \$30,411 in October. Year-to-date 2024 expenses exceeded offerings by \$80,960, for an average monthly deficit of \$6,746. Treasurer Finstad pointed out that 2024 expenses were actually \$30,000 less than budgeted amounts. President Lambeth noted specific efforts by those within the congregation to be mindful of costs, and Council briefly discussed various expenses. The checking account balance at 12/31/24 was \$18,667, not including restricted funds. Council approved Treasurer Finstad's request to transfer funds from the Maine Street stock dividends to replenish the checking account. He gave a summary of investments and other items in his report. President Lambeth remarked that she would ask the Financial Review Committee to meet to revisit the allocation of Telge funds between the different investment funds, as discussed in the fall. Council approved the Treasurer's Report.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Berggren presented Council a draft of the annual letter for the IRS regarding his 2025 parsonage allowance. A motion was made and seconded to accept the letter, and the motion was approved. He gave an update on his activities for the month. He remarked that the Christmas season at Holy Cross "was amazing", and he thanked everyone in the congregation for their participation and extra preparations. Pastor Berggren will participate in a focus group of religious leaders at Rice University on January 23rd. He is beginning plans for Lent. He noted that Ash Wednesday is on March 5th, with the traditional imposition of ashes in the sanctuary at noon and 6 p.m. Wednesday Lenten services will be at noon on 3/12, 3/19, 3/26, 4/2 and 4/9, followed by a light lunch. He is considering a study of the book "Jesus Before Christianity" by Albert Nolan for the Wednesday Lenten services, and

he is hopeful that with the refurbishment of the FLC kitchen, Holy Cross can hold the Maundy Thursday service and meal on April 17th. His other activities this month included preparing for services each week; making phone calls and visits to parishioners; providing counseling and ministering for prayer requests [along with Deacon Donahue]; outreach to the community; weekly Wednesday Bible Study; and various church ministry meetings.

Committee Reports and Old Business:

Buildings and Grounds:

- President Lambeth reported on the status of the **gym roof**, which has been leaking. A bid obtained from the roofing company that worked on the Atrium roof after the 2024 storm damage came in at \$9,700, which was higher than expected. She commented that the exact scope of work needed would not be apparent until the workers ripped off the existing roof section to survey the problem; therefore, the decision was made that, at this time, HCLC would continue patching the problem areas with tar.
- Ms. Lambeth reported on the issues with the **boiler** for the sanctuary. Alan Lambeth has contacted three companies to get estimates for a new boiler had and related upgrades, but he had not gotten any figures back from them at meeting time. It is not a simple replacement, as it is the original boiler and probably dates back to the 1960's.
- Ms. Kilkenny reported on recent **tree work** on the church grounds. Ten trees (Loblolly pines and Mexican red oaks) donated by Twinwood Farms in Simonton, TX and 3 trees donated by an ELC family were planted at the beginning of January; these replaced trees recently lost to storms and disease. She acknowledged these generous donations, as well as funds donated by various individuals and groups in the HCLC family to plant the trees. Ms. Lambeth emphasized that this project did not impact the budget; everything was accomplished with special donations.

Other Old Business:

- President Lambeth noted that she received a thank you card from Adult Protective Services in appreciation for HCLC volunteers who pack grocery bags twice a month with pantry items for their clients.
- Ms. Lambeth suggested the day to recognize new members of the congregation be changed to February 16, 2025 to accommodate the schedules of several participants, and Pastor Berggren recommended it be a **Celebration of Membership Sunday**. He will include special prayers of appreciation during worship for all members of the congregation, and a new member appreciation reception will follow the service.

New Business:

Building Use Requests:

- Council approved the request for use of the Youth Room by Spring Branch ISD for early voting.
- Also approved was the request by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War to hold their encampment meeting on May 10, 2025.
- The Norwegian Seamen’s Mission has asked to look at HCLC facilities, as they are looking for a new place to meet in the Spring Branch area.

Synod Assembly: President Lambeth reminded Council that the 2025 Synod Assembly, which includes the election of a new bishop, will be held in New Orleans this year (May 15-17), and reservations need to be made for the HCLC representatives attending. Council members discussed who would attend from Holy Cross. They also noted that, in anticipation of the Assembly, it would be a good time to take a fresh look at the HCLC and Synod constitutions.

The **Congregational Meeting Part II**, which will include the election of officers, was scheduled for March 9, 2025.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 23, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.

Upon motion to adjourn, the meeting was closed with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Kilkenny,
Secretary, Church Council