

June Council Meeting Minutes
June 15th , 2026 at 6 pm; Hybrid (in person + Zoom)

Present: Pastor Steve, Lynn Caldwell, Eric Breitenstein, Morgan Wright, , Liz Peter, Jesse Lutabingwa, Jonathan Stamey, Mike Seden, Jennifer Davis & James Holden, Kristie Evans, Jonathan Stamey, & Mike Seden

Absent: Jesse Lutabingwa & Amy Atkins

1. Call to Order - Made by James at 6:02PM
2. Devotion – Jonathan. Psalm 46:10 - Be still, and know that I am God. We frequently forget to pause and listen for God; our lives can be so busy. He recently went on a back country trip for a long period of time. There was no cell phone service, distractions, etc. It was a time made available for him to step back. Inertia - an object in motion stays in motion unless otherwise acted upon. We need to let “our motion” come to rest; we need to allow ourselves space and grace to find our peace.
3. Ground Rules – Reviewed by James
 - Please raise your hand to indicate that you would like to speak.
 - Please give your name and state your views on the matter under discussion, including any questions or concerns you may have.
 - In order to allow others ample opportunity to join in the conversation, please keep any subsequent comments by you on the issue/motion succinct and to the point.
 - Please remain quiet when others have the floor so everyone can hear.
 - Please be respectful of those voicing differing opinions.
4. Congregational Input - none
5. Approval of May Council Meeting Minutes:
 - A. A motion was made by Liz to approve the May council meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Morgan. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.
 - B. Review email voting
 - 1) Motion made by P. Steve to bring Kade Maiden on as an intern with Jonathan Weant.
 - 2) The electronic council vote was unanimous.
6. Strategic Visioning – James
 - A. Review Organizational Chart and Liaison Assignments
 - B. Council Goal-Setting Process
7. Policy – James
8. Monitoring and Oversight

A. Reports:

- 1) Senior Pastor Report
- 2) Campus Ministry Coordinator
- 3) Music Ministry Report
- 4) Office Manager Report
- 5) Facilities Report
- 6) Treasurer Report

B. Old Business

1) Capital Campaign Updates

a. Gifts and pledges received to date

- i. Current total = \$272K raised (matched total; beyond ½ way point).
- ii. \$12K is set towards the playground.
- iii. Council members agreed to write thank you notes to those who've given money already. Lynn - make sure recipients are aware that council members do not know how much each family gave. P. Steve to write something up that we can use that addresses this concern.

b. Projects' update

- i. Roof Replacement - roof is done. The gutters are "sort of" done. The roofing company has to come back and address gutter concerns (lack of gutter design uniformity around the church building). There's no payment until we are satisfied. An overrun in budget is expected.
- ii. Councill House Update - 1 mini-split unit to be replaced, malfunctioning (to happen later this week). Ran electrical stuff to the garage which led to reorganizing the garage. The last group was happy with the house. The next group will stay in the house and attend church; their 2nd trip to our church. P. Steve suggested we vocally thank them.
- iii. Parking Lot Expansion - the company might pour asphalt this week. After this, wiring to be done for light poles. The 1st week of July is a hopeful completion date - no later than mid-July.
- iv. Grace Place Update
 - a - Timeline is fall/winter of 2026-2027
 - b - Statement of Work estimate? Working on the final Scope of Work. An overrun in budget is expected.
- v. Playground Project - more funding desired before we move forward. Not an urgent project like the first 3 projects.
- vi. Operational Cash Reserve - Budget overruns that are expected for the roof and Grace Place update projects might affect this.

2) Director of Congregational Life

- a. Start Date August 1st with the Youth Trip!
 - b. Holden house to be used as housing
 - c. Onboarding stuff in process
 - d. Installation on August 9th
- 3) Application of facility use fees (similar to wedding facility use fees) for outside events not directly associated with a non-profit organization or church member.
- a. Not a high volume concern
 - b. Council members requested a clarification of the “custodial services” fee - rectify it with the 3rd bullet point above the fee chart. Discussion: Non-members are more likely not to clean up. How do we determine what cleaning up means?
 - i. Modify 3rd bullet point to add ” Custodial services may be applied”.
 - ii. Make checks payable to Grace sentence a 4th bullet point.
 - iii. P. Steve made a motion to approve the document with above changes. Jonathan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.
- 4) Council Retreat follow-up
- a. P. Steve’s idea was to pick 2 - 3 answers under each Core Value and apply them in a 3-year plan. Plan to have a compiled list of goals by August 2026.
 - b. Top identified voting
 - i. Including and Welcoming All
 - a - Create a “Welcome station”
 - b - Have intentional welcome ambassadors in areas of the church
 - c - Tell our story better (improve marketing)
 - ii. Grow in relationship with God
 - a - Build out a Children’s Sunday School program.
 - What would parents like to see?
 - Eric would like to be involved
 - b - Create more service learning opportunities and hands on service.
 - c - Create events for the whole congregation for ministry practice/learning.
(P. Steve suggests leaving this one out and using “d” below. “c” and “d” were tied)
 - d - Life groups provide a way for more intentional growth in faith
 - iii. Anticipate and respond to the needs in the congregation and community
 - a - Tap into the congregation's strong drive to serve.
 - b - Rebuild the lay visitation ministry
 - c - Could we become a downtown resilience hub during tragedy or nature disaster - wifi, solar/battery power, showers., etc.?
 - Lynn’s daughter is working on something similar).
 - Eric has access to a solar connection.
 - P steve - talk to community services folks. Where could we fill in the gaps?
 - iv. Caring and Comforting each other
 - a - Develop a full Stephen Ministry program at Grace which could include communion visitation

- b - Create more opportunities to connect congregation with LSA
- c - More commissioning with layering on of hands by the whole congregation. P. Steve likes this. On him to initiate.
- d - P. Steve likes the idea of a prayer box. The blue cards are not being used as much; they are not connecting with people.

5) Handicap accessible seating task force

- a. Had been sent to the Property Committee. ADA compliant knowledge?
- b. A lot opposition to the plan by Property - concerns about the # of seats being taken away, folks are not lining up for handicapped seating (just 1 needs it now), once we do some work that's iADA compliant are we obligated to do more ADA compliant things? Lynn recommended that we step back and go more slowly, scale back the project. Property suggested fold-up chairs. Lynn cannot find that churches are not completely exempt from ADA compliance. She suggested we consult someone. Lynn said a lot of churches she's been to have cut outs for wheelchairs. P. Steve - churches are exempt from ADA compliance.
- c. Jonathan - if we cut pews out, we lose seats. We should not displace young families in the back who take children to nursery. Some folks with "disabilities" prefer to watch from home.
- d. P. Steve - to get more involved with Property to address this project. Property to take on the project.

6) Nursery Coordinator Transition

- a. Hannah heading to NC State. Also losing another 2 nursery attendants (altogether losing 3 of 4 attendants). If anyone knows someone, let Grace/Sabina know. The position is posted (\$50/week). 16 is the lowest age we will accept as a volunteer.
- b. Liz - can someone from council check in on the nursery beforehand? Kristie suggested something similar.

7) Second Look: 2026-2027 Budget - special Council budget workshop at 5pm

- a. We should expect a deficit. \$36K short - the only way to make this budget work would be to cut a staff member. BUT we are in the middle of hiring someone. However, the expectation is there will be a "return on investment" with hiring Matt.
- b. Liz - 2% raise is very reasonable.
- c. Kristie - COLA 2026 is 2.8%. 2% is very reasonable.
- d. Morgan - we have monies to cover the deficit
- e. P. Steve - if giving gets closer to \$500K/year from congregation + \$100K for parking + miscellaneous dollars, we would be in a good position.
- f. Mike - last item on the Capital Campaign list is creating a prudent reserve. This would be the purpose of a reserve like this (covering budget deficits).
- g. P. Steve - Staying the same or growing is an anomaly compared to other churches. This is a big step for Grace.
- h. P. Steve - the current staffing costs are \$50K below market. How do we fairly compensate our staff? There's a \$50K risk should we have to replace everyone.
- i. P. Steve made a motion to present this draft budget to the congregation. Morgan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

8) App State Football Parking Designations for 2026

- a. Jennifer made a motion to approve the designations as per the June report. Jonathan seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

C. New Business

1) Facility Requests – Mountain Dev; Gamecock Lutheran; CTK Lutheran Church

- a. All are recommended by staff.
- b. Motion made by Jonathan to approve the above slate of facility requests. Eric seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

2) Call Annual Congregational Meeting for Sunday, August 9th at 11:15am

- a. P. Steve made a motion to have the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, August 9th at 11:15am. Matt will be installed, then the meeting, lunch after.
- b. Liz - suggested we have some music and a picnic this day. Jonathan - note that the grass may not be in place. Jennifer - would be a good day to say farewell and Godspeed to college freshman leaving
- c. Eric seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, the motion passed.

9. Meeting adjourned with prayer – Jonathan

Upcoming Devotion List:

July - P. Steve

Aug - Morgan