

Atonement Council Minutes — 03/25/2025 at 7:00pm

Council Attendees (10/10)

Matt Badding	Lyn Bowers	Angie Brickson
Dave James	Curtis Klaassen	Greg Moffitt
Jeremy Otto (Zoom)	Neil Pfeiffer	Dave Stelzer
Laura Trentadue		

Other Attendees

Pastor Zac Sturm, Pastor Jordan Stone, Pat Bjuland (Zoom), Traci Johnson (Zoom), Boo McCready, Nathan Choate, Keith Mundy, Dennis Allerheiligen

OPENING

Opening Devotions/Prayer: Pastor Jordan

COUNCIL AGENDA

Prior Minutes

- **MOTION #1:** (Lyn Bowers moves/Greg Moffitt seconds) Motion to approve the council meeting minutes from February 27, 2025 without corrections.
 - 8 voting members present: **8 in favor, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. Motion Carries**

Announcement: Pastor Zac

- Pastor Zac has felt the calling of the Holy Spirit to submit his name as part of the Central States Synod Bishop Election process.

Stewardship Committee: Keith Mundy & Dennis Allerheiligen

- Examined historical fundraising and compared it to what is needed now, previous historical fundraising goal targets were much lower than current estimated need.
- Stewardship Committee put a list together of 9 companies and did an assessment, they narrowed the list to 3 companies.
- Examined attendance over the last 12 months (rolling actual count). Has hit a plateau and has started declining, and forward indicators seem to indicate a continual decline for near term. Momentum is down 4.5% for in person attendance, and down 5.3% online for last 12 months.

- However, Atonement members are very generous. Giving at Atonement is substantially above the average of the 9,000 congregations in the ELCA, at about double of similar size churches. ELCA-wide average giving is about 1.8%, estimation is Atonement giving is about 3%.
- When benchmarking against similar congregations across the country, looking at key indicators like households, attendance, budget, and giving: Holy Cross ranked #1, Atonement ranked #2.
- The number of households at Atonement: 400-405. About 1/3 have no contribution of record.
- In 1999 when Atonement opened the new sanctuary, the attendance was 70,000 per calendar year. Attendance peaked in 2002. As of March 2024, attendance of 24,000 per year. When looking at the life cycles of congregational development, (Early Growth, Late Growth, Prime, Redevelopment, Early Aging, Late Aging) we are currently about at “Retirement/Aging” Phase.
- The Selection process for reviewing generosity cultivation consulting firms:
 - Stewardship Committee selected 3 firms as potential partners. They interviewed each firm with 17 questions, reviewed references and proposals, interviewed project leaders, clarified proposals and asked questions. The Stewardship Committee then met to review the 3 firms, and they developed their recommendation to Council.
 - Giving amount dollar figures were not part of interview process. The Stewardship Committee projection is a total 1.9 million target goal for giving, however when a company starts, they will do a Feasibility study to answer two questions: 1) is the Potential there of dollars to ask for, and 2) is there Readiness to give.
 - Stewardship Committee’s best recommendation was Horizons Stewardship, which knows Johnson County well having worked with CORE church for past 5 years, and the staff we will work with also live here in Johnson County.
 - Horizons Stewardship has a focus on discipleship, they have a program called Grow Disciples to Next Level Generosity.
 - They have an integrated funding model to create alignment on Atonement’s mission, vision and priorities, then develop or rework our strategies for Assets, Annual Giving, Capital Giving, Planned Giving, and Special Giving.
 - Planned timing will be rollout in August, annual campaign in October, a second phase capital campaign in January. They also have the option to pause if needed.
- **MOTION #2:** (Matt Badding moves/Lyn Bowers seconds) Motion to approve selecting Horizons Stewardship as the generosity cultivation partner of choice, allowing them to start informal preparation work with Atonement’s Stewardship Committee, and to present them to the congregation for approval at the May congregational annual meeting,
 - 9 voting members present: **9 in favor, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. Motion Carries**

Pastor Report: Pastor Zac

- In the middle of Lent, theme is Lost & Found, attendance has been strong for Mid-Week.
- Have a plan for Holy Week, should be fun. About 10 new members joining for Palm Sunday.

Pastor Report: Pastor Jordan

- Funeral on Saturday
- Increasingly giving more pastoral care more and more lately, something to keep awareness of.
- Both Pastor Zac and Pastor Jordan attended the required pastor annual Boundary Training from the Central States Synod. Happens each February, they have a 3-year cycle, Racial Diversity was topic this year.

Treasurer's Report: Mike Daley

February 2025

Topline & Giving

- February deficit was \$32,500 (\$24,000 worse than budget)
- Giving was \$18,000 worse than budget,
 - excludes dedicated giving to Campus Sustainment of \$9,800.

Balance Sheet

- Cash balances were:
 - \$118,000 in unrestricted cash (prior month: \$126,000),
 - \$334,000 in restricted cash (prior month: \$312,000),
 - total of \$452,000 (prior month: \$438,000).
 - Unrestricted cash of \$118k remains concerning as it contains advance giving of \$109,000.
- Advanced giving balance is \$109,000 (prior month: \$85,000),
Campus Sustainment is \$250,000 (prior month: \$228,000).

Budget

- Expenses were \$5,000 worse than budget with the following line-item variances noted:
 - Worse – Total payroll worse \$1,400 due to hourly payroll higher than budgeted
 - Worse — Worship due to contract musicians: \$700
 - Worse – Property \$10,000 worse due to HVAC repairs, snow removal \$1,800 due to more snowstorms than planned, worse repairs and trash collection
 - Better — Communications due to timing: \$3,500
 - Better — Utilities are better due to lower KCP&L: \$3,000
 - Better – KFam/YFam due to timing: \$500
- Year-to-date expenses are \$4,000 worse than budget
- Year-to-date giving is \$27,500 worse than budget (excludes Campus Sustainment giving)
- Year-to-date total deficit is \$81,000 (Year-to-date deficit plan was \$49,000)
- Year-to-date budget variance is \$32,000 worse (prior month: \$7,000 worse)

Facilities Report & Properties Committee: Dave Stelzer & Greg Moffit

- Campus Sustainment as of February was \$250,124, with the current planned committed expenses (Fire Alarm \$181,581, Gas Line \$28,744, Sump Pump \$6,877, Water Pressure Value \$3000) totaling \$220,202.
- The estimated remaining balance after committed expenses is \$29,921. An additional \$125,000 is planned to be transferred to Campus Sustainment for March through December.
- Water Pressure Value was replaced, and final cost was around \$2,500.
- Sump Pump:
 - Basement Sump Pump work about finished.
 - Another new Sump Pump in the southeast elevator (Charter Hall to Narthex) that is used for coffee/flower carts now also needs to be replaced, costs were not planned with basement sump pump and will be additional.
- The upcoming uncommitted expenses (\$139,674) thus far are:
 - Building Automation System: \$37,000
 - Narthex Air Conditioner: \$50,000
 - High School Room Air Conditioner: \$26,512
 - Lower Level Air Conditioner: \$26,162
- Toni would like to approve moving forward fixing the Building Automation System:
MOTION #3: (Dave James moves/Dave Stelzer seconds) Motion to approve Toni Pearson, Director of Operations, to repair or replace the Building Automation System for approximately \$37,000.
 - 9 voting members present: **9 in favor, 0 oppose, 0 abstain. Motion Carries**

STAFF REPORTS

Communications: Nathan

- New website in progress and coming soon, would like to time when and how to roll it out.

Kids & Family: Boo

- Continuing discussion about declining attendance for Sunday School, looking for opportunities.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Adult Education: Angie Brickson

- Continues to be very well attended, outside speakers include Bishop Susan Candea, Bishop's Associate Rev. David Whetter

Café: Angie Brickson

- Going well, Café always very busy and well attended after Lenten Midweek services inviting members from the partnering two congregations to sit and visit.

Reconciling in Christ & Atonement Welcome: Neil Pfeiffer & Angie Brickson

- Working on a few options for a proposal plan of how to approach bringing the topic of Reconciling in Christ to the congregation, focus is centrally on extended welcome.
- Different paths being explored are a congregational vote or having a council vote.
- Examining what steps might be involved, currently looking at having 4 parts: a starting challenge statement, a period for communication, education, and conversation, a choice or decision point, and clear outcomes. Need to evaluate Welcome Statement possible updates or separately
- Need to continue to examine concerns, barriers, and best paths to try and keep congregation whole through the process. Discussions will be needed to make sure that for any path chosen, to create space for differing convictions and outcomes that reflect them.

NEW/DISCUSSION ITEMS

President's Report & Action Minutes: Curtis Klaassen

- Improve YouTube — David Swinehart — Matt Badding & Neil Pfeiffer
- Inventory of 19 air conditioners — BTUs and approximate cost — Dave Stelzer & Greg Moffitt
- Re-roofing the 1998 facility — need approximate cost — Toni Pearson & Properties Committee
- Weekly financial report for bulletin — Mike Daley, Toni Pearson, Traci Johnson
- Organizations that utilize our facilities — Name, When, Pay or Not — Toni Pearson
- RIC continue planning — Neil Pfeiffer & Angie Brickson

CLOSING

Closing Prayer: Pastor Zac

Adjourn – 10:08pm

Recorded by: Neil Pfeiffer

Submitted for council review: 04/23/2025

Approved: 04/24/2025

Corrected: 05/20/2025, 01/18/2026