

Atonement Council Minutes for October 23, 2025 at 7:00pm

Council Attendees (11/11)

Matt Badding	Lyn Bowers	Angie Brickson
Genevieve Brown	Cathy Dykman-Acinger	Tim McCandless
Greg Moffitt	Jeremy Otto	Neil Pfeiffer
Dave Stelzer	Laura Trentadue	

Other Attendees

Pastor Zac Sturm, Pastor Jordan Stone, Mike Daley, Toni Pearson, Boo McCready, Nathan Choate, Donovan Coup, Dave James, Traci Johnson (zoom), Pat Bjuland (zoom), Keith Mundy (8:00-8:15pm), Dennis Allerheiligen (8:00-8:15pm)

OPENING

Opening Devotions – Pastor Zac

Friendly Fellowship – Cathy Dykman-Acinger

- Everyone was invited to share the favorite Bible verse or favorite Bible story.

President's Direction – Cathy Dykman-Acinger

- Memory of a tenuous time with MLM, serving on the board, and blessing of having a new executive director that really dug in and helped to turn things around. Not that the situation is a perfect reflection of the time now at Atonement, but we can see similar passion and dedication from the staff at Atonement to dig in and see that same opportunity in front of us, working through the challenging time to work hard, give new energy, being brave, know we will see positive change.

Monthly Ministry Highlight – Cathy Dykman-Acinger & Lyn Bowers

Visitors and New Members: New Initiative Update

- Formed a new team: Welcome and Hospitality Team
- Changes during service are (1) reminders during the children's message to sign the blue friendship register, and (2) at the end of service letting visitors to know to get a welcome gift bag.
- First time visitors will get a text message or email from Beth Eland.
- Second time visitors will get an email from one of the Pastors.
- The welcome gifts bag area at the Connect & Serve will be staffed by Council members & volunteers
- Intent is to be purposeful and not over-bearing but show appreciate to visitor and attempting to make a connection. Best suggestion is to find a way to make a connection with each new person.

REPORT ROUNDTABLE

September Minutes

- **MOTION #1:** (Cathy Dykman-Acinger moves, Greg Moffit seconds)
Motion to approve the council meeting minutes from September 18, 2025, without corrections.
 - 10 voting members present: **all verbal Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carries**

Pastor's Report – Pastor Zac

- **MOTION #2:** (Cathy Dykman-Acinger moves, Greg Moffit seconds)
Motion to approve the permission for the wedding reception of Chris Wenske and Cheyenne Cox, Rebecca Floyd's nephew, on November 21, 2025 to serve wine & beer in Charter Hall.
 - 10 voting members present: **all verbal Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carries**
- Horizons Stewardship – Next Level Generosity (NLG) Update:
 - » The NLG team will be meeting with Dustin Cooper on Saturday, October 22, working on a generosity statement and continuing with other planning.
- Horizons Stewardship – Strategy Planning Update:
 - » Pastor Zac and Kim Olson continue to meet with Sunday Morning Experience team and they zoom with Mark Meyer each month, will be doing again next week on progress milestones.
- Fall Stewardship Emphasis is just getting started, the theme is “RISE” and members should start getting the letter and commitment card in the mail in the next week or so.
- Aileen Ball, lead community organizer for the Good Faith Network, asked if Pastor Zac would help again in a leadership capacity, so he will be seeking nomination for Co-Vice President.
- Baptism on Sunday at 8:30, and we are welcoming 12 new members this weekend.
- From staff report: noticing whenever the choir doesn't sing, the attendance often falls below 100.

Ministry & Staff Reports

- Update from Boo McCready on Kids & Family:
 - » The 5-week parenting class has been a great success, with consistent attendance around 16-18 members each week and no drop-off in attendance from week to week.
 - » Taylor Jersak has been leading the Sunday School kids choir and they will be singing at 11am service in early November. Boo also selected a Christmas play for December.
 - » Will be looking to hire new nursery staff members to replace high school seniors that will be graduating.
- Read through each Staff Report's *“Requested Support from Council”*, items of note:
 - » Please help greet people after and before worship. The connections are incredibly important.
 - » Cathy and Boo highlighted the “Welcome Team Charter”, newly defining their Purpose, Mission Statement, Core Values, and Roles within the team.

- » Similarly, request from Nathan: "Request that the Council support a process for creating and annually reviewing a charter document for each lay team. Charters will clarify each team's purpose, authority, and membership, and help ensure alignment with Atonement's evolving strategic plan."

Treasurer's Report – Mike Daley & Tim McCandless

September 2025

Topline & Giving

- September ended \$4,000 better than budget, with a deficit of \$6,000
- General Fund giving was \$16,000 better than budget
- Dedicated giving to Campus Sustainment was \$8,000
- September year-to-date total **surplus** now \$13,667, better from budgeted deficit plan of -\$101,407

Balance Sheet

- Cash balances are:
 - \$167,000 in unrestricted cash (prior month: \$193,000)
 - \$182,000 in restricted cash (prior month: \$214,000)
 - \$350,000 total (prior month: \$407,000)
 - \$103K free cash balance: *Unrestricted Cash of \$167K remains concerning, as it includes advanced giving of \$64,000.*
- Advanced giving balance is \$64,000 (prior month: \$85,000)
- Campus Sustainment is at \$57,000 (prior month: \$93,000)

Budget

- Expenses were \$24,000 worse than budget with the following line-item variances noted:
 - Worse: Communication \$2,000 ⇒ due to timing
 - Better: Payroll \$3,200 ⇒ vacant positions and lower hourly expense
 - Worse: Property \$17,000 ⇒ \$7K in unbudgeted HVAC expense, inspections \$7K higher in part due to timing, \$3K in unbudgeted expense, and repairs were \$3K higher
 - Worse: Utilities \$10,000 ⇒ due to \$8K rebilling from KS Gas, plus higher water bills
 - Better: Worship: \$1,000 ⇒ *Worship YTD remains in-line with budget*
 - Better: Benevolence \$1,000 ⇒ reduced per Council directive 4/24/25
- Year-to-date general expenses are \$9,000 better budget (prior month: \$33,000 better).
- Year-to-date general fund giving is \$41,000 better than budget (prior month: \$25,000 better).
- Year-to-date Campus Sustainment: \$69,500 + \$50,000* (*\$12,500 transfer stopped 4/24/25)
 - Anticipated Campus Sustainment remaining to be given: \$46,000 (total planned is \$115,000)
- Year-to-date surplus actual is \$13,667 (year-to-date deficit plan was -\$101,407).
- Year-to-date total variance is now \$115,000 better than budget (prior month: \$111,000 better).

Mission Investment Fund Loan Update – Mike Daley

- Mike has been in communication with MIF the last few days, he expects the interest rate to come down from the last quote, hoping about 50 basis points (previous was approximately 6.5%)
- We will need the finalized list of items to be repaired and the total estimation of each project, rounded to \$100K - \$150K, will need for the final loan application.
- If money comes in from the capital campaign, it will be used first instead of needing to draw on the line of credit. Capital Appeal with Stewardship Committee is planned to be done in the spring.
- Decision will need to be made how much total we will need to ask MIF for, possibly \$1M or \$1.5M.

Operations & Properties Report – Toni Pearson & Dave Stelzer

- Campus Sustainment Fund balance as of September month-end was \$57,000.
- Proposed list for the MIF Loan are: 5 HVAC Systems, Lower Level Flooring, Exterior Parking Lot, Stairs, Railing, Ramps, and Sidewalks.
- Current repairs for this month were a railing fix done by Patrick, and he checked the others and the ramp railing will also need to be repaired.
- Toni secured donations to cover replacing broken spotlights in the sanctuary for \$2K, and an additional \$4K to replace the soundboard unit needed to interface with the Fire System.

Horizons Stewardship Capital Appeal – Keith Mundy and Dennis Allerheiligen

- Stewardship Committee presented their recommendation for Atonement to contract with Horizons Stewardship for a Campus Sustainment Fund Appeal guided by Dustin Cooper.
 - » The Scope and Schedule for the appeal will start in November 2025 with vision and first impressions, the appeal design starting in January 2026, responses to be gathered in May 2026, and monitoring & follow-up starting in June 2026 through 2028.
- The Appeal Cost from Horizons will be \$49,740, with additional costs up to \$5,000 potentially for Communications and Events.
 - » Payments to Horizons in installments: 15% in November, 15% in January, 70% in March-May.
- The Stewardship Committee has been extremely impressed with Horizons Stewardship with the engagement so far. The Horizons team shows much deeper and broader research and engagement with our congregation than similar firms, and the relationship has been extremely favorable.
- **MOTION #3:** (Angie Brickson moves, Jeremy Otto & Tim McCandless seconds)
Motion is to set a target goal of \$2 million dollars for a capital campaign Campus Sustainment Fund Appeal to start in 2026 and to continue for three years through 2028.
 - 10 voting members present: **all verbal Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carries**
- **MOTION #4:** (Matt Badding moves, Jeremy Otto seconds)
Motion to recommend a congregational vote on contracting with Horizons Stewardship to help Atonement with our capital campaign Campus Sustainment Fund Appeal beginning in 2026.
 - 10 voting members present: **all verbal Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carries**

- **MOTION #5:** (Angie Brickson moves, Dave Stelzer seconds)

Motion to recommend a congregational vote on moving forward securing a line of credit-style construction loan from Mission Investment Fund up to \$1.5 million dollars, with favorable terms to be reviewed by the Treasurer, Director of Operations, and Council.

 - 10 voting members present: **all verbal Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carries**

Up Next & Open Discussion

Welcome Journey Survey Responses: Congregational Meeting Decision – Neil Pfeiffer & Angie Brickson

- Presented the results of the Welcome Journey Survey in a printed handout: 714 voting members were emailed (572 emails sent out, 112 email addresses are shared between members). There were 296 survey responses total, 226 online survey responses, and 70 printed survey responses.
- For question 1: **"If you were asked to vote today, how do you feel about Atonement revising our Welcome Statement with the proposed changes?"** From 294 responses (2 surveys did not include a response for question 1), the results were: 76.2% Would Support (222), 8.8% Lean Toward Support (26), 2.7% Undecided (8), 0.7% Neutral (2), 5.1% Lean Toward Concern (15), 6.5% Would Not Support (19).
- For question 2: **"If you were asked to vote today, how do you feel about Atonement becoming a Reconciling in Christ partner congregation?"** From 296 responses, the results were: 65.5% Would Support (194), 9.8% Lean Toward Support (29), 4.7% Undecided (14), 1.3% Neutral (4), 5.4% Lean Toward Concern (16), 13.2% Would Not Support (39).
- The combined result of "Would Support" and "Lean Toward Support" for question 1 was **85.0%**.
- The combined result of "Would Support" and "Lean Toward Support" for question 2 was **75.3%**.
- With both questions resulting in above a 75% threshold, the level recommended by Reconciling Works, Neil and Angie recommended to council to move forward bringing the two questions to congregation members for the Special Congregational Meeting scheduled for October 26, 2025.
- Included with the printed results were all the comments added by the members in the additional responses sections of the survey, which was called out as a space for members to give their additional feedback that would be shared with the full congregation. The council discussed in depth whether the full comments should be shared with the congregation. The final consensus was that, even though risky, these comments were a critical part of the transparency and openness for all perspectives to be heard and shared with the full congregation. It was also discussed a statement of respect and caution should be given at the congregational meeting explaining the council's decision, asking for the congregation to maintain care for one another, even when particular views may differ and not resonate with their own.
- Discussion of the two motions recommended to the congregation are to match the two survey questions, with a single ballot with both questions asked at one time:
 - » **Proposed Congregational Motion 1:**

To adopt that the Constitution of Atonement Lutheran Church, with Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, be amended in Continuing Resolution [C8.01.A13] Statement of Welcome and Affirmation by the four changes presented to the congregation in the Welcome Journey Conversations updating the language for gender identity and expression, physical and mental ability, and committing to racial equity, justice, and peace.

» **Proposed Congregational Motion 2:**

Provided the amendment to Continuing Resolution [C8.01.A13] Statement of Welcome and Affirmation of the Constitution of Atonement Lutheran Church is adopted, to further provide clarity on the public commitment to living as a welcoming faith community, to adopt that Atonement Lutheran Church become a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

- The format of the congregational meeting the council proposes is to present the two motions together, have an introduction about the survey results, setting a tone of respectfulness, then open up the floor for discussions with a time limit per person of two minutes, alternating between someone speaking in favor of the motion and someone speaking in opposition the motion, following the standard protocol at Synod Assembly.
- **MOTION #6:** (Matt Badding moves, Jeremy Otto seconds)
Motion is to send the two survey questions to the congregation for a vote on Sunday, October 26, 2025. In addition, to share the survey results and full comments with the congregation via eblast and in printed form, including explanatory verbiage for care and context of the reason Council is sharing the results & comments is to help the congregation more clearly see and hear each other, with full transparency and respect for all opinions shared.
 - 10 voting members present: **all verbal Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carries**

CLOSING

Closing Prayer

- **Christ Be Our Light | Notre Dame Folk Choir**, The University of Notre Dame Choir, 2015
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g0c4YeABTs>

Adjourn at 9:35pm

Recorded by: Neil Pfeiffer

Submitted for council review: 11/19/2025

Approved: 11/20/2025