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Core Values

*Intimacy With God
Inspiring Worship
Intentional Faith Development
Compassionate Outreach
Caring Community*

DRAFT

Church Council Meeting Minutes
Jan 13, 2026, 7pm (In person)

2025 Elected Church Council Members	Executive Committee	Voting Representatives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ken Riley (President) 2. Tom Neuhaus (Vice President) 3. Tracy Blois (Secretary) 4. Jim Prosser (Treasurer) 5. Vicky Edell 6. Amanda Honda 7. Maria McDonell 8. Becky Gilbertson 9. Jeanne Kuchera-Sikoff 10. Gayle Johnson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ken Riley (President) • Tom Neuhaus (Vice President) • Tracy Blois (Secretary) • Jim Prosser (Treasurer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry Moraga (CDC Liaison) • Marli Saner (youth rep)* • Miera Stouch (youth rep)*

*1 vote between both youth representatives

Call to Order

The meeting was held in person. The meeting was called to order at 7:06pm by President Ken Riley.

Council Members Present

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ken Riley (President) 2. Tom Neuhaus (Vice President) 3. Tracy Blois (Secretary) 4. Jim Prosser (Treasurer) 5. Vicky Edell | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Amanda Honda 7. Maria McDonell 8. Becky Gilbertson 9. Jeanne Kuchera-Sikoff 10. Gayle Johnson |
|---|--|

Voting Representatives Present

1. Henry Moraga
2. Marli Saner
3. ~~Miera Stouch~~

Staff Members Present

1. Pastor Julie Morris

DRAFT MINUTES

Devotion: Led by Ken Riley

Determination of Quorum



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(C12.06) majority of members of the council-majority is defined as one over one-half (5).

- Number of council members present:
- Number of voting representatives present:
- Number of council members and voting representatives present: 12 of 12

Caring Conversation: what is one spiritual goal for 2026?

Approval of Dec 16, 2025 Minutes

- LINK: [Monthly Council Meeting Minutes 16DEC2025 FOR REVIEW](#)
- No corrections raised
- Motion by Jim P to approve the minutes in final form; second by Henry
- **The minutes are approved via a hand vote**

Acceptance of Staff and Committee Reports

- LINK: [January 2026 Council Staff and Committee Reports](#)
- Specific action items captured below as individual agenda items
- Motion by Tom: *"to accept the staff and committee reports for Jan 13, 2026."*
Second by Jeanne.
- **The staff and committees report is accepted via a hand vote, none opposed.**

Actions From Staff and Committee Reports

- a. Motion from Executive to redirect 50% of each of 2 prior \$10K gifts from the Playground Redesign account to a newly created Sanctuary Improvement account.
 - i. Clarified this is not a reduction in the gift amount but merely a redirection of the designation to kickstart the newly created account for the Sanctuary Improvement accounts.
 - ii. **The motion passes via a hand vote, none opposed.**
- b. Outdoor space umbrella was destroyed in winds but unknown what happened and where responsibility lies. Regardless, it needs to be replaced.
 - i. Motion from Jim for Council to authorize Property Committee to decide upon using funds in Property designated account for umbrella replacement. Second by **XX**. **The motion passes via a hand vote, none opposed.**

Action: Review and Recommend Adoption of 2026 Budget to the Congregation (Jim)

- Motion by Tom to accept the budget as presented to council to recommend for adoption



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to the congregation; Jeanne seconds

- **The motion passes via a hand vote, none opposed.**
- Huge thanks and recognition to Jim as treasurer and the Budget and Finance Committee for the hard work on the budget.

*Action: ****Discuss in Feb**** Assign Conversations with Council months (Ken)*

*Action: ****Discuss in Feb**** Make Bake Celebrate proceeds distribution (Jim)*

Information: Update on Playground Redesign and process next steps (Amanda/Henry)

- Discussions have continued between CDC and FFF, as well as with Property
- Intentional approach to take the time to get this right and address any concerns
- Next steps:
 - Meet with architects and landscapers to prepare designs/plans
 - Bring those to council in Feb or March
 - Will also need an aligned maintenance plan between CDC/FFF/property

Information: Update on Intergenerational Covenant (Pastor Julie)

- Input from Senior Ministry; Worship and Music discussed today; FFF will discuss in Feb
- Action: rep from each committee will discuss with Pastor Julie to tee up discussion at leadership retreat on the objective and concept.
- Will finalize language after FFF review of latest revisions and then bring to council for approval when all 3 committees are ready.

Information: Update on CYFM call process (Tom/Pastor Julie)

- Working towards a 2-year call via same congregational meeting as outdoor redesign
- Motion from Jim Prosser to extend Pastor Marc's existing contract; second by Amanda
- **Motion passed by hand vote; none opposed**

Information: 60th Anniversary Planning (Jeanne) - not discussed; will provide updates in Feb

Information: Upcoming meeting dates

- Next meeting date – Short meeting date on **Feb 1** immediately after annual meeting to elect officers and then full meeting on **Feb 24** at 9:00 am - In person and In zoom
- Executive Committee meeting – **Feb 12** at 7:00 pm - Zoom
- Other upcoming church council dates:



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- Jan 16 Council-recommended budget ready to congregation
- Jan 18 and Jan 25 - Budget Reviews after Church
- Feb 1 Annual Meeting
- Feb 7 First Church Council Meeting + Leadership Retreat
- 11. For the Good of the Order: any updates from anyone?

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- Update from Bill Stoll (guest) asking for the next nominating committee names. Becky Gilbertson is willing.

Meeting adjourned at 8:49pm and closed with the Lord's Prayer

Reports included below:

1. Pastor's Report
2. CYFM Director Report
3. Treasurer's Report

DEVOTIONS			
FEBRUARY Vicky Edell	MARCH Henry Moraga	APRIL Maria McDonell	MAY Jeanne Kuchera-Sikoff
JUNE Ken Riley	JULY Tracy Blois	AUGUST Joe Zimmerly	SEPTEMBER Becky Gilbertson
OCTOBER Amanda Honda	NOVEMBER Tom Neuhaus	DECEMBER Jim Prosser	JANUARY 2026 Ken Riley

CONVERSATIONS WITH COUNCIL (formerly known as Listening Post)			
	JULY Gayle/Amanda	AUGUST N/A	SEPTEMBER
OCTOBER 12	NOVEMBER Maria/Vicky (or Dec)	DECEMBER Maria/Vicky (or Nov)	JANUARY 2026

Pastor's Report- Julie Morris

December 16, 2025 – January 11, 2026



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Advent and Christmas: Our Advent and Christmas seasons were meaningful and joyful. The theme was "The Power of Yes." Thank you to all who embraced our theme and said "YES" to worshipping on Sundays, loving Christ in our families and neighbors, and serving Christ in those who are most in need. Thank you also to all those who made our season extra special, especially our Music Director, Carol Browning, our Accompanist, Jessica Helms, all our musicians, all worship assistants, the Altar Guild, and Beth Spadaro for directing the "Mary Said Yes" children's pageant on December 21.

Caroling with the Confirmation Class and others is always a highlight of the season. We caroled on December 17. Pastor Marc and I both participated in the Child Development Center's Christmas Program on December 18. It was also good to gather with St. Columba's and Camarillo UMC for a Blue Christmas service on December 21 at 2 p.m. at Cam UMC.

We held one Christmas Eve service at Mount Cross at 4:30 p.m. The sanctuary was full with 213 people and 9 people were in the PLC. We also advertised St. Columba's 11 p.m. Christmas Eve service where I preached and their 10:30 a.m. Christmas Day service where I assisted. Only 3 Mount Cross members attended those services. Sunday, December 28 we offered a service of Christmas Lessons and Carols with Holy Communion.

Funeral: I officiated at the funeral for Crockett Gardner, the mother of the Rev. Susan Klein, on Tuesday, December 30th at St. Aidan's Malibu. Carol Browning served as the musician. We continue to extend our care and prayer to Susan and her family.

Vacation: Thank you to Pastor Marc Mohr for being on-call for pastoral care while I was away Dec. 31-January 10 and for being the preacher and presider on Jan. 4. Thank you to Pastor Ralph and Deacon Cecelia for also responding to pastoral needs in my absence, and to Pastor Ralph for preaching on the day I returned, Jan. 11.

Worship Assistant Training: Holding an all-church worship assistant training was an idea that came out of the Worship and Music Committee last year. We implemented it on Sunday, January 11 after worship. The attendance was good (30 people) and it included a pot-luck lunch. Many thanks to the new "leads" for each worship assistant role (Bryan Honda, Acolytes; Marni Engh, Lectors; Gerri Tomlinson, Communion Assistants/Assisting Ministers; Gordon Henry, Ushers/Greeters; and Carol Broderick, Altar Guild) and to Gordon and Melissa Henry for helping coordinate the pot-luck.

Looking Ahead: Our Annual Meeting is Feb. 1 after worship. Our Leadership Retreat is Saturday Feb. 7 from 10 am- 2pm, followed by the Rise Against Hunger service project from 3-5 pm.



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CYFM Director - Pastor Marc Mohr

CYFM is going well. The children's Christmas pageant and the young families camps went really well. We have our annual CYFM planning meeting on Sunday, January 18th. Winter camp is approaching February 6th-8th. We are bringing 5-10 youth from Mount Cross to winter camp. Looking forward to more fun faith events.

Treasurer's Report - Jim Prosser (james_prosser@sbcglobal.net)

Report for the Month of December:

In December, we had the most successful month of giving for the whole year.

- * Pledged giving was \$26,835 (119% of budget) compared with November's \$21,409 (80% of budget).
- * Pledged giving Year to date (YTD) totaled \$322,666, just over 100% of budget.
- * Total Operating Income for December was \$56,757 (163% of budget) compared with November's \$29,532 (84% of budget).
- * Total Income for December was \$59,937 (147% of budget).
- * Total Income for the year was \$501,850 (103% of budget).
- * Non-dedicated spending for December rose slightly to \$41,634 verses \$37,026 for November; but still remained well within budget.

Report for Jan-Dec 2025:

Included in this month's reports is a Budget vs Actuals Report for the entire year (sent under separate cover).

Income Overview

- Total operating income reached \$456,016.23, exceeding the budget of \$417,700.88 by \$38,315.35, or 109.17%.
- Key income sources included:
 - Pledged income: \$322,666.12 (100.20% of budget)



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- Non-pledged envelope income: \$62,270.00 (135.15% of budget)
- Loose plate offerings: \$19,381.28 (193.81% of budget)
- Miscellaneous income: \$43,798.83 (196.42% of budget)
- Special general giving: \$7,900.00 (45.66% of budget)
- Interest income totaled \$12,344.56, slightly above the budget of \$12,000.00, achieving 102.87%.
- Facility use income was \$33,490.00, marginally exceeding the budget of \$32,990.00 (101.52%).

Expense Overview

- Total expenses amounted to \$607,467.30, which was under budget by \$21,987.22, or 96.51%.
- Major expense categories included:
 - Salaries and benefits: \$347,180.94 (93.44% of budget), with notable variances in various staff salaries and benefits.
 - Operational expenses: \$139,851.56 (101.18% of budget), with specific line items like utilities and outside services showing mixed results.
 - Family faith formation expenses totaled \$28,282.80, exceeding the budget of \$26,523.00 by 106.63%.
 - Worship and music expenses were \$6,982.34, below the budget of \$8,260.95 (84.52%).
 - Service and mission expenses were \$12,737.26, slightly under budget (99.22%).

Net Operating Income

- The net operating income was a loss of \$105,616.51, an improvement from the projected loss of \$166,763.64, reflecting a 63.33% better performance than budgeted.
- With dedicated account funding of \$129,262.24, the net operating income adjusted to a positive \$23,645.73.

Key Variances

- We had Significant over-budget performance in income sources such as loose plate offerings and miscellaneous income.
- We also had Under-budget expenses in salaries and benefits.
- Operational expenses showed a slight overage, primarily due to utilities and outside services, but nothing we can't handle.



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- The church's financial health appears stable, with a positive adjustment in net income when accounting for dedicated funding, indicating effective financial planning and community engagement.

The 2026 Budget

On the agenda for this month is the adoption of 2026 which serves as a recommendation to the congregation which is the final authority on the budget adoption.

This Proposed Budget serves as a strategic plan for Mount Cross Lutheran Church, aiming to support its mission and community engagement while maintaining fiscal responsibility. The Proposed Budget was previously sent to you by email. If any of you have any questions, please feel free to communicate them by email before Tuesday's meeting.

Income Overview

- The total projected operating income for 2026 is \$563,387, with significant contributions from pledged income (\$337,176), non-pledged envelope contributions (\$57,319), loose plate offerings (\$18,438), miscellaneous income (\$25,234), and a transfer from the Special Gifts Account (\$66,800). This was unrestricted money that has been contributed to Mount Cross since May, 2023 and has supported various initiatives since then. The remaining balance in this account is slightly over \$72,000.
- Interest income is estimated at \$13,200, while facility use income is projected at \$34,820, contributing to a total income of \$563,387.

Expense Breakdown

- Total expenses are projected at \$646,513.83, leading to an operational shortfall of \$69,790.66.
- Major expense categories include:
 - **Benevolence & Welcoming:** Totaling \$32,048.02, with mission support at \$31,548.02 and welcoming initiatives at \$500.
 - **Salaries & Benefits:** Estimated at \$386,860.16, covering pastor salaries, benefits, and staff compensation. Key allocations include:
 - Pastor salary and housing totaling \$117,161.16.
 - Music staff compensation of \$57,448.
 - Office staff salaries amounting to \$39,616.



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- Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry (CYFM) expenses totaling \$90,300.
- **Operational Expenses:** Totaling \$132,438, covering utilities, office expenses, and outside services. Notable allocations include:
 - Utilities estimated at \$23,250.
 - Office expenses projected at \$13,900.
 - Outside services, including bookkeeping and janitorial services, totaling \$47,070.

Faith Formation and Worship

- The budget for faith formation is set at \$33,899.28, with allocations for senior ministry, adult education, and children and youth education.
- Worship and music expenses total \$6,100, covering supplies, altar items, and music maintenance.

Fellowship and Service Initiatives

- Fellowship expenses are budgeted at \$1,000, focusing on hospitality supplies and programming.
- Service and mission initiatives are allocated \$1,350, including funds for outreach and community support.

Compassion and Care Team Initiatives

- The care team budget totals \$24,435.20, with significant allocations for meal preparation and health ministry.
- The 60th Anniversary Account has a dedicated budget of \$9,520, intended for use in 2026.

Financial Summary

- The proposed budget reflects a comprehensive approach to managing church finances, balancing income and expenses and operational requirements.
- The operational shortfall indicates a need for additional funding or adjustments to ensure financial sustainability in the long run. But, this year's reliance on Dedicated Account funding is only 53% of the amount used in 2025.