

St. Paul Lutheran Church Council Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2026

Meeting called to order: 11:26 AM

Present: Council members Blair Bartling, Janet Uhlir, Deb Drew, and Aaron Shaha. Also present: Karen Rau (Church Administrator), Gail Bagenstos (Guest), and Treasurer George Fosha. Absent: Laurie Lamm.

1. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

2. Approval of Minutes

September meeting minutes were not available and therefore not approved.

3. Treasurer's Report

- Giving has been strong enough that the church has not needed to draw from other accounts.
- Discussion held regarding the Youth Account, which has not been used in at least ten years and currently holds approximately \$5,000. Options considered: retain the account or reallocate funds for capital improvements.
- George is preparing more detailed financial statements for future council review.

4. Administrator's Report

- Karen announced her upcoming move to Kansas but is available to continue working remotely (pending council approval) and in-office once a week on Thursdays.
- Lector reminder emails are being sent with volunteer assignments and weekly readings.
- Working with Dave to create a pre-recorded phone message for inclement weather closures or delays.
- A wedding is scheduled for this Saturday.
- Ongoing work with SAMs to improve communication regarding church activities.

5. SAMs Report

- The SAMs program has completed its first full year, having begun on the first Sunday of January 2025.
- Duties performed include Sunday morning worship support, pastoral care and listening, communion distribution, hospital visits, community outreach, and participation in special services.
- A concern was raised regarding team visibility and congregational awareness; not all SAMs feel the team is recognized as a unified ministry group.
- Discussion included the need for a feeder program to ensure continuity as current members eventually retire, resign, or relocate.
- The church continues to seek a minister; however, there is a shortage of available clergy, and there have been no applicants for the part-time, no-benefits, rural call.

6. Building Updates: Carpet, Paint, and Trim

- A \$15,000 deposit (approximately half the project cost) was paid before January 1 to avoid a 17% price increase.
- Flooring details: carpet tiles 18" x 3'; heavy-duty entryway matting; vinyl flooring along serving line; wood-look linoleum in bathrooms and kitchen.
- Timeline: Trim installation begins Jan 19; carpet and flooring begin Feb 2.
- Painting estimate: \$4,200; Blair will confirm whether this includes labor and paint.
- Order of work: Painting -> Carpet/Flooring -> Trim.
- Additional costs: Trim materials \$5,200; lacquer and stain \$2,400.

7. Motions and Actions

- Motion by Aaron, seconded by Deb, to appoint Blair as Council President. Motion carried.
- Secretary position deferred until Laurie is present.
- Motion by Janet, seconded by Aaron, to appoint George as Treasurer. Motion carried.
- Motion by Aaron, seconded by Janet, to remove all email accounts from banking except churchoffice@stpaulcalhan.org. Motion carried.

- Motion by Janet, seconded by Aaron, to appoint Ginger Flynn, George Fosha, and Karen Rau as check signers. Motion carried.
- Motion by Janet, seconded by Aaron, to grant access to Blair Bartling, George Fosha, and Karen Rau to all financial accounts. Motion carried.
- Motion by Aaron, seconded by Janet, to approve the sanctuary paint bid contingent on it including both labor and paint. Motion carried.
- Motion by Aaron, seconded by Janet, to use Youth Account funds for capital improvements. Motion carried.

8. Additional Notes

- Blair will undergo open-heart surgery in the coming weeks and is expected to be out for 3-6 months.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 PM.