

Council Meeting Minutes
September 15, 2025

Minutes taken by: Marie Ihlefeld

Meeting start time: 7:15 pm

Meeting end time: 8:32 pm

Attendees:

Council - Present	Absent	Pastors/Staff - Present
Gail Dempsey		Pr. Andrea Cain
Vicki English		Pr. Thadd Book
Brent Borchers		Doug Bjotvedt
Anna Sion		
Mari Johnson		
MaryBeth LaMont		
Marie Ihlefeld		
Mark Farrell		
Tony Tainter		
Sue Eberle		

Devotions: Gilbert Refresh Presentation

Approval of September Agenda:

- **First:** Anna Sion
- **Second:** Mari Johnson
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

Approval of August Minutes:

- **First:** Anna Sion
- **Second:** Mari Johnson
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

Team Updates:

1. Director of Operations and Property Report: Doug Bjotvedt

- **Tempe Land Sale Update:** The City sent over a special easement request. They need to rent some space for equipment when they do the well rebuild. The land sale contract is waiting in the mayor's office for a signature.
- **Parking Lot Update:** Doug had approved a change to the contract to increase the materials and the price by \$1500. The change order was never sent to Doug and never completed by the company. Thus, not enough material was used to fill all the cracks. Mari and Vicki met with the owner of the company to survey the cracks & he agreed they would return to fix it. Now, no one is responding from the company & there are no scheduled plans to fix the unfilled cracks.

Motion to authorize Doug to contact another company to complete the unfinished work on the Gilbert Parking lot, if we don't get a response from the original company in the next week.

- **First:** Tony Tainter
 - **Second:** Gail Dempsey
 - **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**
- Doug is looking into how much is reserved in restricted gifts for the Gilbert Refresh project & also what is "Gilbert Remodel" in the Asset list.
 - The IRS finally finished a review from 2023 and it looks like an ERC refund will be coming to Desert Cross. The ERC accounting firm claimed it would be \$20,000. This is not yet confirmed, but the refund will come by 9/30/25. The ERC accounting firm gets 5.8% of the ERC refund per contract.

Addendum September 18, 2025

Corporation commission guidelines recognize certain titles that can add & remove people as signers on the bank accounts. Doug Bjotvedt has been responsible for adding and removing council members from the bank accounts every year. Because of the changes to the corporation commission guidelines, Doug's official title is not recognized anymore.

Motion to change Doug Bjotvedt's title to "acting secretary" for the purpose of banking:

- **First:** Anna Sion
- **Second:** MaryBeth LaMont
- **Approved - Motion Carried**

2. Financial Committee Report: Brent Borchers

\$145,000 of total income including grants and awards for August. We received a \$25,000 gift four months earlier than usual to help with cash flow. Also received a gift of \$20,000 now and \$30,000 more in October for IT improvements. A \$20,000 gift was received for the Memorial Garden. The summer is ending and we should be in a better financial position going forward.

· **Vote to Approve Financial Report:**

- **First:** Mari Johnson
- **Second:** Tony Tainter
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

3. President's Report Vicki English No Update

4. Pastor Reports:

● **Pr. Andrea:**

- Our fall programming at Desert Cross is off to a great start! We have good energy and participation in our worship and our education programs. We are stronger together as we worship, learn, and serve together. Our September theme is Neighbor, and we hear in the gospel a call from Jesus to be good neighbors to those near and far.
- We had an informative mission moment this weekend in Tempe and next week in Gilbert with Habitat for Humanity. Reps came to show a video of recipients of a new home that they helped build and to thank Desert Cross for 30 years of partnership. There are many ways to support Habitat including volunteering, bringing meals, financial support, and prayer.
- A new member class is planned in Tempe and Gilbert in late September and early November. We are thankful for the new people that God is sending to us to participate in our mission and ministry!
- We have set the date for the next Christ Care retreat. It will be on Friday and Saturday, January 30 & 31, 2026. The theme is "Living Faithfully from Generation to Generation" and will focus on the book of Acts and how disciples live faithfully

then, now, and into the future. Pastor Thadd and I will be the presenters and look forward to working together. More details to come.

- Desert Cross has a new missional partner in Borderlands Produce Rescue, a non-profit committed to rescuing and redistributing fresh produce with a mission of reducing food waste, feeding people nutritiously, and promoting sustainable agriculture and composting. Our Tempe campus has a perfect set up for their Produce on Wheels With-Out Waste program which is the Arizona Distribution program. We will be a monthly distribution site. We advertised in the Friday update and over 20 people from both campuses are interested in volunteering. Pastor Thadd, Denise McClellan and I met with the Founder and President last week and look forward to beginning the mission in November. More details to come.
- I completed required CE credits for boundary awareness training, “Boundaries for Christian Leadership” through the Faith+Lead Institute. This training ensures that our ministry is carried out with integrity, care, and safety for all.
- I will be attending an annual CE event in Wisconsin next week with the LALC – Lutheran Assoc. of Larger Churches – for churches with staff. The speaker is Bill Withers and the topic is “Shift Happens” focused on adapting to and leading through the changing dynamics we face in the church and world since 2020. I’m thankful for the opportunity to attend this learning event and to connect with rostered leaders from around the country.

● **Pr. Thadd:**

- Sunday School started up and & the new member class will be starting soon. Letters have been sent to potential new members and emails will follow.
- Leading a Pastor Class on the Book of Mathew. It will start the last Wednesday in October and run three Wednesdays in November. Potluck Dinner is at 6 and class starts at 7pm. This is a great lead into Advent.
- Family breakfast at the park on Labor Day was a great gathering with several generations. About 40 people attended.
- Also completed Boundary Awareness Training requirement.
- Continuing education trips coming up to Minnesota and New Mexico.
- Just returned from vacation white water rafting with family.

5. Endowment: Vicki No Update

6. Gilbert Chamber Report: Mari Johnson/Tony Tainter

- Golf Tournament coming up September 27th. It will be a fun time.
- Trunk or Treat coming up October 25th, flyers are going to Denise & Shannon is announcing in Tempe.
- Synod has \$175,000 in grant money to award. Each church can write a proposal for grants. Plan to apply for a grant for the Borderlands Produce Rescue Project. Can get

up to \$15,000 from grant. Partnering with another church increases the likelihood of winning a grant.

7. Stewardship Pr. Thadd

Stewardship is upon us. The letter is in process and will go out soon with the commitment cards. November 1st a special family reunion meal and entertainment is planned from 6-8pm. Joni may have some exciting songs planned. There are speakers set up for each week of the campaign. October 26th is commitment Sunday.

8. Project Updates: Vicki English No Updates

9. Program (Staff) Reports/Questions: No questions

10. Old Business: Vicki

I-Help: Sign up sheet going around for food & who is volunteering. Council is hosting I-help Tuesday the 23rd. Please arrive in Tempe to help by 4:30. Prepare sack lunches and dinner at 4:30 Dinner is at 6pm – we eat after everyone gets dinner & 7pm is clean up. Plan for 35 people for lunches & dinner.

11. New Business Vicki

- Refresh discussion and decision is tabled until next month. Please send all questions to Vicki.

Prayer Concerns & Praises were shared.

Closing Prayer: Pr. Andrea

Adjournment:

- **First:** Tony Tainter
- **Second:** Sue Eberle
- **Unanimously Approved**