

MESSIAH COUNCIL MINUTES

April 15, 2026 – 6:30 PM

Present: Pastor Steve Solberg, Bishop Katherine Finegan, Mark Petrie, Al Edgar, Lesley Williams, Jean Reynolds, Adrienne Wolf, Darren Smith, Paul Carstens, Laura Tripp, Terry Langenberg, Marina Shinkarenko and Dan Kilpela
Absent: Wayne Geschwindt

Opening Prayer - Pastor Steve led the council in an opening scripture reading and prayer.

Approval of Agenda – The agenda was approved as amended adding Bishop Finnigan’s update to the Consent Agenda and lease and Harbor Light updates to Old business.

Approval of March 18, 2026 minutes – After reviewing the minutes Pastor Steve noticed a typo and suggested a rewording for the Stewardship report and also a mistake in the title to read “Minutes” not “Agenda”. The rewording for the Stewardship report read as, “Stewardship Team Report – Pastor Steve Pastor Steve spoke briefly about the good that stewardship committees have done over the years and mentioned that the purpose is NOT to balance the budget but to help people grow in their response to God’s faithfulness.” Darren Smith moved to approve the minutes as amended and Al Edgar seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Consent Agenda:

1. **April 19th Meeting with Bishop Finegan:** Bishop Katherine Finegan led the council in discussing and planning the meeting with congregation on Sunday, April 19th at 4pm in the sanctuary. Bishop Finegan suggested that Council take part in reading the timeline of events that led up to the Consultation process. Mark, Terry, Lesley, Al, Adrienne volunteered to read. Bishop reminded the council that it’s important to share one’s truth. A robust discussion ensued regarding the logistics of the meeting and the recent happenings surrounding Pastor Andrew’s departure. Council members shared their concerns and hopes for the April 19th meeting. The council was in agreement that there would understandably be many strong feelings regarding Pastor Andrew’s departure and that council members do their best to calmly and thoughtful respond. The Bishop advised council members to prepare statements ahead of time that reflect what they would like to share if the opportunity were to arise. Pastor Steve shared an update that he had written for the congregation as they process the transition. The council agreed that this would be appropriate to hand out on Sunday, April 19th as well.
2. **Finance report** – The finance report was not yet available.
3. **Pastor’s report** – Pastor Steve distributed copies of the Interim Pastor Agreement, Messiah’s finalized and properly edited Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions, the 2026 Messiah Committee & Team Members lists. Pastor Steve reported that Pastor Christine Thomas-

Echelbarger had inquired about whether Council would be in favor of hiring a part-time worker to help with Sunday School and perhaps VBS as well. No formal action was taken but the council agreed that this would be worth pursuing.

4. **Committee Reports** – The Stewardship Team is working on “Volunteer Thank You Dinner” set for May 27, at 6:00pm.

Old Business

1. **Pulpit Supplies Update** – President Mark Petrie reported that pulpit supply was covered through June. Pastor Steve had also provided his availability for July and August. John Magnuson, Pastor Allan Johnson, and Pastor Dave Echelbarger have also been contacted and have agreed to help. The council discussed Services at the Beach and scheduled the following tentative dates: June 28th, August 16th, September 6th. Paul Carstens volunteered to contact the City of Marquette at Clark Lambros Beach.
2. **Financial Wellness Check/Internal Audit** – Mark Petrie followed up on an email he had sent to the council with some information from Pastor Frankenstein from Escanaba. Mark reported that based on his lengthy discussion with Pastor Frankenstein rather than undergo very time consuming internal or very expensive and drawn out external audits the recommendation was to share a checklist for Mike Hill and Anne Rydholm to respond to. This would serve as a good starting point to continue the conversation with Pastor Frankenstein regarding our financial wellness. President Petrie shared that he felt like Messiah was “in a good place” in regards to finances and felt comfortable proceeding in this direction. No formal action was taken on the part of council.
3. **Lease** -Vice President Al Edgar reported that Harbor Light received the Federal 501c3 status (giving them non-profit status). He also reported that the a new lease was in the works for Lutheran Social Services.

New Business

1. **Interim agreement between Rev. Solberg and Messiah** – Pastor Steve had the council review the updated Interim Pastor agreement. Paul Carstens moved to approve the agreement. This was seconded by Darren Smith and the motion carried. Pastor Steve shared that he will be open to discussing any issues that may arise and encouraged open communication. He also mentioned that his stance on officiating same-sex marriages had changed. He mentioned that there may be some that remember his former stance on the issue. He assured the council that he would be able to perform same-sex weddings

and that he would have no issues with Messiah's position in being a Reconciling In Christ Congregation.

2. **Pr. Steve's housing allowance designation** – Pr. Steve requested that his salary be designated as housing allowance. Al Edgar moved to allow Pastor Steve to designate his housing allowances for tax purposes. Pastor Adrienne Wolf seconded the motion and the motion carried.
3. **Letters from the congregation** – Mark Petrie shared that some letters to the council regarding Pastor Andrew's departure had been answered individually. The council agreed that the meeting on Sunday April 19th would answer many of the questions and that perhaps those individuals be responded to in person. Terry Langenberg reported that he had talked with at least one of the individuals who had written to the council last Sunday.
4. **Council presence on committees** – The Council reviewed the lists of committee members. Lesley Williams volunteered to serve on the finance committee. Al Edgar mentioned that Molly Lutey was happy to continue serving as a liaison between Harbor Light and the council.
5. **Transition Team**
 - a. Mark Petrie mentioned that Pr. Sharolyn would like to meet with the council to begin discussing the transition process. A Wednesday evening meeting will likely be scheduled.
 - b. Volunteers for the transition team – 14 individuals have expressed interest. Mark shared that he had let them know that the committee will likely be made up of only 6 individuals and that Pr. Sharolyn had mentioned that trying to achieve as diverse a committee as possible would be advisable.
6. **Conference 8 & Youth Ministry** – Pastor Steve reported that he would be meeting with Pastor Alex LaChapelle from Prince of Peace to discuss confirmation and youth ministry. Paul Carstens mentioned the need to assess which grades were involved in confirmation and the need for 6th graders to be involved in something as they were not included in confirmation this year.
7. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m. and closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Next meeting: May 20th at 6:30p.m