

Messiah Council Agenda
March 18, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

Check-ins & Roll Call

Present: Lesley Williams, Jean Reynolds, Adrienne Wolf, Wayne Geschwindt, Darren Smith, Paul Carstens, Laura Tripp, Terry Langenberg, Dan Kilpela, Pastor Andrew Plocher, Pastor Steve Solberg (Absent: Marina Shikarenko, Al Edgar)

Opening Prayer – Pastor Andrew led the council in an opening prayer.

Approval of Agenda – The agenda was approved as amended adding two Old Business Items and rewording “Action Items” to “Consent Agenda”.

Approval of February 11, 2026 minutes – After reviewing the minutes from the February meeting Adrienne Wolf moved to approve them. Paul Carstens supported the motion and it carried.

Consent Agenda: After reviewing items #1-4 below the council accepted the following reports.

1. Finance Reports – February appeared to be a financially strong month for the congregation.
2. Pastors Reports – Both Pastor Andrew and Pastor Steve provided reports to the council.
3. Building and Grounds Team – Currently without a leader due to leader stepping down (a good possibility of someone within the committee filling the position)
4. Stewardship Team Report – Pastor Steve spoke briefly about the good that stewardship committees have done over the years and mentioned that the purpose is to balance the budget not to “guilt members in to being blessed by God if they give to the church”.
5. Endowment Committee Report/Awards Recommendations – 1st year – 6 Applications were received (5 of which were approved). There was some discussion of Cedar Tree Institute: Pastor Andrew gave some background on the organization led by retired Pastor John Magnuson and commented that it is an inter-faith organization which several Messiah members are active in. The council was made aware that we should be anticipating a cycling of the funding proposals being fulfilled and also that programs will be evaluated after each season.

The council moved to approve the Endowment Committee’s Recommendations as follows:

Approved: Item A (Messiah Assistance Fund), Item B (Quilters), Item C (Superior Connections - with the change that \$3725 be taken from category 3), Item D (LGBTQIA+ Affirming Therapy Group) and E (Cedar Tree Institute). The motion was made by Mark Petrie, supported by Paul Carstens and carried unopposed. Council is seeking clarification on the total Annual amount available and needing a reminder how exactly the percentage available for distributions was calculated and will be calculated in years to come.

It was noted that the presentation of the awards will be announced in all Messiah communications. Mike Hill will be made aware that Council approved the Endowment committee’s awarded amounts.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. 4th St House / OATS - Dan Kilpela informed the council that his wife, Gwen Storm, will soon be renting space from OATS to do therapy. Dan assured the Council that he will recuse himself

Messiah Council Agenda
March 18, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

from future voting on actions taken by the council regarding the lease of the building used by OATS to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

2. Mark Petrie shared that Al Edgar (who was not present due to travel) reported to him that there still needs to be more follow up on lease agreement with LSS property (Pastor Andrew shared with council that LSS was primarily Grant Funded Youth Services to the best of his knowledge). Al also reported that the Building and Grounds Committee needs to coordinate with LSS to investigate needed repairs to the building in order to renew the lease agreement.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Paul Carstens moved that the council appoint Mike Hill as Assistant Treasurer. Laura Tripp seconded and the motion carried.
2. The council reviewed the letter to council from Jeanne and Fred Groos expressing sadness upon hearing the news of Pastor Andrew's departure and how much good they believe Pastor Andrew has done particularly when it comes to making all feel welcome no matter their past church experience. They also brought up many thoughtful questions regarding how it all happened and if there is anything that can be done in the future to avoid such situations. Wayne Geschwindt, Adrienne Wolfe and Laura Tripp expressed the need to respond to Jeanne and Fred's letter formally from council. Dan Kilpela volunteered to draft the response. Pastor Andrew mentioned the availability of a Messiah Council email address that could be used to reply to Fred and Jeanne's letter and similar letters that may be received in the future.
3. Letter to Synod regarding Consultation Process – The Council discussed eventual need to write a letter to the Synod providing feedback regarding the recent consultation process. The Council agreed that it was too early to write the letter and that further discussion would be needed. It was advised that council members should make notes on things that may need to be included eventually in a letter to the Synod as they think of them.
4. Terms of Separation for Pastor Andrew – Pastor Andrew shared the challenges of transitioning out of employment at Messiah and the uncertainty that this poses for his family. He shared that the Bishop was in favor of 3 months of severance pay. Pastor Andrew requested 6 months of severance pay and shared that he was aware of past situations where pastors who were dismissed for very egregious issues had been granted 3 months of severance pay. After sharing a sample document of a severance agreement with the council, Pastor Andrew and Pastor Steve voluntarily left the room to allow council to discuss the matter privately. After discussion Mark Petrie moved to approve a severance package of 4 months compensation consistent with the approved annual budget, along with a waiver of claims, with the exact monetary amounts and appropriate compensation being subject to review by Assistant Treasurer Mike Hill. The motion was seconded by Paul Carstens and carried unopposed. Upon returning to the room Pastor Andrew was updated on the Council's decision. Pastor Andrew asked if there would be a formal document indicating this. Mark Petrie indicated that he would work on it.
5. Review / make final revisions to "Council Highlights" to be shared with congregation. – The council agreed to continue the discussion of the letter to eventually be shared with the

Messiah Council Agenda
March 18, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

congregation over email and to include Pastor Andrew in the email discussion as he is also a member of the council.

6. Pulpit Supply & Reimbursement – Mark Petrie moved that we approve a \$150 for 1st service and \$100 for each additional, plus mileage, lodging, and per diem as necessary. Paul Carstens seconded the motion and it was approved. Pastor Steve reported that he will be in talks with the Bishop and Pastor Andrew as it pertains to filling in pastoral care responsibilities.
7. Updates on Additional contacts for potential pulpit supply – Terry Langenberg shared that Dave and Christine Echelbarger are willing to help. Mark Petrie asked Pastor Allan Johnson who shared that he was willing to help with Saturday services (and he will be asking Jon Magnuson). Paul Carstens reported that Grant Soltwich and Dave Blomquist (both lay ministers) were willing to fill in as well. Paul also reported that Dave Horn is in the process of becoming an authorized clergy pulpit supply.

Pastor Steve Solberg provided his availability with Mark Petrie starting May 9th and 10th.

An Ad Hoc Committee to Schedule Pulpit Supply was formed. Those who volunteered to work together on this were: Terry Langenberg, Jean Reynolds, Darren Smith and Mark Petrie.

8. Review Senior Pastor Job Description (tabled due to time constraints).

Pastor Steve closed the meeting with a brief Confession and Forgiveness and the Lord's Prayer

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Next Meeting Date – April 15, 2026 at 6:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Dan Kilpela (Secretary)