

**Desert Cross Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes**

April 20, 2026

Minutes taken by: Marie Ihlefeld

Meeting start time: 7:02 PM

Meeting end time: 8:25 PM

Attendees:

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

Devotions: Mari Johnson

Approval of April Agenda

- **First:** Mari Johnson
- **Second:** Sue Eberle
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

Approval of March Minutes

- **First:** Mari Johnson
- **Second:** Sue Eberle
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

Team Updates:

1. Director of Operations and Property Report: Doug Bjotvedt

- **Tempe Land Sale Update:** Title company is waiting on the release from the bank, MIF in Chicago. The bank is doing audits on the loans & there are no liens. The city is checking with the title company again, this is a very slow process. We have already passed the 60 day escrow – it will close later than anticipated.
- New financial reports with new software are not as user friendly – getting a ten page PDF that is not interactive. Following up with the new company – excel format would be better.
- Gilbert Parking Lot Account Remaining Balance is \$13,000 to \$14,000 (had raised ~\$31,000 and spent ~\$18,000) - Deanna is making a journal entry change and will adjust the report to show this account balance.

2. Financial Committee Report: Brent Borchers

- Giving is down about \$35,000 year over year --- similar to 2024. We have a good buffer now with extra money for projects, but we will be paying for those projects and summer is coming. A bit concerned, but could improve with Easter & attendance is up.
- Tellers – currently have 5 volunteers and are running with that. Calling a list of potential volunteers.
- Finance team putting property assessment on hold (would cost 12k+) while Doug and Tony go through equipment on both campuses to assess condition and need. Tony provided a list of A/C's and current condition to council – 8 A/Cs have reached max life but are still working. Still gathering some A/C serial numbers, model numbers & sizes.
- The fire panel still needs to be replaced --- it's waiting to be permitted by the city. There is a leak in the community center that needs to be fixed.

Vote to Approve Financial Report:

- **First:** Tony Tainter
- **Second:** MaryBeth LaMont
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

3. President's Report Vicki English No Update

4. Pastor Reports:

- **Pr. Thadd:**
 - Holy Week went well. First communion & the stripping of the altar by the first communicants is a special tradition. Palm Sunday was action packed in Gilbert with 3 Baptisms. A lot of great music for Holy Week.

- Great continuing education at Festival of Faith and Writing in Grand Rapids, Michigan at Calvin University. It was also fun catching up with friends.
- Pastor class is 4 Wednesdays in May. Focusing on books of the bible you do not spend as much time with eg: Titus & James, Peter 1 & 2, & John 1 & 2. Dinner is at 6 & class at 7.
- There is a new member class in Gilbert this Sunday & new members are joining the first Sunday in May.
- Four 8th graders will be confirmed on May 17th.
- **Pr. Andrea:** Senior Pastor Report
 - 2026 has been such an encouraging, energetic, spirit-filled year at Desert Cross so far! There truly is a renewed energy with new people, returning people, growing attendance and participation, new babies, multiplying kids, and new ministries!
 - I am truly in awe of the faith and dedication of all of our leaders and volunteers, and you really warm my heart and amaze me with all the ways you serve, spend your time, share your talents, support the church, and care for each other and our community and world.
 - We just had a baptism of a one-year-old in Tempe yesterday, and if you could have seen the look of amazement on her face when I made the first splash of water. It was special. By the 3rd splash she wanted more and seemed to know it was special too.
 - Our Election meeting is coming up, and I'm so thankful for our candidates who said "Yes" and are willing to serve. I am equally thankful for you, Council leaders, for your energy and commitment to leading Desert Cross – we are doing great things together and even having fun – like last night. Instead of the Sunday scaries, we had a Sunday Funday and it was so nice to gather with you and your spouses – what a great turnout and so fun to just visit and enjoy a meal together.
 - Lent and Easter were a joy and our Easter breakfast in Tempe was a real hit! It's fun to have more fellowship events like Lenten soup suppers and our Snack & Chat on Sundays is really taking off with great attendance – again, thanks to all who make that happen!
 - A highlight for me has been helping teach Confirmation. The kids are just so open and have the best theological questions and musings and are willing to share their thoughts and questions. We learn from the kids too when we hear their perspectives and it's pretty special.
 - New member class in Tempe this Sunday – we have 8 new people joining this weekend and 3 returning members who are re-activating their memberships. It's always a special time getting to know new people and helping them get connected and serving. We are thankful for the opportunity.

- We have lots to look forward to this Spring with blessings and thank you's and special things in worship. Thank you for being a part of our community!

5. Endowment: Vicki English

- The endowment committee voted to approve a grant and has asked for council approval.

Vote to Approve Endowment Grant of \$1500 to Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Tucson, to fund a child protection training program for staff.

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

6. Gilbert Chamber Report: Mari Johnson/Tony Tainter

- Anxious to start the capital campaign for Gilbert Refresh. Do we have a template for Flyers? Flyers need to have address, information, time and both of our Pastors' names. For major events get the flyers approved by the Pastors. Good will offerings for events goes to the general fund.
- Dana needs more volunteers for hospitality at Gilbert. Suggest making an announcement in service & creating a sign-up sheet.

7. Stewardship Pr. Thadd No update

8. Project Updates: Vicki No project Updates

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

10. Old Business: Vicki

- **The Future of Fundraising at Desert Cross:** Fundraising should be for mission and outreach outside our walls.

11. New Business Vicki

- **Capital Campaign:** Refresh-Gilbert capital campaign letter and commitment cards are at the printer & will be mailed out. There is already \$7,000 in the Refresh fund to get started. It is expected to be around \$110,000 total & they can start lining up contractors.

Vote to approve any extra money that remains from the Gilbert Refresh Project when Phase 1 and Phase 2 are complete be transferred to the capital expense fund.

- **First:** Brent Borchers
- **Second:** Mari Johnson
- **Unanimously approved - Motion Carried**

- **Nominating Committee Updates:** Thank you to Anna - hope everyone got the email about the candidates – they are excited
- **Prep for Elections Meeting April 26:** Written ballots will be on standby if needed – thanks to Wendy they are already copied and cut.
- **Golf Tournament:** Proposals need to be brought to council for the revenue from the golf tournament. Where should it go? National Youth Gathering suggested.
- **Grant Request Oversight:** There is a process for grant requests, they need to go through the office. The Pastors need to approve any grant requests & we must have a running tally of the grant requests being made. Communication about grants will go into the Friday update.
- The next meeting is May 18th in Tempe with new and old council members. Anna and Brent's last meeting.

Prayer Concerns & Praises were shared

Closing Prayer: Pr. Andrea

Adjournment:

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