

**Desert Cross Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2026**

Minutes taken by: Marie Ihlefeld
Meeting start time: 7:01 PM
Meeting end time: 7:53 PM

Attendees:

Council – Present	Absent	Pastors/Staff - Present
Gail Dempsey	Pr. Andrea Cain	Pr. Thadd Book
Vicki English	Tony Tainter	Doug Bjotvedt
Marie Ihlefeld	Mari Johnson	
Sharon Bucher		
MaryBeth LaMont		
Mark Farrell		
Sue Smith		
Sue Eberle		

Devotions: Sue Eberle

Motion to update July Agenda to include updates on the Cookbook project and the Gilbert Holiday Craft Fair.

- **First:** Vicki English
- **Second:** Sue Smith
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

Approval of July Agenda:

- **First:** Vicki English
- **Second:** Sue Smith
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

Approval of June Minutes (with fixes to a couple typos on last names)

- **First:** Vicki English
- **Second:** Sue Eberle
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

Team Updates:

1. Director of Operations and Property Report Doug Bjotvedt

- Provided Financials for May and June. Upgrades were done to the accounting software & getting all electronic giving updated.
- Currently \$30,000 behind last year in giving to the General Fund. Ahead of 2024 giving. Attendance has dropped over the summer. Rental income is down \$30,000 compared to last year. Getting \$12,000 from a new tenant over the next 12 months. Currently projecting \$26,600 loss for 2026 with year to date at a \$96,000 loss (expenses above revenue). Restricted donations for projects carried over from last year puts us \$8,800 positive Year to Date. Going into tight months with high operational expenses (A/C).
- Helen S. Wilson Fund is a charitable donation for mission outreach. \$50,000 was left designated to feed the hungry and help hurt in the world. Hope to last 10 years – money is transferred to Special Hunger Jar. \$4,500 moved to Special Hunger Jar recently.
- Tempe Parking lot fund is in Special Gifts. Special Gifts total of ~\$145K is comprised of 22 accounts & only have broken out in the report what people have requested.
- Received notice the Gilbert mortgage interest rate will be doubled. Mortgage is 5-year ARM, with interest rate adjusted automatically every 5 years. Might be able to negotiate a lower rate.
- Land Sale still waiting on title company --- City of Tempe and Desert Cross have provided all documentation.

2. Financial Committee Report: Sharon Bucher

- **Treasurers' Report:** Report sent via email & highlights above in Doug's report.

Vote to Approve Financial Report:

- **First:** Marie Ihlefeld
- **Second:** Sue Eberle
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

3. President's Report MaryBeth

- **I-Help Dinner:** I-Help Dinner went well – tacos were great & there were no leftovers.
- **Congregation Meetings:** Congregational meetings are scheduled & being put on the calendar, to avoid conflicts with Kid's connect or other activities.
- **Contact List:** Council member contact list was emailed to council.

4. Team Report Questions:

- **Endowment:** MaryBeth following up with Endowment – see Addendum.
- **Stewardship:** No new update
- **Gilbert Chamber:** Chamber update was sent to council.
 - Refresh will provide capital campaign totals to Gilbert and Tempe on Sunday the 19th and Sunday the 26th. Hoping to start work mid-August depending on contractor schedules.
 - The Holiday Craft Fair in Gilbert will take place on Saturday November 14th. Committee requests council approval of the Flyer for vendors & approval of funds raised going to House of Refuge. Vendors will rent tables or booths & there will be a Desert Cross table with volunteers & information & business cards. There will be food trucks, raffle ticket sales & the youth group could sell food (hot dogs?) for the 2027 Youth Gathering.

Motion to approve the Gilbert Holiday Craft Fair Flyer for Vendors & Holiday Craft Fair funds raised to House of Refuge:

- **First:** Sharon Bucher
- **Second:** Sue Eberle
- **Unanimously Approved – Motion Carried**

5. Pastor Reports:

- **Pr. Thadd:**
 - Out of town half of the month to see friends in NYC & family in Illinois. Enjoyed the Midwest before the wildfire smoke arrived.
 - Working on the Holiday Craft Fair Committee & working with Brian and Dana on refresh.
 - One more sermon series on Acts to finish July.
 - Fall planning is mostly complete. Thank you to Denise McClellan for gathering 8 different school calendars to plan around. Fall is coming quickly.
 - Blessing of the backpacks will be August 2nd – bring your backpacks & there will be extra cards to hand out to friends & family.

6. Project Updates: MaryBeth/Vicki

- **Cookbooks:** Have enough recipes, 200+, for the cookbook to proceed. Getting price info from the printers & will determine the cookbook price. Should finish by the end of July.
- **Memorial Garden:** The Memorial Garden upgrades are complete until Fall. New plants will be added this Fall.

7. Program (Staff) Reports/Questions: None

8. Old Business: MaryBeth

- **Volunteer Mission Moments:** MaryBeth Mission moments went well, there were lots of sign-ups & participation.
- **Tempe Parking Lot Update:** Vicki/Gail/Mark No meetings yet

9. New Business: MaryBeth/Marie/Sharon

- The December Council meeting is very late this year - December 21st, four days before Christmas. Marie will be out of town. (Not sure if anyone else is out?) December 6th is the Congregational Budget meeting & December 14th is the Finance meeting.

Prayer Concerns & Praises were shared

Closing Prayer: Pr. Thadd

Adjournment:

- **First:** Sharon Bucher
- **Second:** Sue Smith
- **Unanimously Approved**

Addendum:

On June 23rd 2026 a request was made to council to approve scholarships and grants from the Endowment Committee. Council voted and approved via email.

Motion to approve Endowment grant request of up to \$35,000 in matching funds for refurbishing the Tempe Campus Community Center, Endowment grant request of \$1,000 to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chandler to continue its music performance program, \$2,000 Endowment scholarships for 11 applicants, \$1,000 scholarship for one applicant & add \$75,000 to checking.

- **First:** Gail Dempsey
- **Second:** Sue Smith
- **Majority Approved – Motion Carried**

The Endowment Grant request to Camp Aloma was approved by council & recorded in June 15th 2026 council meeting minutes.