

Salemsborg Lutheran Church Council Agenda + Minutes

Monday, October 12, 2026 at 7 P.M.

Mission Statement: *"We at Salemsborg have so benefited from the gifts of God's love, peace, strength and joy through Jesus, that we seek to share these same gifts with others in grateful response!"*

Executive Summary

- Accepted the September financial report. Year-to-date giving was \$188,945, compared with \$186,837 at the same point last year, and was considered generally on track.
- Received notice that the Earl Bane Foundation did not fund the HVAC grant request. Council will compare multiple bids, communicate the need to the congregation, and consider a smaller reapplication and other grant sources.
- Confirmed strong parish activity, including 20 middle school confirmation students, significantly improved high school youth participation, 32 new parish members, and continued solid worship attendance.
- Approved designating monthly noisy offerings to the Mission Committee's featured mission, with the focus communicated through the bulletin, displays, entry board, and announcements.
- Continued development of the 2027 budget. Current planning assumes 3.5% salary increases, higher utilities and insurance, and an overall increase of approximately \$17,000 if other categories remain stable.
- Directed the farm committee to inspect the church farm erosion problem with the county conservationist and tenant, refine alternatives, and return with a recommendation and cost.
- Continued work to consolidate maintenance needs into one shared list, clarify supervision and responsibilities, and reconvene the facilities group.
- Next meeting: November 9, 2026.

Call to Order: Council President

Opening Prayer: Pastor Ben

I. Consent Agenda

Financial Report: see Google Drive

- Through September, church utilities totaled approximately \$10,600, or 48% of the annual utilities budget. Propane costs are expected to increase in the coming months.
- An \$8,100 Waddel invoice for Pastor's office heat-pump crossover system had just been received and was not yet reflected in the report. Council confirmed it may be paid from the approved maintenance budget.
- Year-to-date giving was \$188,945, compared with \$186,837 at the same point in 2025. September giving was lower, but the year remained generally on track, with stronger giving typically occurring in November and December.
- Approximately \$120 from Party in the Park book sales was intended for the Growth Fund but appears to have entered general checking. Jennifer will confirm the amount and correct the designation.
- Stale scholarship checks will be reviewed with the bank and handled through year-end general-ledger adjustments as appropriate.
- The youth T-shirt account remained approximately \$352 in the negative. Options for clearing or carrying the balance will be reviewed before year-end.
- Quinton Pickering remains under contract through the end of the fiscal year. The maintenance position and expectations will be reviewed for the next term.
- Motion made and seconded to accept the financial report. Motion carried.

II. Communications

A. Earl Bane Foundation

- Council received notice that the Earl Bane Foundation would not fund the HVAC request because of application volume and funding priorities.
- A smaller, more focused application may be submitted in January. Additional possibilities include the Dane G. Hansen Foundation and Greater Salina Community Foundation matching-grant programs.

B. Pastor's Report

- Sunday school attendance has been uneven because of family schedules, but middle school confirmation is strong, with approximately 20 students attending every other Wednesday. Confirmation Sunday is October 25.
- High school youth participation has improved substantially. Thirteen attended the Topgolf outing, compared with a high of three at an event last year. Upcoming

activities include paintball, service work, and discussion of a summer mystery trip.

- Youth leaders are using group texts with short devotions and questions, and students are encouraging one another to participate.
- Worship attendance remains solid at both churches. New Member Sunday welcomed 32 new parish members.
- Holding Bible study at the church has improved accessibility for new members; attendance has grown by four this year.
- A joint bluegrass service is planned for April 4, the Sunday after Easter.
- Pastor Ben continues visitation and asked council members to identify members needing hospital or home visits.
- Redeemer Lutheran Church thanked the parish for 12,179 items donated to its blessing-box ministry. The ministry has expanded the number of daily restockings and the range of items available.
- The parish golf tournament drew 21 teams and was expected to net just over \$9,000 after final cart costs.

III. Committee Reports

Memorial

- A detailed written report was provided on current projects, remaining Fellowship Center work, and funds awaiting designation.
- Council discussed the need to clarify guidelines for using undesignated memorial funds while respecting donor-family intentions.
- Possible uses include HVAC needs and future sanctuary improvements, but broader communication and review are needed before allocating significant funds.
- The Memorial Committee bylaws were added to the October shared folder for reference.
- The Growth Fund balance was reported at approximately \$53,000, with approximately \$48,189 undesignated.

Worship & Music

- Confirmation Sunday is October 25. Cakes and photographs are being arranged, and confirmands will participate in the sermon.
- Confirmation meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays, with meals at 6:30 p.m. Additional meal volunteers are needed.
- A joint service is planned for December 27. A Blue Christmas service is planned for December 23 at 7 p.m. at Falun.

- A joint bluegrass service is planned for April 4 at 10 a.m.
- Funeral guidelines remain unfinished and may be taken up after the first of the year.

Youth & Family

- Sunday school attendance for the reported class has averaged three to four students, but the remodeled upper room has improved focus and participation.
- The youth group received 110–120 pounds of donated beef toward its chili-feed goal for the Haunted Trail.
- Council discussed meal coverage for confirmation and youth activities. The parent group will continue to take primary responsibility, with needs communicated more broadly when help is required.
- A middle school parent meeting was scheduled for October 14 to clarify responsibilities and support.
- All current students have Bibles, and additional Bibles remain available.

Outreach

- The Christmas Family Workshop date still needs to be set and communicated in the November newsletter so families can plan.

Maintenance

- HVAC remains the primary facilities issue. Council has a bid from C&L, expects a bid from Callabresi, and still needs the Waddel proposal and supporting information.
- Council agreed that proposals should be organized into comparable scopes, including a minimum replacement option and a more complete option.
- The congregation should be informed before the annual meeting about the failed grant request, the condition of the systems, bid progress, likely timing, and possible funding needs.
- A recent emergency Saturday service call totaled \$473.15 after the vendor reduced labor and did not charge overtime. The response included refrigerant, a contactor, wiring, and related repairs.
- The facilities group will meet again after church to review and prioritize the shared maintenance list. Kyle will arrange and announce the meeting.
- Council discussed establishing greater continuity in maintenance leadership. At minimum, a council member should continue convening knowledgeable volunteers, maintaining priorities, and bringing major recommendations forward.

- All maintenance needs should be consolidated into one shared list. Mona received access so additional items can be added without creating a separate list.
- Tom is supervising Quinton under the current contract. Expectations, check-ins, Sunday opening responsibilities, and the longer-term maintenance position need further clarification.

Mission and Vision

- The Mission Committee created a rotating 2027 mission schedule and will communicate upcoming opportunities through display slides, the bulletin, the entry dry-erase board, and verbal announcements.
- The committee wants to give new members specific, practical ways to participate rather than only general invitations.
- November focus areas are the Dollar Pantry and Operation Christmas Child. December focus areas are the Salina Rescue Mission and the Christmas Family ministry.
- Additional longstanding ministries, including Bethany Home, should be brought to the committee so they can be included in the schedule and communications.
- Motion made and seconded to designate each month's noisy offering to the Mission Committee's featured mission and communicate the designated purpose to the congregation. Motion carried.

IV. Old Business

No additional old business was acted on.

V. New Business

A. HVAC and Facilities Funding

- Because the Earl Bane Foundation request was denied, council will continue gathering and comparing bids, pursue other grant opportunities, and prepare a clear recommendation for the congregation.
- The initial communication will explain the need and timeline; a later congregational meeting will present comparable options and funding requirements.
- Council intends to provide more than the constitutionally required two-Sunday notice so members have time to understand the issue and consider support.

B. 2027 Budget

- Jennifer began the draft budget using a 3.5% cost-of-living increase for salaries.

- Utilities are running approximately 20% above last year, and insurance premiums increased approximately 33%. Property taxes are expected to rise from approximately \$3,500 to \$4,100.
- With these changes and otherwise stable categories, the preliminary budget is approximately \$17,000 higher than the prior year.
- Once HVAC costs are known, council will determine whether a replacement amount should be included as a clearly explained budget line item.
- A detailed line-by-line budget review is planned for the November meeting.

C. Church Farm Erosion and Terrace Work

- The Saline County conservationist prepared a map recommending two terrace improvements to redirect water, reduce erosion, and protect buried lines while retaining farmability.
- The preliminary estimate was slightly more than \$4,000.
- The farm committee will walk the site with the tenant, county conservationist, and other knowledgeable participants; confirm the scope; obtain estimates; and return with a recommendation.
- Council noted that expenditures under \$5,000 may be approved by council, while larger expenses require congregational action.
- Available conservation funding will be checked again, particularly if the work qualifies as new terrace construction rather than repair.

VI. Action Items

- **Jennifer:** Correct the approximately \$120 Growth Fund designation, review stale scholarship checks, continue the 2027 budget draft, and prepare for line-by-line review.
- **HVAC/maintenance leadership:** Obtain the missing Waddel information, receive the Callabresi proposal, and organize all bids into comparable scopes and options.
- **Kyle:** Schedule and announce the next facilities work session and continue using the shared maintenance list.
- **Pastor Ben:** Provide requested new-member information to ministry leaders and continue identifying opportunities for new-member engagement.
- **Worship & Music:** Complete Confirmation Sunday arrangements and continue work on funeral guidelines.
- **Youth & Family:** Use the parent meeting to clarify meal and activity responsibilities and communicate needs when broader help is required.
- **Outreach:** Set the Christmas Family Workshop date in time for the November newsletter.

- **Mission Committee:** Publish the monthly mission focus and noisy-offering designation through all planned communication channels.
- **Farm Committee:** Walk the erosion area, validate the recommended terrace work, obtain pricing, recheck funding eligibility, and bring a recommendation to council.

VII. Closing: Lord's Prayer & Adjournment

Motion made and seconded to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

VIII. Next Meeting

Church Council Date: November 9, 2026