

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

MARCH 9, 2026

Council Members Present:

Julie Brewster, Pastor Scott Cady, Vinni Carey, Pamela Little, Judy Ludwig, Dana O'Brien, Robin Potwora, Greg Weingart

Zoom: Diane Boscarino, Jeanette Richard

Council Members Absent:

Beth Brower

Others Present:

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Council President Vinni Carey at 7:00 pm.

Devotions and Prayer – Pastor read from the Oxford Book of Prayers, one from St. Augustine

M/S/P Agenda amended, Judy Ludwig, Greg Weingart

Celebrations, Appreciation and Thank You

1. Fish – thanking us for our donation on Dec. 31, 2025, for \$127.14
2. June Seiser and Paula Rosenbeck for many years of counting and all their dedication for doing this week after week.
3. Thanks to Greg, Ralph, Jim Clavette, Lisa Bodner for clean-up of Hilltop water problem.
4. Paula and June for taking over a coffee hour.
5. Leana Warner for helping Jeremy during communion.
6. Thank you for getting your reports into the Secretary early.

Privilege of the Floor –

Ashley Jones, Lightwell Insurance Advisors was not in attendance but sent in a letter. They are unable to provide cheaper insurance coverage than what we currently have. She will run the numbers again during the summer to see if numbers might come in lower.

Zach Adams sent a quote, and Pamela is looking it over. Greg suggested that it might be a good idea to compare, and if the prices are close, going with another company might be a good idea due to past claims with the church. This will continue to be looked at, have time since policy doesn't come up for renewal until August.

Approval of Council Minutes

M/S/P Diane Boscarion, Greg Weingart to approve the minutes of February 9, 2026, as amended. Add discussion of counters to the minutes, going back to 2 teams of 3 counters, Pamela, Jeanette, Judy, Karen Marciano were mentioned.

Treasurer's Report

M/S/P Judy Ludwig, Julie Brewster to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented, pending audit.

Year to Date/P&L, total income shows we have brought in \$15,531.28 more than what was budgeted. Envelopes for the 2 services held online were only behind by \$1646.00 and Hilltop is above their budget by about \$5000.00. Expense wise, tough winter for heating, plowing, etc. Property is only over by \$2500.00. Snow removal was \$7600.00 so far. Total budget is over by \$5000.00 but due to the increase in income, we are only over budget by \$2966.00.

Finance met with Chris Benjamin, Financial advisor said that all Hilltop accounts are frozen for scholarship, still meeting with back office. Not sure what the problem is. Doesn't match up with what the state has, names don't match, etc., suggested investing somewhere else. It will be resolved. The committee will be meeting with other financial advisors going forward.

Diane brought up a form to have everyone fill out a confidentiality sheet who is dealing with sensitive parishioner information, counters, bookkeeper, secretary, treasurer, scholarship, Angel Project. Will be sent out to council by email to review.

Pastor's Report – Scott Cady

Pastoral Acts

- 3 pastoral conversations
- Home visit for funeral planning
- 5 pastoral phone calls
- 3 funerals, 2 with reception
- 1 nursing home visit
- 4 pastoral emails re; funerals

St. Paul's events, classes, meetings, activities

- 3 zoom Bible studies
- 2 in person Bible studies
- 1 conversation re: IT
- 1 conversation re: evangelism
- 1 meeting re: Toastmasters
- 4 choir rehearsals

- TAFA prom greeter
- 1 Men's Breakfast
- 1 meeting re: Hilltop
- 1 meeting re: various concerns within the church
- 7-8am Ashes distribution
- 2 sessions reading to Hilltop
- Morning Ashes and full service on 'Ash Wednesday
- IT meeting
- Worship & Music meeting
- Meeting re: counting money x 3
- 4 Regular worship services - one with Mark Lingel, Synod staff
- 2 coffee hours
- 3 confirmation classes
- 1 Lenten potluck/devotions

Other

- Helping an ill neighbor x 2
- Text study with Naugatuck Valley Conference
- 3 days' vacation - 3/2, 3/3, 3/4

Discretionary Fund Balance \$95

Reflections There are so many things going on right now, most of which are at least possible boosts to our ministries. We'll be dealing with many of them on the agenda. From a pastoral perspective too, there are several positive signs. I'll give you some examples. Sun March 8 Jeremy was the acolyte. He loves doing this, which is a great sign in itself. He is non-verbal so I was saying both "The Body of Christ, given for you." and then for him "The Blood of Christ shed for you." When Lena Warner, high schooler, received communion, she whispered, "I'll speak for Jeremy." She stepped up and did the words over the chalice for him. Sweet. Our ushers did not show, but the Wasik's readily agreed to do the collection at the last minute. After worship a member told me she was thinking about my challenge a couple weeks ago to read the New Testament. But she did not have one. So, we looked over the shelves in the hall across from the office and quickly found a good translation that is also in larger print. Sweet. Jeanette is in FL and attended an Episcopal congregation that addressed their finances in a particularly direct and, she felt, helpful way. She texted me to suggest we consider the same approach. One of our members who was to do coffee hour had an unexpected medical issue with one of her family. June Seiser and Paula took over and put it on. June also is the one who alerted me to the medical issue, so I could follow up with the family. Meanwhile, the three boys who make up my confirmation class had a reputation for being cut ups, but they have been reading sections of the Old Testament and discussing the texts with good questions and engagement. Mark Lingle, the Synod staff who came to preach, was well received and had good conversations with several members. (One downside...the folks who were most vocal about not having good access to Synod did not bother to engage with him at all. Well, nothing is perfect). A couple I married some time ago often have work requirements on Sunday, but on the 8th, they did not, and were pleased to be in worship.

All these, and many more, are signs of a healthy church. And this Council shares the credit for that. I'll ask a couple of things of you. First, would any of you be interested in going the Synod Assembly in June. It is a completely different perspective than we can ever get from our local ministry.

Second, I'd love it if we had one person who would follow and report one of the following: The New England Synod, Camp Calumet (our New England outdoor ministry), the ELCA, the Lutheran World Federation, or the World Council of Churches. If any of you would follow any of these on-line and give occasional, brief reports, we'd all be better informed about the way the Body of Christ in the world is active and fruitful. Diane questioned how this would happen, just go on their website and click follow.

Jeanette went to a church in New Smyrna, FL, the pastor told the congregation how much it cost to run the church per day, times 7, and tell what it would cost each member to meet that figure. We will look into some version of this going forward.

Thank you all for all you do. I am blessed to have you as partners in the Gospel. Yours in Christ, Pastor Scott Cady

Talked with Pelton's who will be new ushers.

Ecumenical Grief support group started up, Pastor is the clergy person for clergy issues, will attend 3 sessions.

Diane, Pamela, Greg, and Pastor met with Alan Borghesi regarding sale of land. Having difficulty in getting in touch with the family that owns the land, Pastor suggested writing a letter to this family since they also used to own the land that the church is on.

Use of Facilities

1. Toastmasters contract – all set and done, they have the keys and they have started meeting. So far, all is good. Will be paying one payment annually, and also paid \$5.00 for each key card they were given, which will be refunded when returned.
2. Piano Recital – will go with a one day contract, many intricate details, moving piano, etc. Rachel will send it to the council tomorrow to review, then she will send it out. Details on moving the piano will be put on the back wall for everyone's reference. Past fee was \$200.00. New fee will be \$250.00
3. Possible use of facility for Tai Chi – would like to do privilege of the floor next month. Wants to rent a room.

Updates:

1. Land Sale – Alan Borghesi would like to purchase the land across the street to change it to commercial, but needs to change our offer from \$1,000,000. to \$800,000.00 and the \$200,000.00 would be used to help with the purchase of the

land across the street. The doctors are orthopedic doctors. Alan Borghesi would then sell off pieces of the land, and Greg suggested that perhaps we could get back a small percentage if he is able to sell the parcels. This would have to go to a congregational meeting, announced for 4 weeks, because of the change in the amount of the sale. Could be combined with the Cell Tower. April 14, 2026, Congregational meeting for Land Sale and Cell Tower.

M/S/P Pamela Little, Jeanette Richard to change the sale of the land to \$800,000.00 from \$1,000,000.00 at the April 14, 2026, congregational meeting.

2. Counters – under control – add details
3. Solar Panels – Greg has been in conversation with the company, they will get plans to the city of Torrington, hopefully next week, He has prints of engineering for the roof and sent them to the company, should hear back from them this week. Hope construction will start the spring.
4. Cell Tower – Greg has been in conversation with Jo about putting a small stick approx. 75 ft., on the property by Charles St. We will not have anything put on the roof, up to 3 companies can put antennas on the stick. If they add additional companies, we would get an additional 50% of the income. This would be in addition to the one in the tower. They would buy out the company in the tower for \$650,000.00 in a lump sum. Hopefully get the congregation to use some of this to take care of large repairs, invest the remaining. The finance committee supports sale.

M/S/P Greg Weingart, Julie Brewster to present the cell tower proposal to the congregation at the April 14, 2026, meeting, and this will be reviewed by our attorney after the meeting.

Old Business:

New Business:

1. Alarm company report – Alarm company came out, check everything, found that alarm batteries were below percentage, and they replaced them.
2. Synod Assembly (June 4-6) – Convention in Worcester, Pastor and 2 delegates should attend, church pays fees. Jeanette and Pamela volunteered to go.
3. Pastor's Housing Allowance – Pastor request's increasing his housing allowance to \$55,000.00 due to increased repairs and maintenance. Total amount remains the same.

M/S/P Pamela Little, Judy Ludwig to increase Pastor's housing allowance by \$10,000.00 taking that money from his salary. Housing would be \$55,000.00 and Salary would be \$34,327.00 No increase in total figure.

4. Council Meeting Change Request – Vinni requested moving council meetings to 6:30 from 7:00., Council agreed to this.

5. Back Up Media Device/Storage – Old unit – give into

M/S/P Pastor Cady, Dana O'Brien to allow IT to permanently destroy the old back up drive. Greg will take care of this.

6. Immigration Enforcement – NE Synod entered into a lawsuit that immigration cannot just enter the building to 'look around' unless they have a warrant, which they won. Pastor sent info about St. Paul's, so we are covered in this. Pastor can get posters to post around the property. Need a contact person if there is an issue. Greg volunteered to be the contact person.

7. Bishop Visit – Special Coffee Hour, sign-up sheet, more brunch type items, if not a lot of people sign up, spend some money, Judy will make a sign-up sheet, Special second offering
Special Flowers – Use Altar Flower Fund to pay for flowers

Bike Blessing & Car Show – Julie Brewster - May 9, 2026, with rain date of May 16, 2026, 12-4 pm There will be \$10.00 donation to enter a bike or car. They have had a couple of meetings, working on a flyer, working on getting sponsors for the event. Replaces the fall car show. There will be awards. Food truck.

Pastor will put together a new member class. One time event.

Part II date? Tabled – Liaisons go back to get committee's get report together for last year events

Budget Meeting date tabled

Part I date tabled

Committee Reports

Administration – Liaison: Vinni Carey

I would like to take my first week of vacation in April during Max's spring break, April 12-18.

Question on the minutes I am supposed to be receiving from Committees; does this include Hilltop Advisory Committee?

St. Paul's ELCA Annual Report is completed and was submitted on time

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Nothing but the numbers

February 2026	Attendees	Last Year	Season
1	95	83	4 Epiph.
8	56	79	5 Epiph.
15	102	84	Transfiguration
18	49*	48	Ash Wed.
22	95	85	Lent 1

OL = online only * 7 am =7 noon=22 service=20

February 2026	YouTube views	Facebook Views
1	19	112
8	35	144
15	125	192
18	?	96
22	46	132

Altar Guild – Liaison: Jeanette Richard - No Report

Christian Education – Liaison: Pamela Little

Chris Ed met on 3/2/2026. The following was discussed:

We discussed security protocols for the Sunday School classrooms after an incident a few weeks back when a man came into the classrooms looking for storage space. We discussed locking the doors during class. Currently one classroom only has one teacher, and she is not comfortable closing her door. Chris Ed is working on getting a 2nd person to sit in the classroom and/or assist more consistently.

Children's Church – Paula thanked the teachers for taking over children's church due to her absence. There will be no children's church in April due to Easter

Synod visitors – Plans were discussed for Bishop Piphó's visit. The children will sing "I've got the Joy, Joy, Joy, down in my heart," and will make cards.

During Pastor Lingle's visit, a new member of the congregation asked questions like, "What does Synod mean?" This surprised another member who overheard, since that topic is typically covered in new member classes. Everyone agreed that these classes should always take place before someone joins.

On Easter Sunday there will be no classes. We will hold our annual egg hunt after service.

Last Day of Sunday was discussed. We will be making windsocks. The committee was asked to come up with additional ideas for the day.

VBS – is scheduled for 8/3-8/7/2026. The theme was changed from "Creation" to "Junkyard Redemption". Paula will order the starting kit this week.

First Holy Communion was discussed. The training class will be held on Saturday, September 12th from 9am – 12pm. The First Communion ceremony is scheduled for World Communion Sunday, October 4, 2026.

Next Meeting is 3/2/2026 at 6:30pm

Concert Committee – Liaison: Pamela Little

The concert committee had its first meeting on 3/3/2026.

It was decided to hold five (5) concerts this year. June – October.

- Will said he would like the first concert to accompany a church picnic if possible. It could be held on a Saturday afternoon or Sunday, following church. We would have the picnic and end it with the concert. – Will be discussed at next month's meeting.
- It was discussed to try and diversify the genres of the bands

There will be no cost to attend. Sponsorships will be sought to cover the expenses.

Those expenses may include:

- Cost of Bands
- Advertising cost, if applicable
- Snacks
- Program, if applicable

Everyone agreed that the priority is to grow our audience both within and outside the church.

- Partner with area churches, friendly hands, etc.
- Place in businesses
- Promote on website and social media

The next meeting will be April 8, 7:30 pm, via ZOOM

Congregational Care – Liaison: Robin Potwora

The Congregational Care Committee has been called on to do so far this year to provide a ride for the daughter of one of our members, and the mission was accomplished.

Eucharistic Ministry – Liaison: Pamela Little

Eucharistic Minister	Congregation Member Name	Visited	Date	Took Communion	Comments/Concerns	Request Pastoral Visit
Bonnie Schaff	Gloria Thibault	Yes	2/5, 2/12, 2/19, 2/26	Yes		

Jeanette Richard	Betty Hilton	Not visited			Will visit upon her return from vacation	
	Sigrid Smitley	Not Visited			“”	
Leah Seleman	Eleanor Klonoski	Not Reporte d				
Pamela Little	Helen Winzler	Yes	2/18	Yes	We had a nice visit	
	Ernie Marquard	No			Visit was canceled due to Ernie’s passing	
	Denise Gammon	Not visited				
Need someon e to visit	Wallace Gangell	Not visited				
Need someon e to visit	James Wolfinger	Not visited				
Cynthia Rose	Midge Rosenbeck	Not Reporte d				

Evangelism – Liaison: Robin Potwora

Meetings: In-person EC meeting with the Pastor, Sandy, Irene, and Tony on February 15th. Have also met with the Pastor and have been in email communications with EC members. Our next scheduled in-person meeting is on March 29th. I plan to arrange a meeting next week with Philip to get help with operating the teleprompter and microphone for the Pastor’s video introduction. On the agenda is scheduling a meeting this month with the owner of Carl’s True Value to sponsor a Cable advertising campaign.

Created: Recreated the slogan for the business card. Have a report on the survey results to share with the council. The Welcome to Torrington envelope will be printed, showcasing the new b-card upon the council’s approval.

In development: YouTube shorts for website. Printed envelopes for Welcome to Torrington.

Other: Launched the reintroduction initiative in an email to chairs of committees.

Presenting for approval: Back of the business card. Council approved.

Submitting: Results from the survey.

Other: When a poster is created for each committee, we can have Andrew add photos to an auto-play carousel on the About page.

Farmer's Market – Liaison: Julie Brewster – No Report

Family Ministry – Liaison: Vinni, Diane, Pamela, Judy– No Report

Fellowship – Liaison: – Dana O'Brien – No Report

Finance – Liaison: – Julie Brewster

See discussion under the Treasurer's Report.

Garden of Memories – Liaison: Beth Brower – No Report

Hilltop – Liaison: Pamela Little

Registration 2026-2027

T/Th 2	1+ 2 (paperwork sent)
MWF 3 & 4's	8+ 6 (paperwork sent)
M-F Full Day	10+ 6 (paperwork sent)
M-F ESCT	7+ 5 (paperwork sent)
Tours have been happening.	
FB announcement went out Feb 4, 2026	

Maintenance & Repairs- Thank you, Greg, Diane, Ralph and company for the quick response to the water damage in the front foyer and for fixing the double door lock. Carpets are being replaced in three classrooms on 3/13 by Delene Flooring. Grant money was used to purchase these.

Continuing Education- In-house professional development is scheduled for Friday, Feb 13, 12:15-3:00. Staff will be reviewing the NAEYC Code of Ethics

Field trip is scheduled for all classes but the two yr. olds. It will be at Kid's Play in Torrington on March 13, 2026.

Fundraiser – The Hilltop Bingo fundraiser is scheduled for Friday, March 6, at 6pm. It is a great night and a lot of fun. Hilltop staff/classes and the committee have made baskets for the drawings during the event.

Art fundraiser

In person on Friday, April 24, 5:30-7 pm.

Each classroom will have an auction basket.

Each staff member will contribute to either the auction or raffle gifts

Each classroom will have a classroom project for the Auction
Each student will have two art projects to showcase.
Possibly hold it totally in Hilltop for convenience.

2026-2027 School Calendar – was reviewed by the committee

IT/Website – Liaison: Judy Ludwig

We had a long and very productive IT meeting on February 19th. Topics discussed included back-ups, storage, email, and audit procedures.

In addition to committee members, we were joined by representatives from Datahal, the Hilltop Director, our Bookkeeper, our Church Secretary, and our Council President. Datahal has served as St. Paul's IT company for over 10 years. Philip also had the opportunity to finally meet Jeremy, a network technician from Datahal.

Datahal works on 10-hour service blocks. We purchase a 10-hour block at \$115 per hour, and time is deducted as minutes or hours are used. The block never expires, ensuring that all purchased time is fully utilized. Datahal also manages our daily back-ups.

Going forward, Datahal will handle computer and network issues that require adjustments.

- If the Church Office or Hilltop needs immediate assistance, they will contact Datahal directly.
- If the issue is not urgent, they will contact Philip first.

We believe this approach will help reduce staff frustration, ease stress when tasks cannot be completed due to technical issues, and provide additional support so Philip is not the sole volunteer responsible for all IT matters.

Jeremy expressed how impressed he was with Philip's knowledge and capabilities, especially without formal training in the field. It will be beneficial for Philip to have a professional partner to consult with to ensure everything runs smoothly. Philip, thank you for your continued dedication and willingness to volunteer your time and talents, even with a very busy life. St. Paul's has been greatly blessed by your service and the significant cost savings over the years. Our church truly depends on faithful and dedicated volunteers.

We are working to strengthen St. Paul's computer and network security, while also improving transparency and communication.

Whenever work is being done, whether by Philip, Datahal, or both, staff will be notified in advance. After work is completed, a report will be shared with staff and the IT Committee, so everyone remains informed. With so many people and computers involved, clear communication is essential.

We also discussed an old back-up that needs attention. This matter will be brought to Council for a decision regarding whether to securely retain it or delete the information and properly destroy the storage media.

Present: Pastor Cady, Rachel Harrel, Vinni Carey, Judy Ludwig, Margaret Clavette, Ramona Weingart, Greg, Weingart, Diane Boscarino, Phillip Weingart, Jeremy Rosenzweig

Zoom: Barbara Mazzei, Pamela Little

Property – Liaison: Greg Weingart – No Report

Puppettude – Liaison: Judy Ludwig

Puppettude will present the children’s message on Palm Sunday.

Safety – Liaison: - Vinni Carey – No Report

Scholarship – Liaison: Judy Ludwig

Forms are out and due by April 30, 2026.

Social Concerns – Liaison: Pastor Cady

The Social Concerns Committee, it’s unclear to me who the chair is; I understood it was Christine Dickerson, but the Pastor is named the chair on the revised list.

Soup Kitchen – Liaison: Jeanette Richard – No Report

Staff Support – Liaison: Vinni Carey – No Report

Stewardship – Liaison: Pastor Cady – No Report

St. Paul’s W/ELCA – Liaison: Jeanette Richard – No Report

Use of Facilities – Liaison: - Diane Boscarino, Rachel Harrel - No Report

Worship & Music – Liaison: Pastor Cady – No Report

Other Discussion

Prayer and Dismissal

M/S/P Diane Boscarino, Pastor Cady to adjourn at 9:04

Next meeting will be at 7:00pm.

Judy Ludwig, Congregational Secretary

Council Terms

<u>2026</u>	<u>2027</u>	<u>2028</u>
Dana O'Brien	Diane Boscarino	Julie Brewster
Robin Potwora	Beth Brower	Vinni Carey
<i>Vacant</i>	Pamela Little	Judy Ludwig
<i>Vacant</i>	Greg Weingart	Jeanette Richard

2026 Council meeting dates

1/19/26, 2/9/26, 3/9/26, 4/13/26, 5/11/26, 6/15/26, 7/13/26, 8/10/26, 7/14/26, 10/12/26, 11/9/26, 12/14/26