ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2025

Voting Members Present:	Afton Brown, Carol Fritz, Lee Keffer, D J Klema Alex Krug, Kylie Stoppel, Pastor Teri Sutherlin Gaylon Walter
Voting members Absent:	Melinda Olson, Heather Pohlman
Others Present:	Hadlee Brown (Youth), John Dumler, Mark Mai

INVOCATION/CALL TO ORDER

President Lee Keffer called the meeting to order at 6:36 pm. Pastor Teri Sutherlin led us in prayer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND TREASURER'S REPORT

It was moved, seconded and passed to accept the November minutes as presented. It was also moved, seconded and passed to accept the November treasurer's report as presented.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Under new business: h) Lee Keffer requested to discuss evaluation of the Pastor, and under i), Kylie Stoppel concerning the budget.

COMMUNICATIONS

President Lee Keffer presented a letter from Kai Mueller representing Edward Jones. The letter states the Kai is beginning to do lesser hours and will turn over a lot of the operations to Alex Lofland. The letter was passed for the council to review.

REPORTS

EDUCATION - Afton reported that the Children's Christmas Program was a success as well as the cookie reception which followed. Sunday School will now be on hiatus until January 11, 2026.

EVANGELISM/PARISH FELLOWSHIP/SOCIAL MINISTRY - No report.

PROPERTY - No report.

STEWARDSHIP/FINANCE - No report.

TECHNOLOGY - No report.

WORSHIP & MUSIC - No report.

YOUTH - Alex Krug reported that they have held the Live Nativity Scene. It was not as well attended as they had hoped but they were able to collect $680.00. He also reported that the Youth group went to the Russell County Food Pantry on December 17 and helped fill Christmas baskets and also wrote 180 Christmas cards to be given out with the baskets.

CEMETERY - Mark Mai reported that we have a new person for mowing at the cemetery. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the contract to hire Herbie Schumaker II for mowing at the cemetery beginning in February 2026 at an

annual rate of $ 13,500. This will be paid out in increments of $ 4,500 each on April 1, July 1 and October 1, 2026. Mark also reported that they have retained Hydro-Chem Spray Services from Great Bend to spray weeds in the cemetery twice a year.

PMA - Written reports were submitted for November and December.

PASTOR - A written report was submitted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a) Staff Christmas bonuses have been given in the amount of $150.00 each. An executive session was called at 6:58 pm for 10 minutes to discuss evaluations and raises of staff. This session ended at 7:08 pm.

b) We continue to advertise for a clerical position for the church. It was decided to set December 29th for the final day to accept applications. A committee will be formed by the pastor to review applications and set up interviews. We are also in need of a part-time custodian to work daytime hours. It was the consensus that we begin to advertise for this position after December 29.

c) 2026 Offering envelopes were received on December 18, 2025, and will be set out for pick up during the Christmas Eve Services on December 24, 2025.

d) Several church members participated with handing out hot dogs, coffee and hot chocolate to approximately 150 people and Christmas Carols were also played during the Lighted Christmas Parade held in downtown Russell on December 6. Consensus was that we would like to do this again in 2026.

e) An update was given on expenses for the 125th anniversary celebration. [The total cost for 125th Anniversary celebration including the church directory, meals, and expenses was $5,251.45.

$1,650.00 was paid from donations given for the Anniversary.

$3,601.45 was paid from memorial funds.*] (*Expenses added 1-3-2025.) All expenses were paid through donations and memorial gifts and not deducted from any 2025 budget line item.

f) It was moved, seconded, and passed to transfer The Good Samaritan/RCAOC account which is currently held under the name of St. John Lutheran Church at Southwind Bank to Sunflower Bank under the name of RCAOC.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Pastor Teri Sutherlin reported that we have received a memorial gift from Frank Peirano.

b) Each year we receive a monetary donation from The Russell Thrift Store. It was moved, seconded and passed to donate the $500.00 received this year to the Quilting Ministry of St. John Lutheran Church.

c) At the end of 2025, we receive money to be given to a Philanthropic fund. Options were discussed with a full list to follow. Suggestions for recipients of this fund are welcome from any member of the congregation; nomination forms

are available. In the past, the practice has been to disperse this fund between 2 options, a global entity and a local entity. Suggestions were Lutheran Disaster Relief (US), Meals on Wheels, the Senior Center and the Dream Theater. These options will be presented at the annual meeting for the congregation to vote on their choices.

d) Annual reports are due by December 26, 2025. The Annual Meeting will be held Sunday, January 25, 2026, at 11:30 following the 10:30 am worship service. Alternate Weather Date February 1, 2026.

e) We were approached by KRSL to sponsor the 48 hours of Christmas (which we have sponsored in the past). Due to time constraints, it was moved, seconded and passed by E-Mail vote to sponsor this endeavor again in 2025.

f) It is noted that there are several open council positions for 2026. Members needed will be Secretary, Treasurer and at large position. If you are interested or know of someone who might be, please contact Lee Keffer or the church office.

g) At the end of 2025, we will receive Endowment year end disbursements. It was moved, seconded and passed to allow Kylie Stoppel to disburse $20,000 to the General Fund and the remaining balance into the Capital Improvement Fund.

h) It was noted that we do not have an evaluation tool in place to evaluate the Pastor. Several tools are available for guidance, and a committee will be formed to review these tools and complete this process.

i) Kylie Stoppel presented the budget for 2026. The budget was discussed and with a few minor tweaks, it was moved, seconded and passed to accept the budget as the final budget for 2026. This will be presented to the congregation for review prior to the annual meeting.

DISCUSSION

a) It was decided to move the date of the next Executive Committee to January 6 so it would not fall two days before council meeting as per the usual schedule.

b) It was decided that the Executive Committee would be allowed to finalize the information for the 2025 Annual Report, and no extra meeting would be required.

c) Christmas Bags for the children were made up and distributed to the children after the children's program on December 14th. Any leftover bags will be given to children after the Christmas Eve Services.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

ADJOURNMENT AND LORD'S PRAYER

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm with the Lord's Prayer.

NEXT EXECUTIVE MEETING: January 6, 2026 at 5:30 pm
NEXT COUNCIL MEETING: January 15, 2026 at 6:30 pm
Respectfully recorded and submitted
Carol Fritz, Church council Secretary