

SOTV Council Meeting - March 24, 2026

Present: Pastor Leslie Aska, Phil Smalley (treasurer), Mary Larsen (President), Carolyn Ciaccio, (VP, via Zoom), LaVon Downing, Brian Carpenter, Kevin Nitz, Terry Sittman, Shelley Pierson, Don Wiese, and Susie Smalley (Secretary)

Pr. Leslie opened the meeting by reading a blessing entitled "Planting a Garden" from the book *Speak it Plain, Words for Worship and Life Together*, a reading from Psalm 65, & a prayer

Call to Order:

† **approval of last month's minutes:** LaVon motioned to approve the minutes; Shelley seconded

† **approval of agenda:** Susie motioned to approve; LaVon seconded

† **report of the pastor:** Pastor Leslie stated it has been a "intense yet meaningful first Lent as pastor of two congregations." She has had two more funerals since our last meeting, and one more is coming up at the end of the month. In February, there was Ash Wednesday (both churches), she led Bible study at Shepherd, attended the North Conference Clergy meeting, and began weekly Wednesday midweek services (both churches). In March, she attended the Congregational Resourcing Event, our game day here, the First Call Cohort, enjoyed visiting with voters who came to our church on election day, and continued our weekly midweek Lenten simple suppers and Holden Evening Prayer services here (as well as those at First/downtown churches)

New Business:

† **Sunday Council Host monthly sign-up:** too many Council members signed up to be Council Host multiple times (two different months) which didn't leave any months open for Brian and Don to sign up for any. Brian took one of Carolyn's months (June); Don took one of Susie's (November).

- Guidelines/duties will be posted on the kiosk in the narthex under the schedule
 - change: recycle bin - used to be part of the duties listed, but now just need to let Phil know if it needs to be taken out so he can notify the waste company
 - ...remember, make sure all the doors are locked and the coffee is put away and the lights (especially the bathrooms) are all turned off!

† **fellowship/hospitality events:** Kris Tukker seems to be the central person for all the "food events", for lack of a better term, but does not want to head any sort of committee, have a title, or go to Council. She's very hesitant about heading a committee, and doesn't want to be "official," so Mary asked her if we got someone to volunteer to take things (any needs, requests, ideas) to Council, if she'd feel better about that. She seemed to be fine with that; Kevin volunteered to be the liaison.

† **combined events (with First Lutheran):** Mary asked how we can get messages about the events we host here at Shepherd over to First Lutheran to invite people from there to attend as well. Pastor said she would share Betty's (First's secretary) email with us so we can contact her to add anything to their newsletter.

† **new member initiatives:** ideas to attract visitors...

- gift bags for visitors - Mary brought a sample gift bag from her son's church up in Green Bay, WI
 - Susie volunteered to investigate getting pricing for doing something like that
- thoughts for white, changeable streetside sign
 - Burma-Shave inspiration (short, eye-catching messages)
 - "Come for the Music, Stay for the Message" (current message about Easter service)
 - Google "church sign sayings" and one can find a plethora of ideas!

† **SOTV Constitution:** We have a physical copy here at church, but Pastor believes everyone should have a copy. Susie suggested having it accessible from our website. Phil will email to everyone on Council.

† **SOTV Covenant:** We all are signing a covenant for behavioral guidelines – apparently there have been issues in the past. This should be signed every year, but has been missed several times.

† **graduation ceremony:** FYI: Harvest Time graduation ceremony will be Thursday, May 21st

† **bulletins:** Susie said she has heard both complaints and praise for the larger bulletins. The praise was simply “I like them,” and didn’t specify more; the complaints included, “too hard to hold/handle, too noisy when turning pages, the print wasn’t any larger, why all the wasted space, and why aren’t we utilizing our hymnals anymore?”

Agreeing that it seems we’re being wasteful, the first thing Susie did was compare the paper cost. The large paper costs over three times the cost of the standard 8½ x 11 paper, so even though we will need to increase the number of pages if we go back to using the smaller paper with larger print, it would still be cheaper than using the 11x17” paper.

The consensus of the Council was that we should go back to using the smaller sized paper and make sure we use a larger, more readable font. We do have the rest of the case of the larger paper, and we don’t want to make any changes before Easter, but it makes sense to switch back to using the smaller paper after that. We also agreed we’d seek feedback from the congregation about the bulletins, especially regarding readability.

† **committee reports:**

- **Finance Committee:** Phil has had to change how he does the forecasting of the envelopes (how are we doing compared to what we budgeted). We’ve already gotten over 1/3 of our giving income after only 1/6 of the year because people have started giving yearly rather than monthly (because of tax benefits). He continued to give an overview of the financials and if anyone has questions, they can certainly ask!
- **Worship & Music Committee:**
 - piano in sanctuary was tuned
 - palms and tulips were ordered
 - flower chart – still need people to sign up
 - talked about Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Easter, Easter brunch, taking down the butterflies, Pastor’s vacation, our next meeting (May...we’re skipping April), and invited anyone to attend our meetings (don’t need to join the committee to do so)
- **Building and Grounds:**
 - Our insurance company mandates that water leak detectors are needed.
 - John & Phil will install them when they arrive.
 - a window fell out and broke in Moline Hall; Steve Larsen cleaned it up and fixed it
 - new quarter round moulding went into Moline Hall as well, and was painted
 - Miss Dale’s students cleaned up the Memory Garden. They also...
 - rearranged Moline Hall after voting day
 - shoveled the sidewalks after our snowstorm the other week!
 - pitch in to help in many ways! (pizza party on us?)
 - Rockford Heating was here to do annual maintenance
 - Don will soon make a lawn mowing schedule
 - first Tuesday of April will be the first meeting of the year
 - wanting to get quotes to take down some branches and sealcoat the lot
 - parking lot light was fixed – Chad Farris knew a guy with a bucket lift

Motion to adjourn by Don Wiese, 2nd by Kevin Nitz. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned and closed with The Lord’s Prayer

Next council meeting: April 14th at 4pm

Respectfully Submitted, Susie Smalley