

Shepherd of the Valley Council Meeting - June 16, 2026

Present: Pastor Leslie Aska (*left meeting just prior to Worship & Music Committee report*), Phil Smalley (treasurer), Mary Larsen (President), Carolyn Ciaccio (VP), Terry Sittman, Don Wiese, Shelley Pierson, Brian Carpenter, and Susie Smalley (Secretary)

Pr. Leslie opened the meeting by reading a passage from Habakkuk and described some of the highlights from Synod Assembly.

Call to Order:

† **approval of last month's minutes:** Terry asked if we should be reading through the minutes at the meeting before we approve them. They were emailed to everyone; Phil will display them now so we can all see them.

Terry motioned to approve the minutes from our last SOTV Council meeting; Phil seconded. Motion was approved.

† **approval of agenda:** Terry motioned to approve the agenda; Shelley seconded.

Phil suggested swapping the new and old business (the agenda had New Business before Old). Pastor explained that Pr. Josh Ebener (works for the Synod) had suggested doing New Business before Old Business during church council meetings to ensure that more time is spent talking about things moving forward and less talking about things that have happened (but keeping the reports at the end).

Terry motioned we cover Old Business first, then New Business, then discuss committee reports at the end, Phil seconded. Motion was approved unanimously. The motion on the floor to approve the agenda was carried as well.

Old Business:

† **Pastor Leslie's report:**

- She is approaching her 1-year anniversary!
 - She officially started July 1
 - July 13th was her first Sunday preaching
 - She was ordained Aug. 10th
- Synod Assembly (June 12 & 13) - attended for the first time as a pastor. Phil & Susie also attended as voting members from Shepherd of the Valley. Next year, Synod Assembly will be held in Rockford. It has been at Augustana since 1987.
- She now has ready a slideshow/Bible study about her trip to Greece & Turkey.
- She will be going on vacation July 20-31

† **church workday (Sat. June 13th):** Many things were accomplished! Steve spoke during service last Sunday thanking all those who volunteered. Discussion led to the Memory Garden and that we have had a couple services out there and maybe we could plan one again.

† **visitor welcome gift bags:** Mary brought in six mugs (\$2 each) that can be used in a Cricut machine. Susie will take them to Zane & Asia to get their input (and perhaps use their Cricut machine) on getting our church name/logo written on the mugs.

Susie, along with help from AI, has designed a new logo. She has made many iterations, the latest ones adding the city and our website under the "Shepherd of the Valley" and "Lutheran Church" and another with just the city. She showed both to council and the consensus was to use the one with the city *and* website for the stickers she will order from Sticker Mule (online). They are running a sale this week: \$17 for 50 3" x 3" stickers (free shipping).

New Business:

† **Garden Walk:** Mary brought up this city-wide annual event. It'll be July 8 (1-8pm). Mary has done it every year and wants to invite others to join. She'll put up a signup chart for people who would like to participate as well as those who would like to volunteer to be a 'walking buddy' (help others who may need a steadying arm).

† **Ice Cream Social:** Will be held after our combined service the end of this month (June 28th) The time put on the flyer was 11:30-2, but it'll start before that, right after service ends. They just wanted a definite time to put onto the flyers. The event will be held in the fellowship hall at First Lutheran, John & Rick Burns will provide live music for the event, and there will be hot dogs & chips as well.

† **Thank you gesture to all our volunteers:** Mary would like to do something that will show our appreciation for all our volunteers we have helping our church. Phil cautioned about making sure we don't single out a group or person, so we didn't cause anyone to feel excluded. There was mention about how some things are just "magically" done - people just step up and do it without anyone knowing who did it. Pastor acknowledged and said we could include all in how we word it: single out some groups/people but also be all-inclusive in the wording (ex. "...and ***all*** those who have volunteered, giving their time and talents...")
We are thinking of doing something maybe during coffee hour in mid-October?

† **committee reports:**

- Finance Committee:
 - insurance: During the Finance Committee meeting, there was a big discussion over insurance: Phil looked into possibly switching insurance companies and got quotes. Taking all things into consideration, they voted to recommend to council that we stay with the current companies. So, Phil motioned we vote to stay with current insurance companies; Mary seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
 - brush pile from workday last Saturday:
 - Steve got a quote for \$300 from a tree service, finance committee approved it, and they went ahead with scheduling it to be taken care of, even without approval from the church council. It was already done today.
 - Phil acknowledged it was not the proper procedure.
 - Terry commented that \$100 is a low threshold for getting things like that done and believes it should be higher (...more later...)
 - Pastor Leslie had a couple questions regarding yard waste
 - regarding our garbage service: does it also include yard waste removal?
 - Phil doesn't believe so, but will check
 - regarding the recent brush removal:
 - was it priced by the load size or weight?
 - Phil: they just came out and gave a quote for that particular job.
 - future: is it better to do all the trimming at once and have one big pile or to spread it out and have smaller amounts to get rid of each time?
 - Phil: if using the dumpster to put branches/yard waste in: smaller amounts more frequently are better than letting it accumulate.
- Worship & Music Committee: Carolyn gave her summary of what transpired during last week's meeting. *[W&M Committee meeting minutes are all posted on our website.]*

- Building and Grounds Committee:
 - workday: much accomplished - already discussed some of the many things that were done.
 - Our garage "is a mess!" - Don said there is a bunch of old stuff in the garage just taking up space: broken things, old chalkboards, a big volleyball net with buckets full of concrete, et cetera. He contracted a company called Big Time Junk to come and clean it out. They're coming tomorrow morning. The cost is \$350. Don said he went ahead and scheduled it and if council won't reimburse, he would just pay for it.
 - Phil motioned that the church pay for the expense, Terry seconded.
 - Motion carried unanimously.

† **spending:** Earlier in this meeting, Terry mentioned the spending limit that people/committees have before needing council approval. Currently, the limit is \$100. Anything under \$100 needs no approval; anything over needs council approval. Terry thought that \$100 was kind of low. Discussion followed, and he suggested moving it up to \$400. There was concern that it was quite a jump from the current amount, but it was clarified that it would still need approval from the Finance Committee, just not Council. Carolyn asked for clarification: currently anything under \$100 needs NO approval; now anything up to \$400 would need to be approved by Finance?

Susie suggested we make tiers for expenditures:

- ≤ \$100: no approval required
- \$101 – \$400: must be approved by Finance but doesn't need Council's approval
- > \$400: must be approved by Church Council

Terry motioned to use that structure (underlined above) for spending. Phil seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to adjourn by Phil & Mary, seconded by Don Wiese. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned and closed with The Lord's Prayer

Next SOTV Council meeting: July 21st at 4pm
(Pr. Leslie won't be here but is okay with us having the meeting without her.)

Respectfully Submitted,
 Susie Smalley