

St Matthew Trinity Lutheran Church

Hoboken, NJ

Minutes of the Annual Meeting

June 15, 2025

The President, Bernadette Oberndorf, called the meeting to order at 11:39AM following worship.

Pastor opened the meeting with a prayer.

It was determined that a quorum was present.

Minutes: The minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting were presented for approval by Melissa Long. Leslie Neve motioned to accept the minutes, and Courtney Kochuba seconded. The minutes were approved.

Note: the full written 2024 Annual Report was made available in print and online to all congregants about a week prior to the meeting, so spoken reports were brief.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Gary presented his report during his sermon.

Nominating committee: The nominating committee comprised Bernadette Oberndorf, Mark Singleton, and Courtney Kochuba. The committee noted that we have three open Church Council positions. The committee recommended filling two this year. The committee nominated Joel Kraye and Byron Warner. Mark Singleton motioned to accept the nominees with gratitude, and Melissa Long seconded the motion. The nominees were elected by congregational vote.

President's Report: Bernadette's remarks were brief and highlighted how full of gratitude she is for all that everyone does for SMT and how it has been an honor to lead the congregation this year.

Lunchtime Ministry Report: Spike was not in attendance to present his written report but Mark spoke on behalf of LTM. Mark noted that Spike does a great job shepherding this ministry. As a result, LTM is a thriving part of our community and the city of Hoboken and it changes lives. Food is an important element but LTM is even more so about community – about being known and seen. Mark asked the congregation to remember Spike in our prayers.

Peace & Justice Committee Report: Leslie's report focused on LTM PM, the Hoboken Shelter and other ministries that fall under Peace & Justice, including the Seafarers. Leslie noted that it was LTM that brought her to SMT. Leslie is on the board of Seafarers. She spoke about how much the seafarers appreciate the "Christmas at Sea" satchels, and that it's a hard life. Leslie noted that with US government cuts in various aid, a lot of money that helped people including refugees is no longer available and that they are struggling and could use help

Shelter Report: Dan Pickerel presented his Shelter Report. SMT is a founding member and we have an active voice and role there. The work of the shelter is growing. The Shelter is a productive organization but it's disappointing that the need for the work they do is so prevalent and growing.

Property Report: Mark's report noted that having an old building is a blessing but it takes a lot of work and a team to keep it going. Mark highlighted the work we did this year, including painting the wall, removing a few pews, installing a bathroom, lighting and other projects. He also focused on work we would like to do this year, including re-pointing the exterior brick wall and installing central air downstairs for LTM.

Mark noted that we have anticipated funds that should be coming from the sale of a closed church in Kearny that is dedicated to LTM. That is not in the budget as we are unsure when those funds will be received. The state of NJ completed a cyclical inspection of 63 8th St and we will need to spend \$20,000 on fire escape repairs. The state has cracked down on fire escapes. Pastor Gary noted that “the building always wins” and old buildings can often become anchors. We are lucky as a congregation that we have the resources to maintain it.

Music Ministry Report: Matt’s written report spoke of the vital role music plays in our congregation. He thanked us for our support of the program. He thanked the cantors, choir, and musicians. He noted that choir was done until fall and he made a pitch for others to join. Mark recognized Matt for all the work he does behind the scenes on the altar and making sure church is set up for worship every week.

Altar Guild Report: Leslie thanked everyone who helps and asked for volunteers if anyone is interested in helping. She also noted that Matt makes sure the paraments are correct for each season.

Marketing & Communications Report: Courtney thanked the Marketing & Communication team, which includes Carly Longo and Sarah Reever-Pickerel. She noted that we did more paid campaigns this year especially around brand awareness. Our email has grown by 38%. The focus will continue to be brand awareness, including tying back into the ELCA and what Lutheranism is. She asked us to pass along any content we see from other congregations or organizations that speaks to us.

Stewardship Committee Report: Bernadette spoke on behalf of Terri Matteo, our Stewardship Lead. Bernadette thanked Terri for all her hard work. The expansion of the committee brought joy as well as the collaboration with Youth & Family. Bernadette asked us to prayerfully consider our giving. In approving the budget, we are agreeing to support the works and financial commitments of the church, not just agreeing to have others support it. Pledges are down and pledged amounts are down which may speak to the uncertainty in the economy.

Youth & Family Committee Report: Sarah Reever-Pickerel noted that Y&F stands for Youth & Family but also You & Fun. The group comprises commitments members but also Sunday School teachers, whose names Sarah read out and recognized. The theme for the year was “We Are Better Together.” The calendar was anchored with some special events, typically about one per quarter. These events included Wiffle Bally, Christmas Pageant, Easter, Vacation Bible School (VBS). We have good attendance at events. Sunday School is not as well attended – about two to four per week. This year we added in some events to fill in the calendar, including S’mores Night, Cabin Fever Bingo and Kid Participation Sunday. Sarah noted that leaders are always welcome. We always have a lot of helpers for the events but we could really use people to lead and plan out the events and also more teachers for the Sunday School rotation. Sarah thanked everyone for always supporting the kids and being welcoming of families who walk through our doors.

Treasurer’s Report: Carol Cusack, supported by the finance committee, gave our final report of the meeting. She noted that we are fortunate to have reserves. She thanked all who give and all who support the finance committee, and gave a special thanks to everyone who donates in kind as well.

Adoption of the 2025-2026 Budget: The finance committee then presented the fiscal 2025-2026 budget, and Carol that the congregation accept the budget as presented. Leslie Neve moved, and Jenn Nilsen seconded, a motion to accept the budget as recommended by the Church Council. With no other discussion, *the 2025-2026 Budget was approved.*

There being no further Old or New Business, Melissa motioned for the congregation to accept all reports. Courtney seconded the motion and the congregation accepted all reports.

Mark gave a blessing.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30PM, concluding with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Long

Church Council Recording Secretary