

December Council Meeting

12/15/2025

101 Peachtree Parkway

Peachtree City, GA

Council meeting called to order at: 6:33 PM

Attendees: Bill Grabill, Ben McCumber, Brenda Adams, George Axford, Ellen Pfundt, Davida Kilgore via Zoom, Pastor Wes, David Turk, Pastor Fritz, Mark Bunker

Absent were: Hope Catlett, Jason Houser and Mike Earwood

Devotion: Hope was unable to attend. Pastor Wes led us in prayer in lieu of a devotion.

Opening Comments/Youth report: Bill/Pastor Wes: We have Youth camp coming up as well as Breakfast with Santa. The Family Advent event went over very well with over 80 attending.

Bill offered the following reflection on 2025 and a look ahead:

2025 saw a substantial shift in our staffing. Pr. Wes Smith joined our staff following Pr. Miriam Beecher's retirement last year. We also had changes and realignment of responsibilities in the Children's Ministry, Contemporary Worship, and Administration. Significant progress was made managing our facilities with removal of a crumbling retaining wall that was a safety hazard at our Palmetto Road campus. Our aging facility at our Peachtree City campus also underwent significant upgrades with completion of the sanctuary renewal, replacement of several failing heating and air conditioning units, resurfacing our parking lot, and other needed projects. We did all these things and more while serving the community and celebrating our 50th Anniversary as a congregation.

While COS is certainly fortunate in that our membership and finances are not in free fall like so many congregations. We should not be complacent. The overall demographics and trends for church membership are out in the public sphere for anyone to view. I will not go into opinions about the reason for declining church membership, but I think we need to be cognizant of these trends when making decisions around staffing, expenditure of funds, and most importantly our ministry focus.

My prayer is that COS will be contrary to the general church trends and find innovative ways to respond to Jesus's Great Commandment by serving the community and deepening connections with Christ. As council members we are charged with managing the "governance & business"

side of being a church. This is important work and thank you for agreeing to serve in this way. My struggle ... and challenge to fellow council members as well is to always keep the commandment of loving God & servicing others at the forefront of all we do as Christ followers. I have to believe that if we are able to keep our ministry focus, others will know us by our love and want to eagerly join us on the journey.

Pastors' Report: Pr. Fritz/Pr Wes

Pastor Fritz used elements of the Nativity story to guide his report. There were as follows:

Census: Ours is the 2025 Annual Report. Kendra and Barbara are working together gathering the reports from all the various groups of the church. The deadline to submit reports is January 2. Congregational meeting is January 25 following the 11:00 service.

Magi/wisemen- Pastor Fritz thanked all the members of council as well as so many others within the church that work tirelessly for the facility to function.

Shepherds: all of us! Leading God's people in small groups and ministry.

Angels: The angels sang and gave praise to God. We have a wonderful music program with so many wonderful people leading and participating. The Love Feast was a joyous success.

Gifts: Our giving intents. We seem to be a little bit behind in receiving our intentions. Pastor Fritz encouraged the council members to lead by example and get theirs turned in as well as have conversations with congregants regarding intentions.

Nativity Characters: staff and groups- the staff breakfast and caroling was great. There are so many activities within the church alongside Pastor Wes and his new group Flock of Ages. There is also a new young adult group and so many more activities going on. We haven't loved on Pastor Wes like we should. Keep welcoming him and support him in his endeavors. We fought hard to retain Brad. He is doing a wonderful job and working hard.

Star: Where are we going? There are discussions for the retreat ongoing. We continue to support a great prayer life, care for other people, active worship life and navigate God's word.

Inn: How do we welcome others to COS? We are working on a restroom revamp. Hopefully we will have more people at Palmetto Rd (30% increase). We have win-win policies for others to use our facility. Let's use our space and love our neighbors.

Mary: She pondered things in her heart: 5-7 years planning for 2027.

Pastor Wes: Agrees with Pastor Fritz on his above listed items. A reminder regarding the MLK Bishop Prayer and Praise worship Jan 17. Cost is \$20.

The Men's retreat is themed Deep Roots, Quiet Waters: Strengthening faith thru rest/stress. There will be a free dinner and small group discussion, worship time, music and fun times.

Flock of Ages has been successful with roughly 25 people showing each time. There have been difficult conversations but good conversations. We will be picking that back up on January 14. Meetings are weekly. The Lutheran 101 book is next.

The Palmetto task force is meeting on Wednesday. Blue Christmas Service is this Wednesday evening..

Treasurer's Report/Finance/Audit: Mark/ George

After considerable discussion it was determined that we do not have all the information for the safety questions regarding speaker installation so the CER is tabled pending receiving additional information.

Mark: The budget is still very favorable for the year...much better than last year. Under budget being good. Numbers are in the black.

Fritz: Compliment to the congregation-in addition to regular offering we received great donations for the 80 for Haiti and for the star/angel tree. Lots of great donations and gifts that are being giving.

Our small groups are keeping the congregation healthy and contribute to other groups and missions to thrive.

Personnel: Ben

Condolences were expressed for Ben McCumber for the loss of his father. Chip Beard / Personnel Committee will do staff discussions with evaluations by supervisors to follow in mid January. The evals will be a bit different this year. Strengths and improvements will be listed as part of written evaluations.

FMT-Palmetto Rd: Bill

Kudos to the Palmetto Rd FMT for all their hard work and dedication. Eric is staying busy and is in need of volunteers to help keep the grounds tidy. We are also looking for a stump grinding company. The Men's Retreat out there will hopefully inspire more people to have activities at the Palmetto Road campus.

Brenda asked about the Palmetto Road gate keypad and possible upgrades.

Administrative Items: Bill

1. Vote on approval of November Council Minutes. There were some small discussions on some changes. Moved, seconded and passed.

2. Pastors Housing Allowance-vote to approve submitting to the congregation. Motion to pass new resolution according to synod **guidelines to 50% income as housing allowance**. Brenda moved, second Ben, all ayes. **Motion passed**.

Bill commented that it would be good for staff and ministry leaders to use SharePoint consistently.

Scott is still working on revisions to the constitution. Changes are color coded. Good time to review. The congregation will be asked to review and vote on ELCA Model Constitution revisions in January congregational meeting. Council will work in 2026 to update our COS specific revisions that may be needed. Discussions ensued.

3. Thank you notes: Brenda-any name please give to Brenda or email them. Larry and company for Love Feast, members of the orchestra and any others who contributed to such a wonderful service.

4. Next Council Meeting: January 26, 2026/Congregational meeting will be the 25th.

5. Next Devotional: Hope

Other Committee Updates/ member feedback: all

A question was asked concerning how do people know when we're having a Christmas Eve service outside of the COS community? Discussions regarding web searches and signage.

Meeting adjourned: moved, second and passed at 7:48.

Council closed with the Lord's Prayer