



# ATONEMENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

Congregational Election Meeting

SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025

**DRAFT**

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## Call to Order

Pastor Zac Sturm opened the meeting with a prayer. Curtis Klaassen (President) called the meeting to order at 12:08 p.m.

A quorum of at least 80 voting members was verified.

## Congregational Meeting Minutes

### **Motion to Approve Minutes from the Annual Meeting**

**RESOLVED**, to approve the minutes from the Annual Meeting held on January 28, 2025, without corrections.

Moved by: Randy McColley, Seconded by: Keith Mundy

No objection or debate. Voting conducted by raising hands: all Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carried.

## Elections

### *Council Members Election*

The nominating committee Tina Boutelle, Brad Anderson, and Randy McColley, has nominated Genevieve Brown, Cathy Dykman-Acinger, and Tim McCandless for election to the Congregation Council. No additional nominations were spoken from the floor.

### **Motion to Elect Three (3) Members to the Congregation Council**

**RESOLVED**, to appoint Genevieve Brown, Cathy Dykman-Acinger, and Tim McCandless to the Congregation Council of Atonement Lutheran Church for a term of three (3) years, beginning July 2025 and ending June 2028.

Moved by: Janice Kindred, Seconded by: Todd Briggeman

No objection or debate. Voting conducted by raising hands: all Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carried.

## *Treasurer Election*

### **Motion to Elect the Treasurer**

**RESOLVED**, to reappoint Mike Daley as the Treasurer of Atonement Lutheran Church, continuing in his role for a term of one (1) year, beginning July 2025 and ending June 2026.

Moved by: Brad Anderson, Seconded by: Toni Pearson

No objection or debate. Voting conducted by voice vote: all Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carried.

## *Nominating Committee Election*

The floor was opened for nominations. Dave James, Randy McColley, and Tina Boutelle were nominated by voice.

### **Motion to Elect Three (3) Members to the Nominating Committee**

**RESOLVED**, to appoint Tina Boutelle, Randy McColley, and Dave James to the Nominating Committee for Atonement Lutheran Church, for a term of one (1) year beginning June 2025 and ending May 2026 at the annual Election Meeting.

Moved by: Keith Mundy, Seconded by: Brad Anderson

No objection or debate. Voting conducted by voice vote: all Ayes, no Nays, Motion Carried.

## *Treasurer's Report*

Mike Daley (Treasurer) presented an update on Atonement's finances, sharing some visual graphs of current state, as well as projections for 2025 based on historical patterns.

- There has been no significant change since the last update in January. The current trend of cash balances will become unsustainable if not addressed.
- Where we are year-to-date for four months: giving is \$372K, expenses are \$484K, running a deficit which is typical for Atonement for these first 4 months of the year.
- General Fund giving is \$42K behind budget, Campus Sustainment giving is at \$42K, so in-line with the overall expected commitment, but behind for planned General Fund expenses.
- Trend is a little concerning. Typical Atonement giving comes mainly in December, which is hard to plan for throughout the year as deficits built, and hope to balance at the end of year. Request is for any December givers to spread out their giving earlier and throughout the year.
- Cash balances on hand ideally should be at 3 months of expenses, but we are currently running at or below 1 month of extra expenses on hand, which may make it difficult to pay monthly bills if the general fund deficit trend continues and the gap grows wider.

## Horizons Stewardship Proposal

To help with the concern for the general fund, the Council asked the Stewardship Committee for recommendations to bring to the congregation.

Keith Mundy & Dennis Allerheiligen, the Stewardship Committee co-chairs, presented a proposal to the congregation to hire the professional fundraising organization Horizons Stewardship to help Atonement achieve our General Fund and Campus Sustainment goals for 2026 – 2028. A one-page summary along with a three-page detailed proposal was distributed to the congregation and presented by Keith Mundy.

- The Stewardship Committee tracks key indicators:
  - **Attendance:** In-person attendance over the last 12 months is averaging 4% lower than the previous 12 months. On-line has stayed flat over the same period. The combined average attendance is 525 per month, down about 2.6% from a year ago.
  - **Membership:** our baptized membership at the end of 2024 was 1,070 (in years past has been 2,500). We have 500+ households who are connected to our ministry, but only 415 households which are active members. (400-450 is a typical range for previous years)
  - **Faith Responses:** Atonement typically ranges between 35% and 60% for those who respond. We are currently averaging 37% who make a faith commitment. This is an important number because the Stewardship Committee has found that those who decide to make a faith response will typically give regularly and a higher amount. Those who don't make a faith response will often give what they can and when they can. Of the active member households, 67% contribute to our ministry, and around 33% have no contribution of record (although they may give offering, it is not tracked to a household). Historically it is not uncommon to have about 25% to 30% for a congregation of our size to have no contribution of record. We are looking to grow that number.
  - **Percentage of Giving:** Atonement is a very generous congregation, giving well over 2% of our household income (about 2.3 to 2.4%). Nationwide giving trend averages are 1.6 to 1.8%. We are currently lower than our average, which historically has been around 3%.
- The Stewardship Committee also tracks past fundraising efforts:
  - Since the 1980's, Atonement has conducted 10 special appeals. Four special appeals have used a professional fundraising organization; the last one was in 2003 (has been 20 yrs). Of those, two met the goal, one was within 5% of the goal, and all were large dollar goals (around \$1.8 million). Six special appeals the congregation lead on our own efforts; 4 of 5 times did not meet the goal, one time was within 3.5%, with the average result being about 77% of the original appeal goal, which also were small dollar goals.

- The Stewardship Committee provided their recommendation:
  - When considering the dollar amount of the needs outlined by the Council and Director of Operations, around \$1.5 million, their recommendation is to once again use a professional fundraising organization to help achieve our ministry goals.
  - The Stewardship Committee then went through a process of 9 steps to interview potential partners and identified Horizons Stewardship as the best partner, as well as recommending to Council which services and timeframe would be best for Atonement.
  - Horizons would conduct a feasibility study, engage with Atonement with 5 different professional staff members with a variety of services, for fee of \$78,000 (which for comparison, the fee 20 years ago was \$80,000 for lesser contracted services).
- Next steps are for the congregation to review the shared information and communicated over the next few weeks. There will be an information forum June 15<sup>th</sup>, and a Congregational Meeting on June 22<sup>nd</sup> to vote on approving the proposal. The Stewardship Committee is also engaging families to consider helping cover the Horizons Stewardship's service fee.

## Welcome & Reconciling in Christ Update

**Neil Pfeiffer** (Secretary) presented on the topic of welcome, inclusion, racial equity, social justice, and outreach, and the progress Council has made over the last year.

- A brief history of Welcome & Inclusion at Atonement:
  - The first conversations at Atonement started with a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) task force and Hospitality Committee in November of 2009, almost 16 years ago.
  - The most recent conversations were a series of listening sessions and a survey in the fall of 2023 by the Welcome and Inclusion Team, who then created recommendations.
- The listening sessions and survey revealed two key themes from our members:
  - The most important one is that we all firmly oppose discrimination and collectively desire for Atonement to be inviting & welcoming.
  - The second key theme is that Atonement is diverse and cannot be represented by a singular voice. That we have a wide collection of perspectives on how we should approach outreach – that the statements, symbols, and partner associations we may choose are deeply important to our members.
- The Council is working on the plan for what comes next:
  - After the completion of the survey process 18 months ago, the Welcome and Inclusion Team proposed a series of action items for the Council to consider. The Council is currently in-progress of discerning which action steps will come next and the timeline.

- Time will be planned to share the collection of diverse perspectives at Atonement, not to convince each other and to arrive at a unison, but to find each other in the spaces that exist in-between, helping us to better recognize and understand each other.
- The goals will be two-fold: to create conversation that keep us all in this congregation together throughout the process, and to give the congregation the opportunity to arrive at clarity and discernment about being a Reconciling in Christ partner congregation.

## Pastor Zac's Update

Pastor Zac recognized the leadership of the two exiting Council members:

- Curtis Klaassen (President) and Dave James (Vice-President) will be concluding their term on Council this June. Pastor Zac took a moment to recognize them, thanked them for their leadership over the past three years. The congregation joined in a round of applause to show appreciation and thanks.

Upcoming Synod Assembly:

- Will be held June 5 – 7, 2025 at the Embassy Suites in Olathe.
- Attending voting members will be Curtis & Cherry Klaasen, and Mark & Joanelle Porter.
- Bishop Rev. Susan Candea, member of Atonement Lutheran Church, and Bishop's Associate Rev. David Whetter, previous pastor at Salem Lutheran Church, will both be retiring at the end of their term at the end of the summer.
- There will be an election for a new Bishop held at this year's Synod Assembly. Pastor Zac has felt the Holy Spirit's calling to put his name in as a candidate for Bishop. He asks for our prayers for himself, for this church, for the Holy Spirit to reveal the best candidate, and to trust in the Spirit.

## Closing

Curtis Klaassen and Pastor Zac called the closing of the meeting.

Pastor Jordan Stone ended the meeting, singing the camp song "As You Go On Your Way" (May Christ Go With You), by John Ylvisaker. The meeting ended at 12:54 p.m.

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Recorded by Neil Pfeiffer, Secretary: 05/18/2025