

## **Council President's Report – September 2025**

While this past month was a bit quieter from a Church Council perspective, our **youth ministries were full of life and activity!**

My husband and I continue to teach the Preschool–Kindergarten class, and we've had a fun and meaningful start to the year. One of our first lessons was about building our lives on a strong foundation, based on the parable of the wise and foolish builders. To help our little ones connect with the message, we created "houses" using marshmallows and chocolate kisses—some built on "sand" (pudding), and others on "rock" (Oreos with frosting). After the story, we discussed strong and weak ways to act, helping the children understand how making good choices starts with a solid foundation in faith. It should be of no surprise that they enjoyed the lesson and needed a bit of cleaning up, additionally they voted in favor of more projects with Oreos, marshmallows, and frosting.

It has been in the bulletin, but I don't want you to miss this update: Hope Lutheran's Youth Ministry was awarded \$3,000 from the Endowment Fund Committee of the Southwester Minnesota Synod-ELCA. Sandy Joesphson had brought the opportunity to the attention of the Education Committee. A big thank you to Terri Myhre, Erin Roberts, Emily Hennen, and Angie DeVos for their time and efforts in the application process.

Although the council had a quieter schedule, we did hold an additional Zoom meeting led by **Peter Soli**, founder of *Dialog Works*. Peter shared some proposals to help **Hope Lutheran "Hope Together."** His organization was founded in October 2020 as a ministry focused on congregations navigating transitions, especially in the wake of COVID-19. The mission of Dialog Works is *"to enlarge the capacity of faith leaders to establish and nurture sustainable ministries."*

We anticipate voting in our October meeting on whether to move forward with Peter's guidance and support.

We're excited to announce that the **Building Committee** has been formed and will hold its first meeting following worship on **Sunday, October 19**. At the September Council meeting, the following members were approved to serve:

***Jason Johnson, Jeff Van Keulen, Fran Fier, Lynn Okrina, Gene Fodness***

We are grateful for their willingness to serve and look forward to their insights as we assess the needs of our facilities. If you believe there is anything that needs to be addressed with the building in the future or have useful ideas to share regarding, please contact one of these building committee members.

I've been working to move forward on the situation regarding our **mission trip funds**. After consulting with multiple attorneys, I was able to connect with one in South Dakota who has kindly agreed to assist *pro bono*, aside from any incurred fees. Due to the defendant's connections, several attorneys I previously contacted were unable to take the case due to conflicts of interest.

I will be seeking **Council approval to proceed** once an engagement letter is presented. Please continue to pray for a just resolution to this matter.

There have been updates from the synod shared in regards to the candidate search. In August there were two candidates that received our paperwork and in the past month, Hope Lutheran's open call has been shared with 2 candidates, and our MSP has been shared with 1 candidate.

As we reflect on all that's happening in the life of our church—from youth ministry and council work to building updates and mission outreach—we're reminded of the importance of building on a strong foundation.

Just like our preschoolers learned with their marshmallow houses, the storms of life will come—but when we are rooted in Christ, in community, and in faith, we can stand firm.

Let us continue to build **Hope Lutheran** on the solid rock of Christ's love, truth, and grace—so that together, we remain strong, steady, and ready for whatever lies ahead.

Amie Ascherman