

SPECIAL VOTERS MEETING SUMMARY

A special meeting of the Voters Assembly was held on Sunday, June 28, 2026, with 28 voters in attendance.

Items covered in the meeting:

- **Election of Executive Director** - As of this point, no one has volunteered to be nominated for this position. If you know of someone who would be open to serving, please contact the pastors or anyone else on the nominating committee (Pastor Drinnon, Roy Cordes, Rich Nordmeyer, and Mike Callan).
- **Stewardship Report and Income** - Stewardship Chair, Bill Krones, shared the realities of our current giving. Our budgeted Offering income was only short by \$600.00 for the last fiscal year. Our budgeted Building Fund income was short by \$37,000.00.

Bill also shared these thoughts:

One main cause of stress to St Paul's budget is inflation. Inflation has totaled 25%-29% over the past five years. Over the same 5 years, giving has remained relatively flat.

Ways to increase income:

- **Increased enrollment at school.** As congregation members we need to promote our school. Tell your friends neighbors and relatives about it. When you encounter someone discouraged with public education, invite them to meet our principle and tour our school.
- **Improve Stewardship** which will lead to improved giving, Joyful, Proportionate, Regular giving. When giving is proportionate, it automatically increases when your income increases.

As members of a large congregation, we tend to have the thought that someone else will increase giving to meet our budget needs. We each need to prayerfully consider our own financial commitment to St Paul's. Our giving not only helps meet our budget needs it really supports the ministries at St Paul's. As a congregation we need to move beyond special fundraising drives. Our long term solution is improved congregational wide stewardship.

Each person attending today's meeting can help by speaking with other members of the congregation who did not attend the special voter's meeting.

- **Treasurer Report and Cash Flow** - Treasurer, Scott Styck, shared our standing at the end of the fiscal year. The current budget was discussed and how our budget shortfall has developed. Possible solutions were discussed, but nothing that was not a short-term solution anyone was in favor of. A budget was passed after discussion showing a shortfall of \$316,196.
- **Trustee request for 2026-2027 Endowment distribution** - Because of some current maintenance needs, the Board of Trustees, asked the Voters to reallocate monies from the Endowment fund that were approved for School Parking lot repair and striping, to be used for a few other maintenance needs. Replacement of the water heater at the school, replacement of the skylights downtown that were damaged in the hailstorm, and to repair the holes in the school parking lot. (In discussion, someone offered to cover the cost of the skylight replacements - PRAISE GOD!) Voters approved the reallocation of the funds.

- **2026-2027 Budget Update and Discussion** - As presented at the May 17, 2026 Voter's meeting, due to inflation of general expenses and maintenance costs, combined with no visible increase in congregational giving during last year, we are still looking at a 2026-2027 deficit budget in the area of \$316,196. We have managed through short-term solutions but have been laying the groundwork with some long-term changes.
- **Possible solutions and plans** - A large deficit is a tough reality, but we are optimistic that God will continue to bless us as He has for over 160 years.
 - Possible solutions:
 - **Cut expenses** - Over the years, the church and school have cut as much as possible without cutting staff and faculty as that will affect our ministry.
 - **Increase Income** - There are a number of ways to increase the income side of the equation:
 - Continued Study of Stewardship by the congregation through a yearly stewardship emphasis to help members see the blessings God has given them and how they can return those gifts back to God.
 - Beginning of weekly stewardship notes for the announcements and weekly email blast to remind members of God's blessings.
 - Encouraging members to remind friends and neighbors about the blessings of our school and how to enroll their children at St. Paul's. There were also some comments about our members using social media to share and spread the stories of our school ministry.
 - Pastor Koeppen will reach out to area congregations asking them to consider making St. Paul's School a place where they could send their local mission dollars. St. Paul's is the last Lutheran School in our circuit.
 - We will continue to share Ministry Stories (as Pastor Koeppen shared the weekend of June 13-14). These stories are told to help members see that their gifts, while paying bills, salaries, and benefits, help to set up the environment for God to us to touch lives with His love, forgiveness, compassion, and grace.
- **2026-2027 Budget Direction** - While acknowledging the deficit, the leaders were looking for approval to continue paying expenses without an approved budget. However, the Voters did decide to approve the deficit budget in hopes that the congregation would grow in their stewardship and trust in God's provision.

There were many more discussions during the meeting than cannot be covered in this brief summary. This would be an encouragement for all members to participate in the three meetings each year to hear of the joys and struggles of our leadership as we lead our church and school. If you have any questions, you can talk to one of the pastors or church leaders.