

SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Minutes of the Church Council Regular Meeting
June 23, 2025

The Church Council convened for the public June Regular Meeting on Monday, June 23, 2025, in Room 19 and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 P.M. by Barbara Smith, President of the Council.

MEMBERS PRESENT: *Amanda Boyer/Zoom, Melinda Borman, Kirk Dalgaard, Phil Denton, Katy Forand, Wanda Gillman, Tracy Mulderig, Marty Schmidt, and Barbara Smith.* || Nine members.

STAFF PRESENT: Rev. George Miller, Senior Minister

VISITORS PRESENT: *Bill Brinkhorst/Zoom, Joan Dalgaard/Zoom, Joy Dressel/Zoom, Marsha Fey/Zoom, Dan Herron/Zoom, Kathy Herron/Zoom, Donovan Larson, Paul Litzsinger/Zoom, Adam Rustige, and Kim Witbrodt/Zoom.* || Ten Visitors.

OPENING PRAYER: Amanda Boyer opened the meeting with a prayer.

GUEST COMMENTS: Donovan Larson and Adam Rustige joined the meeting on behalf of the Physical Facilities Ministry to discuss open items (see the Physical Facilities Committee Report).

ONE WORD "THANKS": Every Council member shared one aspect of their lives for which they were thankful. Barbara Smith passed around a card from Michele Ottinger thanking St. Lucas UCC for her mother's funeral.

2025 SUCCESSES: Barbara Smith read a list of accomplishments year-to-date (see attached) and thanked everyone who participated. See appended.

CONSENT AGENDA:

It was moved by Marty Schmidt and seconded by Barbara Smith that the following items be approved by consent agenda:

- Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – March 24, 2025, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – April 28, 2025, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – May 22, 2025, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting – May 22, 2025, Minutes
- Finance Committee Meeting – May 20, 2025, Minutes
- Membership & Evangelism Committee Meeting – May 6, 2025, Minutes
- Open & Affirming Update – May 2025

The motion carried unanimously (9-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

MINISTRY REPORTS:

Staff Reports – Two written reports were submitted to the Council prior to the meeting.

- Senior Minister Report – May
- Associate Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation Report – May

No additional discussion was necessary.

Finance Committee Report – Financial Secretary Wanda Gillman submitted two written reports to the Council prior to the meeting.

- Balance Sheet Analysis as of May 31, 2025
- Analysis of Revenue and Expenses as of May 31, 2025

Wanda supplemented the written reports with an oral update that the May 2025 Regular Offering (\$41,034.95**) and Total Income (\$51,326.25) were both under budget. (**In preparing the minutes, it was discovered that the number reported was Regular Envelopes revenue only. Total Regular Offering was \$41,647.95.) Total Expenses for the month (\$86,582.77) were

under budget. She highlighted the lost rental revenue due to the vacancy of the Sexton's house and the incremental expense of the final payment for the roof replacement on that property (\$6,022.84). The actual Total Deficit year-to-date is \$75,566.47, which is over budget by \$12,159.46.

- 1) **External Audit Status** – Wanda reported that Carol Stelmach is pursuing additional bids for the external audit with the goal of starting in August. The Council discussed the difference between a full audit and a surface audit. Wanda Gillman reassured the Council that the audit would be thorough and that a deeper dive into a particular area may be warranted if issues are identified. The Congregation approved this audit in 2019.

Physical Facilities Committee Report – Kirk Dalgaard, Donovan Larson, and Adam Rustige provided an update on behalf of the Physical Facilities Ministry.

- 1) **Charlie Singer's Retirement** – Donovan requested a clearer understanding of Charlie Singer's retirement plans to ensure sufficient time to select and train his replacement.
- 2) **Sexton's House Property Analysis** – Adam offered to prepare an analysis to help inform the decision of whether to lease vs. sell the Sexton's house property. This analysis would be delivered by the July Council Meeting and include recent revenue, recent expenses, major repairs anticipated in the next 5 years, the market rental value, and the market sale value.

The Council recommended contacting Carole Barner for feedback on the property. The Council requested that a similar analysis be completed for the Parsonage. Adam informed the Council that the tenants of the Parsonage property recently renewed their lease, so this second analysis is less urgent. He agreed to start it after the Sexton's house analysis is completed.

- 3) **Sidewalk Repairs** – Donovan stated that guidance from the Council is needed on which sidewalk repairs the committee should pursue.

Wanda Gillman confirmed that repairs to the sidewalk were not anticipated for the 2025 budget and advised fundraising the costs. The bid for completing all recommended repairs to maintain existing sidewalks was \$21,965. The Council questioned whether jacking the Denny Road solution would be a more cost-effective alternative, recognizing that this may not be a permanent solution to the underlying problem.

The Council advised the Physical Facilities Committee to 1) request a bid to jack the Preschool Denny Road sidewalk, 2) report back with how many handicap spots are required on the Preschool lot, and 3) estimate the costs of removing the path from the Preschool lot to the Sexton's house.

- 4) **Preschool Painting** – Donovan received confirmation that asbestos is not a concern with the paint in the Preschool side of the building.
- 5) **Fence Repairs** – Three sections of fence are damaged. A tree branch damaged one section of chain link fence top rail, which Donovan expected would be easy to replace at low cost. A second section of tree damage should be repaired by the homeowner due to the fence line trespassing on St. Lucas UCC property. An automobile damaged a third section – Donovan agreed to follow up on whether the current repair is sufficient or requires a more permanent solution.
- 6) **Property Tax Assessment** – Kirk reported that St. Louis County tax assessment for the Sexton's house property increased and that Physical Facilities is looking into whether it should be challenged. Last year's appraisal was \$285,600. This year, it increased to \$359,000. Bo Frumson agreed to research the individual parcels and how they are subdivided to determine if the assessment is inflated. The church is allowed one tax-exempt property and that is the Parsonage.

The Council raised concerns about inflated land values for parcels containing the Park Hill cemetery and the unusual layout of the parcels. Jeff Wagener is responsible for challenging the assessment. Marty Schmidt agreed to talk to Jeff this week.

- 7) **Camera Update** – Kirk shared that the new Pavillion camera will be installed soon. There was no update on the status of cameras requested by the Preschool for the playground or the Cemetery Board for the cemetery.

Personnel Committee Report – Barbara Smith and Phil Denton shared that a meeting will be scheduled to discuss 1) Charlie Singer’s upcoming retirement, 2) staff succession planning, and 3) the new Travel & Expense Policy recommended by the Finance Committee. More information will follow in Executive Session.

Worship Committee Report – Barbara Smith stated that the committee was formed. Members include Cathy Forand, Rev. Miller, Linda Radick, Linda Taylor, and herself. Another individual has been approached.

Disaster Response Committee Report – Rev. Miller shared that the committee was formed and plans to meet on Monday, June 30th at 6:00 pm via Zoom. Members include Amanda Boyer, Kirk Dalgaard, Joe Forand, and Cathy Viehman. Rev. Miller recommended that the committee focus on the following priorities: 1) establishing a fund that can be released immediately after an event, 2) contingency plans in the event of a disaster, and 3) educating members on how to respond to a disaster.

OLD BUSINESS:

Installation Date – Rev. Miller’s Installation remains scheduled for Sunday, November 2nd at 3:00 pm.

Parsonage Lease – Barbara Smith did not have updates on the pet dog previously residing on the property. Council members had not received a copy of the complete DECA contract to review prior to the meeting.

The Council discussed the need for documentation about 1) who is allowed to contact the tenant, 2) standards for what should be recorded for communications that do occur, and 3) the role of DECA vs. the Council vs. others. Members of the Council reiterated disappointment that the tenant failed to respond to the Council’s certified letter.

The Council requested more information about who initiated the Parsonage lease renewal, when the lease was signed, who signed the lease on behalf of St. Lucas UCC, and whether any grant applications were approved that restricted increasing the rent. Wanda Gillman confirmed that the terms of the lease were not discussed with the Finance Committee. It was the Council’s understanding that contracts must be signed by a Council Officer to be valid.

In the future, the Council recommended that a detailed cost/benefit analysis (similar to that which Adam Rustige volunteered to perform for the Sexton’s house property) be submitted at least 3 months prior to any lease renewal deadline so that the Council can evaluate the proposed terms and risks in advance. The Council discussed whether a home inspection to evaluate the state of the property may be beneficial.

Sports Contracts – Barbara Smith had not yet posted information about this role in the eBlast. Ideally, this volunteer would shadow Violet Brooks for the upcoming contracts.

Physical Facilities Files – Marty Schmidt drafted a letter requesting the return of old files and confirmed that neither Debbie Heagle nor Donovan Larson received the files previously.

Disaster Relief Proposal – Rev. Miller withdrew his proposal to host a community benefit concert for the recent tornado victims given that two other churches have already executed similar, successful events since the Council last met. He recommended considering how St. Lucas UCC could respond with more agility in the future.

Donor Recognition – Kirk Dalgaard agreed to distribute images of example donor wall installations prior to next month’s meeting.

Council Conversations – The Council agreed to schedule a town hall meeting given that over 6 months have passed without one and members are asking for this to be reinstated.

Rev. Miller recommended scheduling the first town hall for the same day as Stump the Pastor Sunday (August 31st), which could help set a tone of levity and good-will. This is over Labor Day Weekend; he emphasized that no date is perfect because we have a busy calendar – the important thing is that there is a date.

Every 3-4 months could be a good cadence. November 30th was proposed for the subsequent town hall.

The Council discussed whether it would be feasible to host the event in the Fellowship Hall instead of the Sanctuary or Room 19. More people might participate if they did not have to relocate to a secondary location and could enjoy their coffee + donut. The A/V Committee would need to be consulted about whether it is possible to use Zoom effectively in this space.

Associate Pastor Search – Tabled until the Personnel Committee completes prerequisite work on job descriptions and succession planning to inform what type of role is needed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Victory Garden Vandalism – Barbara Smith shared that Debbie Ball reported two incidents of vandalism at the Victory Garden where plants were destroyed. Incidents occurred last year as well.

The Council wondered whether this vandalism was occurring while the fields were in use or when they were vacant. Rev. Miller advised handling the situation delicately to avoid creating a perception of being unwelcoming. A sign stating that the area is being recorded may be sufficient to deter future bad actors.

Offering Collection – As Treasurer, Marty Schmidt agreed to take ownership of ensuring that the offering is gathered from the altar and will recruit an usher to accompany the money. The Bylaws say that it should be the Financial Secretary, but the Council agreed that the Treasurer is more appropriate. He will call Barbara Smith to backfill if he is unavailable.

Member Roster Update – Barbara Smith shared that the Membership & Evangelism Committee identified which members are now inactive and will be sending these individuals a letter. Tracy Mulderig added that the Council is responsible for voting to remove previously identified inactive members from the member roster. This discussion should occur during Executive Session due to sensitive information.

Rev. Miller Vacation Request – Rev. Miller requested the ability to roll over 5 days of unused Vacation from his 2024-2025 contract (starting August 1st) to be used the week of August 13-19th. The call agreement states that Vacation does not roll over but that a special request can be made. It is not uncommon for someone new in a role to postpone Vacation in the first 6-12 months.

It was moved by Marty Schmidt and seconded by Barbara Smith to approve Rev. Miller's request to roll over 5 days of Vacation from the 2024-2025 contract to the 2025-2026 contract for use August 13-19th. The motion carried unanimously (9-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

Rev. Miller Mileage Request – Rev. Miller requested that parking for General Synod be counted toward his annual mileage allowance instead of personal expenses.

The Council confirmed that the IRS considers both parking costs and mileage as travel expenses, so this request is the appropriate way to record parking expenses. No motion was needed.

The public session of the Church Council meeting recessed at 7:53 P.M.

(Minute marker: 1 hour/53 minutes)

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Mulderig
Recording Secretary

The next regular meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for Monday, July 28rd at 6:00 pm.

Approved by the St. Lucas UCC Church Council on July 28, 2025

Successes – First Half of 2025 – In no specific order

- Adult Ed on Sundays & Bible Studies at Friendship Village
- Tuesday Coffee Zooms
- Epiphany Boxes in January
- Chili/Soup Cookoff in January
- (2) Successfully Quarterly Cabinet meetings
- Council Retreat in January
- Music Dept. growth
- Backpack program remains strong with more participants than ever
- Mission & Outreach is going strong
- Membership, Info Session, and New members (April)
- Social Outreach remains strong
- ONA Task Force is actively engaging with members
- Preschool Board with an active, wonderful Preschool
- Finance Committee that gets along and looks at everything carefully
- PET
- Stewardship
- Personnel Committee was resurrected this year
- Cemetery Board has a strong group
- Memorial Committee
- AV Committee/workers have been life-changing for us
- Socks, Crocs, & Cocoa
- HS Youth Trivia Night
- Wonderful Lenten Series with Wed services
- Pass the Brick
- Successful Spring Day of Service
- Palm Sunday, Good Friday & Easter Services (with hats)
- Sadly, multiple funerals with successful memorial lunches
- Ministry Fair (Stewardship)
- Memorial Day Community Service & Worship Service
- Pet Blessing