

**SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Minutes of the Church Council Regular Meeting**  
**February 24, 2025**

The Church Council convened for the February Regular Meeting on Monday, February 24, 2025 in Room 19 and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M by Barbara Smith, President of the Council.

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

**STAFF PRESENT:** Rev. George Miller, Senior Minister

**VISITORS PRESENT:** *Bill Brinkhorst/Zoom, Joy Dressel/Zoom, Ken Hamilton/Zoom, Dan Herron, Kathy Herron/Zoom, Marsha Fey/Zoom, Julie Kies, Ellen Littleton/Zoom, Donovan Larson, Adam Rustige, and Jackie Zeitingner/Zoom. || Eleven Visitors.*

**OPENING PRAYER:** Barbara Smith opened the meeting with a prayer and invited each Council member to share one thing for which they felt grateful.

**GUEST COMMENTS:**

**Parsonage Rental Background** – Donovan Larson and Adam Rustige appeared before the Council to share more information about the decision to lease 11815 Denny Road. The Social Justice Committee's original intent was to support the family until the youngest child graduates from the Lindbergh School District.

- **Long-term Commitment** – The youngest child is in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. Therefore, an additional 10-year commitment to the family would be required to meet the stated objective. Concerns were raised by the Council about an additional decade of wear and tear on the house. Donovan believed the home to be in acceptable condition, though dated.
- **Revenue** – Rental income on the property is \$15,000 annually, which has remained flat since the original agreement in 2018. A realistic market rate for the property is believed to be \$1,800 - \$1,900/month, as many elements of the property are outdated. Adam expressed an openness to consider modest increases to the rent above its current rate of \$1,250/month. The 11825 Denny Road property is leased for \$1,400/month.
- **Expenses** – Maintenance costs were \$9,327.09\* in 2024, primarily due to a significant one-time plumbing repair. Management costs were \$1,130\* in 2024. [*\*Note: While preparing the minutes, it was discovered that the totals stated in the meeting were for YTD Actual Last Year (2023). The 2024 maintenance and management costs were \$3,501.47 and \$1,513.24, respectively.*]
  - The Council requested additional information to better understand the total costs of maintaining the property including 1) average maintenance expenses from the past 2-3 years including repairs covered out-of-pocket by donors and 2) the parsonage's share of the cost to insure the St. Lucas campus.
- **Renter's Policy** – The Council requested proof of renter's insurance, which should be on file with DECA.
- **Safety** – The Council asked whether the basement can be used safely as a 5<sup>th</sup> bedroom with two means of exit and was reassured that the home has passed occupancy inspections.
- **Ongoing Maintenance** – The Council asked whether it would be appropriate to teach the youth residents how to maintain the property as a developmental opportunity. Mowing is currently covered as part of the broader grounds contract.
- **Missional Focus** – Questions were raised about whether focusing on a single building mission would be a better use of manpower, such as making improvements to the property vs. focusing on Habitat for Humanity.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

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

- A/V Committee Meeting – January 28, 2025, Minutes
- A/V Committee Special Meeting – February 18, 2025, Minutes
- Cemetery Board Meeting – December 18, 2024, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting – October 28, 2024, Minutes (Amended)

- Council Regular Meeting – November 25, 2024, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – November 25, 2024, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting – December 30, 2024, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – December 30, 2024, Minutes
- Personnel Committee Meeting – February 5, 2025, Minutes

The motion carried unanimously (8-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

### **GENERAL BUSINESS:**

**A/V Committee Report** – Dan Herron returned on behalf of the A/V Committee for approval to use the A/V Fund to purchase a new Dell desktop computer.

The Council concluded that the A/V Committee had the authority to make this \$2,198.06 purchase without an official motion. After discussing alternative discounts, it was decided to purchase directly from Dell with St. Lucas UCC's tax-exempt status.

**Staff Reports** – Three written reports were submitted to the Council.

- Senior Minister Report – February
- Associate Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation Report – February
- Communications Report – February

Rev. Miller highlighted a change to the structure of his Senior Minister report – overtime days worked, vacation days taken, and accumulated mileage/expenses will be included at the bottom of the document each month for transparency. He thanked the Council and Congregation for the outpouring of support in recent weeks, noting that discussions about productive conflict will be ongoing. Building on a Conference conversation about widespread clergy burnout and church “rhythms”, he requested that the Council think critically about the feasibility of the church calendar and be open to retiring old rhythms to make space for new opportunities. Finally, Rev. Miller expressed gratitude for Rev. Pillman's exceptional pastoral care for parishioners and staff.

**Guidelines** – Barbara Smith and Rev. Miller are partnering to define ground rules and expectations for future meetings.

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

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

Wanda supplemented the written reports with an oral update that the January 2025 Regular Offering (\$67,419.80) and January 2025 Total Income (\$74,804.84) were overbudget. Total expenses for January 2025 (\$90,631.59) were overbudget by \$3,811.49 primarily due to the quarterly insurance payment that hit in January. Marty added that returning to offering plates has made a noticeable positive impact.

**Physical Facilities Committee Report** – Tabled until next month due to the absence of Kirk Dalgaard.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Senior Pastor Housing Allowance** – Rev. Miller's housing allowance for 2025 required formal approval.

It was moved by Marty Schmidt and seconded by Phil Denton to approve a housing allowance of \$41,808 for Pastor George Miller for the year 2025. The motion carried unanimously (8-0) by a show of hands with no abstentions.

**Search Committee for an Associate Pastor** – Barbara Smith initiated a discussion on next steps needed to move forward with the search process.

The Council agreed to form a small Feasibility Committee to review the budget, assess needs, and provide recommendations. The committee will consist of Debbie Heagle, Marty Schmidt, Barbara Smith and representation from both the Senior Minister Search Committee and the Pastoral Care Committee. Recommended members included Barbara Beck, Beth Elmore, Karen Tylka, Lanny Wingbermuehle, and Jan Winter. The meeting was tentatively scheduled for March 13, 2025 at 1:30 pm in the South Narthex.

**Committee Liaisons** – The Council confirmed that all committees requiring Council liaisons have representation.

**Personnel Ministry** – Marty Schmidt proposed changes to the Personnel Ministry description as requested by Barbara Smith. Phil Denton recommended against the proposed requirement that the Chair be responsible for meeting minutes.

It was moved by Marty Schmidt and seconded by Phil Denton to approve the following changes to the Personnel Ministry description: 1) the Chair shall be a member of the Church Council, 2) representatives of Church Council may serve concurrently for up to four years, and 3) the committee is responsible to recommend changes to staffing and compensation to the Finance Ministry and Church Council prior to annual budget planning. The motion carried unanimously (8-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

**Sports Contracts** – Barbara Smith contacted Violet Brooks about whether she wishes to continue coordinating the sports field contracts with the Lindbergh School District. This item is tabled until Violet provides a response.

**Saturday Worship** – Marsha Fey secured Rev. Kies for the pulpit throughout March except for this upcoming Saturday. Rev. Pillman's call agreement does not include Saturday night. Julie recorded last week's service and agreed to do so again if necessary.

**Duties of Council** – Barbara Smith reported that new Council members have practiced collecting the offering / coffee money. Rev. Miller agreed to continue discussions about how to execute Communion, noting that the table is more aligned with our theologically than the altar because Protestants do not see Communion as a sacrifice. Council members were encouraged to use the SignUpGenius links. Marty Schmidt reminded everyone to press the button to lock the office cabinet.

**Land Use Task Force** – Barbara Smith recommended tabling this topic indefinitely due to limited progress.

**Welcome Center Updates** – Marty Schmidt recommended that Council move forward with pursuing updates to the Welcome Center area.

It was moved by Marty Schmidt and seconded by Phil Denton that the Physical Facilities Ministry be tasked with researching and bidding improvements to the Welcome Center entryway and main stairway to include 1) furniture, 2) any necessary repairs, 3) painting, and 4) non-slip flooring. During discussion, Melinda Borman requested that a deep cleaning of the area be included as a potential action. The motion carried unanimously (8-0) by a show of hands with no abstentions.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Accounting Audit** – Marty Schmidt reminded the Council that a motion was passed at the November 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting to have an outside company conduct a full audit. This audit was postponed first due to the pandemic and then to allow for 1-2 years of history under the new accounting system.

It was moved by Marty Schmidt and seconded by Phil Denton that the Church Council seek bids to begin an audit of our finances by an independent firm effective July 1, 2025. The motion carried unanimously (8-0) by a show of hands with no abstentions. Rev. Miller contacted Rev. Lake for accounting firm recommendations. Rev. Lake replied with the recommendation to contact Kathleen Rainey, Operations Manager for the Missouri Mid-South Conference.

Concerns were raised about the current column formatting of the 2025 budget PDF that makes the document difficult to read. The Council requested that Denee Bowers reformat the linked in the eBlast.

**Establish a Worship Committee** – Barbara Smith reported that Debbie Heagle reordered the single serve disposable communion sets. Barbara reviewed a list of tasks to be delegated to a newly formed Worship Committee including: 1) taking care of the Sanctuary (e.g., refilling pew materials, changing the paraments, preparing communion), 2) partnering with Linda Taylor & Linda Radick on music, and 3) working with Rev. Miller on upcoming worship plans.

Melinda Borman volunteered to assist Barbara with forming this committee. During discussion, it was recommended that special events (e.g., weddings, funerals) fall under the scope of this committee and that the Head Usher (Terry Marcille) be a member.

**Offering Envelopes** – Barbara Smith recommended that the Council consider no longer ordering preprinted member offering envelopes to save \$1,500 annually. She reported that Debbie Heagle can successfully tie checks to donor accounts. Multiple members have requested to be removed from the envelope distribution list and use in general is limited with the increase in electronic giving.

It was moved by Barbara Smith and seconded by Melinda Borman that member offering envelopes be eliminated. During discussion, concerns were raised about challenges this could introduce with linking cash donations to member giving accounts. The Council agreed to supply blank envelopes and to educate the congregation about the importance of writing your name on them for cash donations. Tracy Mulderig recalled a recent discussion among members about how children's offering envelopes helped teach the importance of everyone contributing to the offering and that there is a desire to resume this practice. Barbara withdrew the motion and committed to further exploring how to implement this policy if approved at a future meeting.

**eBlast Recommendations** – Barbara Smith reported that Paul Litzinger asked that Council meeting agendas or general topics be included in the eBlast proceeding the meeting.

The Council requested that Denee Bowers send a separate email with the tentative agenda and zoom link each month. Concerns were expressed that the newsletter is titled the "Weekly Update" yet conversationally referred to as the "eBlast". This may be causing confusion for new attendees.

**PET Update** – Marty Schmidt reported that the retainer fee has been sent to legal counsel.

**Preschool Board** – Amanda Boyer reported that the kids love the lunches with Rev. Miller. Operationally, registration for Fall 2025 is off to a strong start and tuition rates will be reviewed around October. Some retirements are anticipated.

**Room Rentals** – Marty Schmidt informed the Council that a rental policy and fee schedule exist for all rooms on campus, not only the Fellowship Hall. The policy states that a responsible party for the event must be a member of St. Lucas UCC. Rev. Miller shared that there is confusion about who should be contacted regarding these requests and in what order. Clarification is needed for the approval flow.

The public session of the Church Council meeting recessed at 7:40 P.M.

*(Minute marker: 1 hour/35 minutes)*

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy Mulderig  
Recording Secretary

*The next regular meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for Monday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.*

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