

**SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
March 27, 2023, 6:00 pm - Zoom Hybrid/Room 19**

*(*This meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm by President, Marty Schmidt.)*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Phil Denton, Marsha Fey/Zoom, Katy Forand, Kathy Herron, Donovan Larson, Jack Laudenschlager/Zoom, Marty Schmidt, Paul Simons, Barbara Smith, and Juanita Wagner/Zoom | ten members.

STAFF PRESENT: Rev. Dr. Carole Barner, and Rev. Vicki Hampton

VISITORS PRESENT: Bill Brinkhorst & Joy Dressel/Zoom, Sandy Harris/Zoom, Dan Herron, Randy Jurgensen/Zoom, Ellen Littleton/Zoom, and Sue Simmons/Zoom

OPENING PRAYER:

The meeting was opened with Hebrews 12:1-2 recited by Barbara Smith

GUEST COMMENTS:

Dan Herron of the A.V. Committee shared an update regarding the cameras damaged during the February lightning strike. Our insurance carrier sent out their own rep -Strike Check- to assess the damage to our equipment. He created a 15-page report which details each item of equipment with its replacement value. One of the cameras damaged had an original cost of \$5,500. An interesting note is that camera is no longer manufactured. Therefore, the current like-version the insurance company recommends will be an upgrade from the one we lost. Their report totaled \$21K in equipment and allows \$5K for depreciation value in the event we decide not to replace a specific item. Their report does not include fees for labor and installation. However, they did quote \$191/camera for their labor, and installation. Dan will also secure bids from Reinhold Electric and Tech Electronics for labor and installation. The A.V. team is still renting cameras in the event the cameras on loan are asked to be returned. That vendor is Lens Rental in Memphis, TN. (Their fee is \$174/camera/week vs Schiller's quote of \$573/camera/week.) The current rental period is two weeks but can be extended. The A.V. team has determined \$26K will be needed for three new cameras which will include upgrades to our former equipment. It will result in a \$5K increase over Strike Check's recommendation. The current A.V. budget is \$2,700. Additionally, there's an A.V. fund that currently contains \$5K.

REVIEW OF FEBRUARY MINUTES:

February 9, 2023, and February 27, 2023 minutes were not voted/approved as two comments/questions were brought up for discussion. Phil's comment in the 2/9/23 minutes will be discussed later this evening in the executive session. And Paul questioned whether he had made a comment regarding the size of the neighbor's fenced property on 2/27/23 as he has never looked at the parcel in question. Marty feels that comment was most likely made by him. The 2/27/23 minutes will be updated to reflect Marty as the one who commented on 2/27/23.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A.V. Committee Meeting - March 6, 2023, Minutes
- Cemetery Board Meeting - December 21, 2022, Minutes
- Cemetery Board Meeting - January 18, 2023, Minutes
- Cemetery Board Meeting - February 15, 2023, Minutes
- Finance Committee Meeting - February 21, 2023, Minutes
- Membership & Evangelism Meeting - March 7, 2023, Minutes

Carole offered that the actual name listed in the Finance Committee minutes should be Employee Retention Credit, not Employer Retention Credit. Paul will make that correction.

After the discussion concluded, Barbara moved and Kathy seconded the March 2023 Consent Agenda as submitted for approval with the noted change within the Financial minutes. The motion was accepted unanimously by a show of hands.

STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor Vicki -

- Donovan asked what “Play Space” is. Pastor Vicki explained her Wednesday sessions are a program intended for ministers to help in the administration of their congregations. Expert discussions change weekly and typically last one hour. They are emceed by Rev. John C. Dorhauer.

There were no other questions or comments for Pastor Vicki.

Pastor Carole -

- A question regarding 2023 VBS was asked of Pastor Carole. She advised this year will follow the same format used in 2022 with individual sessions taking place. Michele is planning on Storm Chasers for June, and MO Natural Resources Dept. for July. Also -hopefully- The Mineral & Gem Society in August, with Serengeti Steve to return in September and October will offer “Blood & Bones”.
- Pastor Carole also advised two more items set in place after this report was submitted. 1.) A funeral for Audrey Engel will take place on March 30th, and 2.) As a fund-raiser, The Youth Group is offering another Parent’s Night Out on April 29th.

There were no other questions or comments for Pastor Carole.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Paul Simons updated the Council on the current financial status of the church and presented them with the financial statements for February.

- In summary, the General Fund Income and the Total Regular Offerings were both under budget by about the same amounts which account for being under budget in February.
- ...YTD in those same line items was as well.
- Miscellaneous Income in February was under budget by approximately \$3K which was due to a timing issue with rent received after the close of February in early March.
- General Fund Expenses in February were under \$700 -Good!- and YTD General Fund Expenses are still down \$6,600 -Great!- but that amount will be offset later in 2023 for the Search Committee’s use.
- FYI - some extraordinary expenses incurred in February were for the rekeying of all exterior doors and the scarifying of the Pre-School sidewalks, in addition to snow removal.
- This resulted in a General Fund deficit of \$27K which is twice what we projected and can be primarily attributed to a decrease in Regular Fund Offerings.
- Overall, the total YTD deficit is approximately \$3,600 more than the 2023 budget but it is within an acceptable range of YTD figures... so “we’re doing okay” at this time.

OLD BUSINESS:

>*Physical Facilities Ministry* - The reports from this group are being shared by Ministry Chair, Donovan Larson

- Lightning strike - most of the current information was supplied by Dan in his A.V. report
- Mowing & Lawn Care - Two bids have been received for 2023. One from Loyet Landscape and the second from M S Lawncare. M S Lawncare is a vendor we had used prior to 2022. He is not clear on why the church stopped using him, but his bid of \$27,800 is much lower than Loyet’s. Plus an advantage is he is familiar with our campus. The 2023 Campus Grounds budget -which includes snow removal- of \$9K plus the Lawn Maintenance of \$19,500 allows for \$28,500. Plus, he mentioned if we lock in with their three-year contract, there will be no rate increase during that time.
 - Barbara moved and Phil seconded that the Council accept M S Lawncare’s three-year bid as submitted be approved. With no additional discussion, the motion was accepted unanimously by a show of hands.
- Ball Fields - We currently have multiple contracts to use our ball fields this year. One by Lindbergh Schools Soccer plus 2-3 other groups who want to use the fields for baseball. Presently, our three fields are all varied in their conditions from standing water to fully weed-covered. Donovan has received a bid from Kyle’s

Landscaping for \$7,500 which will give us two “high-end” fields, and the third would be cleaned up and treated with weed killer. Our field contracts started in early March and those coaches want to start playing. They’ve already complained about the condition of the fields to Violet Brooks. Phil raised the question of the high costs associated with this type of effort, especially with this year’s budget cuts. Perhaps forming a task force could be a better decision to determine how the fields can be better marketed. Marty asked if it could be cheaper to lay seed and market the fields for soccer or lacrosse and eliminate the costs associated with the maintenance of a baseball infield. Per Donovan, the problem is for this year the existing contracts are for baseball and we’re running out of time for the minimal work. He can go back to MS to see if there’s room within the bid we just accepted to help us get the fields in reasonable shape rather than “high-end” for this year. For example raking, patching, weed killer, etc. The consensus of the group is that this should be the route we take for now so we can accommodate the current contracts. Donovan will spend what is allowed in the current budget to get the fields in shape for this year. More discussion will be needed in the future. No motion tonight.

- Pre-School Parking Lot - The former Building & Grounds committee priorities for 2023 had planned to “put a topping” on the Preschool Parking lot and to also seal the large church parking lot. Donovan has received two bids for asphalt work for the Preschool lot. Both are good asphalt companies Donovan has worked with during his working years. One is \$25K and the other is \$15K. With warmer weather coming we need to get on someone’s job list. He feels with Kelly Blessing’s help he can make acceptable plans to reroute parent traffic with minimal disruption. Once on their schedule, he expects a job like this -two to three potholes with repaving- to take no more than a week. This is Donovan’s recommendation. Paul questioned if this is to be paid via the \$5K allowance under the Parking Lot Maintenance line item. Donovan knows there are firm line items to be addressed in the 2023 Physical Facilities Ministry budget. He also knows unexpected items -like a leaking roof- will occur. However, as the Pre-School lot is deteriorating quickly and he predicts we’ll pay much more if we wait another year or two. In addition, his conservative estimate is the \$15k job will be a 10-15 year fix, with only follow-up sealing to be done -maybe- five years after the original job. Therefore, his recommendation is to do it this year. *(To offset the cost may mean postponing the sealing of the main lot as we’d planned.)* Yet, if everyone feels it’s better to wait and just patch the holes, his comment is with a three/four-man team over two days, it could be \$1500-\$1800 each day just for the potholes alone. Katy commented this contractor does very good work. And Phil shared he “thinks it’s a very good price”. Marty added, “He thinks we need to do it”.
 - Without any additional discussion, Kathy moved and Phil seconded the \$15K work for the Pre-School parking lot to be approved. The motion was accepted unanimously by a show of hands.
- Neighbors with Fence on Church Property - A proposal in Jeff Wagener’s 3/6/23 letter to the homeowners offered one of two options agreeable to the church. (1) St. Lucas will sell that parcel to them for \$2,500 in addition to any added fees as their responsibility. (2) Or they need to move the fence onto their property line with zoning setback requirements. The homeowners replied with yes they would like to purchase the property at a price of \$250 as an “act of good faith” from the church. They also included a list of detailed costs needed for their approval of the sale of this parcel. Additionally, their letter referenced their contact with Wendell Gaume and Karl Scheidt in December 2018 when they received permission to “put up the fence”. Marty reviewed Council meeting minutes for some months prior to and after December 2018. He found no mention of this discussion in the minutes. Marty also asked several Council members from that time about this topic and no one remembered conversations being exchanged. This circumstance did not come to our Council’s attention until 2-3 months ago during a -formerly named- Building and Grounds meeting. Phil gave his legal opinion about the information in their response letter. He also gave his legal opinion regarding our rights as the property owner. Phil also pointed out the neighbor does recognize St. Lucas as the property owner by the comments they made in their letter. Donovan offered three things he feels we could do to attempt resolution: 1.) Have them move the fence onto their property line, 2.) Have them purchase the parcel for a credible price, or 3.) Have a revocable agreement drawn up stating they can leave the fence in place but as the property owner St. Lucas can revoke that agreement at any time. And if any improvement is requested they would need to get the church’s permission. Phil shared his opinion by referencing Deuteronomy 19:14 - “...you must never steal

anyone's land by moving the boundary markers your ancestors set up to mark their property." Katy asked if this is the "hill we want to die on" for such a small parcel. Marty is regretful they received the wrong information and doesn't know where the truth lies. Vicki shared a situation she experienced when she was with another church. A neighbor requested to make alterations to the bordering church property. That church had a Land Use Agreement drafted. Liability in their situation would have been the neighbor's responsibility. Plus all documents were legally filed with the county. In that instance, Phil shared you could add a sunset clause so that when their children reach a certain age the agreement would expire. The group agrees their primary concern is the future liability against the church. Marsha added this documentation may also help if their property ever goes up for sale. Marty will ask Jeff to draft up a document. And Donovan will contact Karl Scheidt to check his memory.

> St. Lucas Youth Trivia Night - Marty asked how it went. Carole responded that it was a very good night and money raised was approximately \$7K. The BYOB beer/wine caveat was managed well. She thanked the Council for their approval of this "adaptation for this event". Marty offered that tonight is not the night, but the Council will need to draft a formal policy going forward if we decide to continue with this practice.

> By-Laws Task Force - The new group had its first meeting before Marty left for Africa. Their second meeting will be next week. Those team members are Phil Denton, Joy Dressel, Marty Schmidt, Sue Simmons, and Paul Simons. Topics being discussed are 1.) An attempt to streamline the church's governance for more lateral reporting vs. hierarchical reporting. Whereby creating a system the leaders of the ministries that report to the Council are also members of the Council. 2.) They are considering an increase to a council member's term from three years to four years. This may benefit an office holder's experience. It will allow them to "get up to speed" in the position and carry that knowledge into the next year. Marty also mentioned an advantage of having a lawyer on the committee as the team is learning there are very real challenges in the current by-laws. They were created before more modern legislation was set forth. There are more contemporary ways we need to be established as an organization in addition to how our by-laws are being managed. Vicki mentioned that the processes used several years ago to amend P.E.T. may have been appropriate for the time, but regulations have been passed since that could bring PET into current practice. Presently there are regulations in place named UPMIFA -Uniform Prudent Mgt. of Institutional Funds- which has been adopted by Missouri. For clarification, Marty asked, that St. Lucas is the grantor of PET. And a separate board then runs the endowment trust. Correct? So, who then can lead revisions and updates needed? Paul stated the congregation has to approve any amendments made to the PET agreement by a 2/3rd majority vote. He feels the Council is allowed to take the lead. Vicki agreed. Plus she advised there is someone within the UCC named Matt Wagner who can advise St. Lucas on what needs to change and how we need to proceed. In addition, Phil offered that the trust agreement itself has very limited areas you can amend, it's "an irrevocable trust". If you do this you have to do as the trust states and it needs to be done correctly. Vicki will consult with Matt to determine how St. Lucas can move ahead.

> Open Council Position - Marty has chatted with a couple of people, however, he's been limited with a follow-up due to his travels. He feels confident someone will be in place by our next meeting.

> Open Pre-School Board Position - For those not aware, Stan Burcham the current Pre-School Board president has resigned his position and the April meeting will be his last meeting with St. Lucas. Per Paul, according to the by-laws the Pre-School Board chairperson fills temporary vacancies. But they do have the ability to elect a new President after he resigns. In his resignation letter, Stan noted the travel time needed to St. Lucas from his home in Ballwin. And they have selected Parkway UCC as their new church home due to its ONA status.

> Other Old Business - Pastor Vicki has reconsidered not having a Maundy Thursday service and has now decided to offer a service with communion since there will not be communion served on Good Friday. She envisions the service to be quiet and contemplative. A service with scripture readings, a devotion, and communion. It will be shorter than a Sunday service and start at 3:00 pm on April 6th. The question was asked if transportation would be available from Friendship Village. Juanita volunteered to contact their Social Director so arrangements for those wanting to attend can be made.

NEW BUSINESS:

>ONA - Marty shared that Pastor Vicki was approached by the Social Justice Committee to ask when the time to start exploring ONA will be. Marty admitted he was not involved in the past attempt so he is not aware of how much the former group was able to achieve. And he asked if it would be necessary for St. Lucas to start all over again. According to Pastor Vicki, her understanding after speaking with some members is that we “kind of jumped in with both feet”. To her, it sounds as if there was a core group pushing for it. And that a pastor who came in was told that St. Lucas IS ready for ONA. Yet she heard no evidence that the guidelines of the consortium were followed. Paul asked if we should be contemplating this during the interim process. Pastor Vicki’s response was that Barb Biedenstein who is well-versed in this process advises against starting this measure during an interim process. Yet, there is a member of the Social Justice committee who disagrees and has told Pastor Vicki that Barb Biedenstein has told her it IS okay to begin the process during an interim. Pastor Carole shared her story of working toward ONA at Grace UCC as their settled pastor. It was a three-year process that involved learning, growing, and deep reflection. Building and strengthening relationships, sharing stories, and learning to listen to each other in the congregation are needed. And of course, you’ll need the assistance and guidance of the UCC and their guidelines such as the list Pastor Vicki just read, in order to succeed. Paul asked if it would help to have a Congregational Conversation as a barometer to see how the current congregation feels about the topic. Pastor Vicki answered that to do this would be making the decision that you want to start the work... “you’d be putting the cart before the horse”. And she doesn’t want to give the wrong impression. Being pro-ONA, she was gratified at the Council's unanimously positive response when she told a member that she would perform a wedding for a gay couple in the sanctuary if she were asked. The member and his wife left the church when they received a letter from the Council supporting Vicki's position. She also stated the Social Justice team is not the group to lead this issue. It needs to be a diverse group of members similar to the Transition Team. The consensus of the group is since we are now a different church it would be best to start again, fresh, while also allowing more time to pass. Pastor Vicki also reiterated we need to enlist the assistance and guidance of the coalition with their many resources to achieve this goal.

>Signage for Sport Fields - Katy proposed installing weatherproofed signs to post upcoming events by St. Lucas Church so that non-members coming onto our property for the sports fields are aware of what we have to offer. A comment was offered that type of product would fall under the parameters of Stewardship which Katy is a part of. Marsha also offered that profits from the field concessions could be used for that purpose as well. Katy will concentrate on gathering more information regarding solutions.

>New UCC Signs - Donovan advised he plans to begin the process of researching prices plus city/county ordinances, etc. with the intent of replacing the two, older, faded directional signs for St. Lucas that currently sit on northbound S. Lindbergh Blvd. and southbound Sappington Road. He’ll report back to the Council soon on his findings.

>Question about 3/26/23 Council Conversation - Paul asked how that went. Marty answered “Good and well attended”. There were no comments about the statement drafted by The Council for the Search Committee. Pastor Vicki added there was a good discussion and explanation about how membership numbers are tracked/verified.

At this time, Marty released visiting members from the meeting and closed the Zoom so the Council could go into an Executive session.

*Please see the 3/27/23 Executive Session meeting minutes for the discussion that followed this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Smith,
Recording Secretary