

SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHURCH COUNCIL Minutes of the Church Council Regular Meeting October 27, 2025

The Church Council gathered for the public October Regular Meeting on Monday, October 27, 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.

Present

Barbara Smith, President
Katy Forand, Vice President
Wanda Gillman, Financial Secretary
Tracy Mulderig, Recording Secretary
Carol Stelmach, Treasurer
Amanda Boyer (Zoom)
Melinda Borman
Phil Denton

Also Present

Rev. George Miller, Senior Minister
Bill Brinkhorst, Lay Delegate to the SLA & MMS Meetings
Joy Dressel, Lay Delegate to the SLA & MMS Meetings
Lynn Fey Follis (Zoom), Co-Coordinator of Youth Ministries
Donovan Larson, Chair of the Physical Facilities Ministry
Paul Simons, Parliamentarian
Donna Alexander (Zoom)
Bill Biedenstein
Pat Fribis (Zoom)
Cathy Forand (Zoom)
Ken Hamilton (Zoom)
Stephen Hanpeter (Zoom)
Dan Herron (Zoom)
Kathy Herron (Zoom)
Linda Taylor
Kim Witbrodt (Zoom)

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Opening Prayer – given by Wanda Gillman

President's Report – presented by President Barbara Smith

President Barbara Smith asked all in-person participants to share something for which they were thankful. The President highlighted recent successful events from the past month and solicited additions to the list.

The following items were recognized:

- Trunk or Treat event
- Appreciation Sunday for the Preschool & Cemetery Boards
- 115 + 111 meals served by the Backpack Program this month
- Anonymous donation of a new keyboard for the Choir Room
- Guest speaker programs hosted by Adult Education featuring Jeanette Mott Oxford and Heartland Industries
- Improvements to campus made during the Fall Day of Service

The President appointed Paul Simons to serve as Parliamentarian for the meeting and read the Council Covenant (Church Council Policies 1.4.2).

St. Louis Association Fall Meeting & Missouri Mid-South Conference Annual Gathering Report – presented by Joy Dressel (report attached)

The Church Council thanked Joy Dressel for her efforts to prepare and present historical artifacts at the Association and Conference gatherings.

Guest Comments Prepared Statement – provided by Katy Forand (statement attached)

The Church Council honored the statement with a moment of silence, followed by a brief prayer from Rev. George Miller.

Review of Consent Agenda – The following items were adopted by consent agenda as provided to the Church Council for review and approval (documents on portal).

- Minutes, A/V Ministry Meeting – August 26, 2025
- Minutes, A/V Ministry Meeting – September 23, 2025
- Minutes, Cemetery Board Meeting – September 17, 2025
- Minutes, Council Regular Meeting – September 22, 2025
- Minutes, Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – September 22, 2025
- Minutes, Finance Ministry Meeting – September 16, 2025
- Minutes, Membership & Evangelism Ministry Meeting – September 2, 2025
- Minutes, Open & Affirming Task Force Meeting – September 16, 2025
- Minutes, Social Justice Ministry Meeting – September 9, 2025
- Notes, Council Conversations – September 21, 2025

Staff Reports – presented by Rev. George Miller (reports on portal)

- Senior Minister Report
- Associate Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation Report
- Communications Coordinator Report.

Rev. George Miller celebrated Rev. Janet Pillman's accomplishments, which included making 39 direct contacts over 80 work hours.

Finance Ministry Report – presented by Financial Secretary Wanda Gillman (report attached, financial documents on portal)

- Balance Sheet Analysis as of September 30, 2025
- Analysis of Revenue and Expenses as of September 30, 2025

Financial Secretary Wanda Gillman reminded the Church Council that asset funds are excluded from the revised totals. The Church Council discussed concerns that the 2025 Actual Deficit could be even worse than anticipated. Solutions to the structural deficit are needed (e.g., staff reorganization, fundraising events). Fundraising events could foster fellowship, increase revenue, and attract new members.

The Financial Secretary reported that Catlett & Associates anticipate beginning the external audit in January 2026.

Items requiring Church Council action:

- 1) **2026 Budget** – The Church Council postponed the motion to approve the budget for presentation at the Annual Meeting until Executive Session to allow for the discussion of relevant personnel-related issues.
- 2) **General Endowment Fund** – Stewards of the General Endowment Funds must be identified in accordance with the Bylaws (Part XIII) so that quarterly meetings can resume.

Physical Facilities Ministry Report – presented by Donovan Larson, Chair of the Physical Facilities Ministry

Donovan Larson reported the following items:

- Alternative bids to repair the flat roof leaks are necessary, as Glandt Roofing is not responding to calls
- New tenants have moved into the Sexton's House property
- An electronic sign on Denny Road would violate local ordinances; a variance is being pursued
- Approval of the bid for mud-jacking the sidewalks is needed (\$3,400)
- Concerns about delays in the search process for Charlie Singler's replacement

As liaison to the Preschool Board, Amanda Boyer raised concerns about security of the Preschool door. The Church Council requested that the Physical Facilities Ministry inspect the door and meet with Kelly Blessing to understand her concerns.

Rev. George Miller recommended that Donovan Larson and Amanda Boyer meet with Kelly Blessing to discuss the location of the Little Free Pantry, as police have raised concerns about the proximity to the Preschool door.

It was recommended by Donovan Larson, moved by Barbara Smith, and seconded by Phil Denton that the following recommendation be approved:

That the Physical Facilities Ministry be authorized to contract services from Archway Mudjacking for \$3,400.

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

The Church Council discussed that the HVAC changeover from A/C to heat is scheduled for after Rev. George Miller's Installation. Donovan Larson advised contacting Jeff Wagener if an alternative appointment time is desired.

President Barbara Smith thanked Donovan Larson for his labors to clean and prepare the Sexton's House property for the new tenants.

Disaster Response Ministry Report – presented by Rev. George Miller

Rev. George Miller shared the dates of upcoming events:

- November 10, 2025 – presentation by Dr. Mary Schaller Blaufuss
- February 9, 2026 – presentation by Joshua Rau
- March 8, 2026 – presentation by Amanda Boyer with fundraiser

Worship Ministry Report – presented by President Barbara Smith

President Barbara Smith reported the establishment of a five-member "Chancel Crew" whose responsibilities will include preparing Communion and changing decorations on the altar (i.e., paraments, flowers). The President agreed to meet with Rev. George Miller to discuss broader needs for the Worship Ministry.

President Barbara Smith reminded the Church Council that Communion will be held on November 3, 2025, and will follow the new format established last month. Vice President Katy Forand and Tracy Mulderig agreed to practice, as they were not present to serve last month. Rev. George Miller advised the President to delay when she approaches to altar to act as the anchor.

Nominating Committee Report – presented by President Barbara Smith

President Barbara Smith reported that ballots will be necessary at the Annual Meeting instead of a slate, as the number of candidates exceeds the number of open positions for the Church Council. Parliamentarian Paul Simons reminded the President that whether to allow additional nominations from the floor should be an expected action item at the Annual Meeting. The Church Council discussed the need for a digital ballot alternative for Zoom participants.

The President reported that all open positions have at least one candidate, except for the Perpetual Endowment Trust. Parliamentarian Paul Simons reminded the Church Council that the proposed candidates should be published in the Annual Report and distributed to the Congregation at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. Everything to be presented to the Congregation should be distributed at least two weeks in advance; the deadline was yesterday.

Preschool Board Report – presented by Amanda Boyer

Amanda Boyer reported that the Preschool received a \$1,000 donation from the Barnes family.

Youth Ministry Report – presented Amanda Boyer

Amanda Boyer reported that the 2026 Mission Trip is scheduled for July 11, 2026 - July 19, 2026, at Spirit Lake Ministries in North Dakota.

Personnel Ministry Report – The presentation by Phil Denton, Chair of the Personnel Ministry, was reserved for Executive Session.

OLD BUSINESS:

Installation of Rev. George Miller – presented by Rev. George Miller and Linda Taylor (summary attached)

Rev. George Miller reported that a productive meeting was held with Dan Herron, Chair of the A/V Ministry, regarding needs for the service. He recommended that anyone hosting events with A/V needs meet with Dan proactively to ensure optimal coordination.

Rev. George Miller advised the Church Council to consider a \$200 honorarium for the pastor who will be preaching at the service. The Church Council concluded that a formal motion to approve this expense was unnecessary.

President Barbara Smith recommended publicizing that a meal will be held after the service and offered to connect with Denee Bowers.

Staff & Member Appreciation – presented by President Barbara Smith and Rev. George Miller

President Barbara Smith reported that the first event for the Cemetery and Preschool Boards was a success. Rev. Miller reminded the Church Council that the next appreciation service will honor the staff and be held on November 23, 2025. Charlie Singler's retirement celebration will be held on December 28, 2025.

Reactivation of the Special Events Ministry – presented by Recording Secretary Tracy Mulderig

Recording Secretary Tracy Mulderig reminded the Church Council that a motion passed last month to reinstate the Special Events Ministry. The next step is to identify members for this new ministry so that meetings can be arranged. Discussion was tabled.

Items requiring Church Council action:

- 1) **Council Liaison** – The Church Council postponed the appointment of a Council liaison until next month.

SunCrest Fest – presented by Rev. George Miller

Rev. George Miller reported that no churches were represented in this year's parade. He recommended that St. Lucas UCC minimally consider marching in the parade and handing out candy next year. Hosting a booth and/or sponsoring more expensive, high-visibility advertisements are options for evangelism.

NEW BUSINESS:

Staff Holiday Gifts – The Church Council postponed discussion of holiday gifts for the staff until Executive Session.

Event Planning Guidelines – Recording Secretary Tracy Mulderig offered to draft a checklist framework for discussion at a future meeting.

Fellowship Hall Banners – presented by Vice President Katy Forand

Katy Forand reported that the old banners are currently in storage. A prototype for new banners designed by Melinda Borman was distributed. Rev. George Miller recommended allowing families to sponsor the banners to fundraise the costs.

Food Insecurity Concerns – presented by Amanda Boyer, Treasurer Carol Stelmach, and Vice President Katy Forand

Amanda Boyer requested that the topic of resuming monthly Community Meals be discussed. She raised the idea of assigning a month to different ministries to divide the effort required to plan the events.

Treasurer Carol Stelmach reported that Lindbergh Lights the Way is concerned about disruptions to SNAP benefits. Social workers at the Lindbergh School District said that St. Lucas UCC's Little Free Pantry is the most popular food pantry in the area because it is anonymous and with no strings attached. She recommended that extra collections be held throughout November to ensure that the pantry is stocked. Lindbergh Lights the Way is also accepting monetary donations that will be distributed as \$25 gift cards to Schnucks for vetted families.

Vice President Katy Forand reported that flyers for the Chiefs Party: Taylor's Version will be distributed with the Backpack program to advertise that the event will include a free meal.

The public session of the Church Council meeting concluded at 8:30 P.M.

(Minute marker: 2 hours/30 minutes)

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Mulderig
Recording Secretary

The next regular meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for Monday, November 24th at 6:00 pm.

Approved by the St. Lucas UCC Church Council on November 24, 2025

St. Louis Association Fall Meeting & Missouri Mid-South Conference Annual Gathering Report

Report on SLA Fall Meeting and MMS Conference Annual Gathering (a.k.a. CAG) 10/27/25

Some acronyms used:

MMSC - Missouri Mid-South Conference ("Mid-South" covers Arkansas and the western edge of TN)

SLA – St. Louis Association (which includes 3 churches in Memphis). There are also Western and Eastern Associations in the Conference.

OCWM – Our Church's Wider Mission (giving that goes from our church to the Conference)

Bill Brinkhorst and I attended the SLA fall meeting on Oct. 4 in Clayton and the CAG meeting on Oct. 18 in Fulton. I will summarize about 10 hours of meeting time.

Format of each meeting/gathering includes (1) worshipping together. Each one also has an (2) opportunity to "meet and greet" and network before and after the meeting. Both have an opportunity to (3) recognize significant anniversaries of clergy and churches and the passing of members of clergy from our Conference. (I was the presenter for anniversaries.) Both meetings were hybrid.

CAG- 55 congregations represented. Approx.45 in person and 33 via Zoom.

In both meetings we voted to accept the slate of nominees for the boards of directors.

Both meetings had reports about KPVF radio station, 99.7, 10-mi radius for broadcasting but will also stream via internet. Streaming will begin first – next spring. Variety of programming =>Uplifting, inclusive, ecumenical, modeling unity.

At CAG, we heard reports from Outdoor Min, youth programming, Finance, Disaster Response, search process for CM (with Diane Weible), Current CM will stay until December 31 unless she takes another job before that.

Big **takeaway** from both meetings - *Something has to change*. Need to simplify and focus on the main goals. Times have changed. Fewer churches, less attendance at churches. We need to work together to care for each other (clergy and churches). There's no single governing body that has authority over the individual churches. We covenant with each other. Example: Barrel of Monkeys game- *holding hands and helping each other*

SLA Finances – SLA always proposes a balanced budget since almost all of the money just passes through as grants to local organizations. There are no employees, no office.

MMSC is a different story. There are employees, although most are part-time. There is an office. There are travel expenses. There are two outdoor ministry properties that need maintenance and improvements. And we co-hosted the national General Synod meeting in July, which had lots of expenses.

MMSC finances – not good. Expenses for property insurance, liability insurance, medical and dental insurance are going up. Changes in laws for minimum wage, OT pay and sick time that are more costly.

OCWM giving is down- fewer congregations and fewer congregants. Some income is not easily predictable: harvesting of the forest, Carbon credits (paid only once every 6 years).

Budget of \$1,605,565 was approved with a deficit of \$438,765. Last year or two, there were substantial budget deficits, but things such as the carbon credit income and the sale of the TAMBO area of MoVal property helped us come out ok.

There is an “investment fund” that is drawn from but no endowment fund. **The Board is considering instituting a per capita bridge-the-gap contribution from each church.** Give some thought to that.

Main theme of **closing worship** sermon was “covenant” and what it means for the bodies of the UCC working together and supporting each other.

Brief Announcements:

COMO mission trip opportunity offered during the week in summertime at Columbia UCC.

There is an MMSC group forming an adult mission trip to Back Bay Mission Oct 11 – 17, 2026. Contact Rhonda Stockglausner.

***Action item** – Disaster response (handout) Joshua Rau needs a contact person from each church. There is a workbook available for church preparedness. Joshua would like to have teams of volunteers that could be called upon.

Respectfully submitted by Joy Dressel and Bill Brinkhorst, lay delegates

Guest Comments Prepared Statement by Katy Forand

For the last six weeks, I've wanted to say something. Obviously saying all of this tonight, while it was therapeutic writing and is at some point worth discussing - it's not the time nor the place. But with what happened in September regarding the Christian Nationalism event - it doesn't need to be rehashed - but I do need to constructively convey how hurtful those chain of events were to members like myself - how we felt, how we were treated, and even cast aside.

For starters, we're missing someone tonight - a fellow member and my friend, who despite who he is as a person, all of the mission work, dangerous, emotionally, and physically draining work he does half a world away to feed starving children, didn't matter - that wasn't enough to earn him any respect that he may have a varying political belief than other's here.

How he felt; I felt it too, and for me, this was not the first time. We simply wanted a pause and reflection - an understanding of what this was doing and saying to your fellow members - members who feed starving children in Africa, and other who advocates for low income children here in Missouri. Our own "social justice" wasn't enough because we think differently. And all of this was followed by an email to council stating that only the work SJM is doing is really being the hands and feet of Jesus Christ."

Many any of us — myself included — have no desire to bring our politics into this sanctuary. We come here to worship. We come here to serve. If there is a threat to our church is not from those who think differently, but from those who cannot accept that different does not mean lesser — that those who see the world another way are no less Christian, no less faithful, no less the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. And that is how we were made, are made, to feel....lesser and judged for it.

With that a bit out of the way let me briefly touch on a few things - I think there may be some misperceptions about either me as a person or my intentions. Let's clear the air.

I wholeheartedly believe St. Lucas can be, and should be, "in the snooze" as Pastor George says - we have so many positives, so many things to celebrate, but the energy consumed by fighting each other is draining all celebration. A change needs to happen. For every time I feel I've experienced this church at its worse, I have also experienced it at it's best. So I have hope.

Why I Go to Church and Why I Do Not Go to Church.

1. To give thanks and praise for the enormously blessed life He has given me. To whom much is given, much is required and so I try to live up to that by serving others in various ways. I'm not perfect, but I do try living my life full of gratitude and being grateful.
2. For fellowship - if we're all here, we at least have one thing in common, right? We're all Christians and we all believe in God.
3. For worship - it renews me; I like to be uplifting by the old hymns, and hear a message of hope. And it's wonderful doing it among friends.

I don't go to church to:

1. Fight with my fellow members; to be judged for my political beliefs instead of my character or who I am. Instead of fighting each other, we should be supporting each other - in illness, in grief, in

celebration, in support. And also be asking how to keep these doors open — not how to get rid of those we label as threats. Let's just stop. Stop judging, stop worrying who is what and who they vote for - just stop making everything political, partisan or otherwise

2. To feel worse; to be stressed, or to be attacked by those who I don't know why, just feel it's ok. I know we'll have disagreements or different ways to do things, but the tone and antics I've witnessed make me wonder what is the goal, because they feel more Machiavellian than Christian, more self serving agendas than actually serving others - or our fellow church members. And it is certainly not uniting.
 1. In a faith where grace is freely given, this place knows it as its enemy - too many times anger and lash outs overtake the simple principle that we all deserve and all should give, grace to others. Instead, its attack upon attack.

How do we overcome that mentality? If the example of Jesus and his life isn't enough to guide how we treat others in our own church...what can help us? Well, for me I think everyone hearing this is huge step. We can't view everything here as us versus them. Because that means there will be a winner and a loser. There were no winners after our divide 5 years ago - we lost friends, lifelong members - there's no celebration in that. And if you think victory for St. Lucas means when people like me are no longer an issue for you, that's not very nice nor christianlike.

That said, stop treating some of us as if we're the problem Instead, let's unite in our love for this church, unite behind our Pastor. Because if we continue this "us versus them" mentality, there will be no St. Lucas in five years. But if we choose each other, what unites us because we actually do have more in common, there can be a St. Lucas for everyone.

Jesus ate with the sinner. He welcomed the outcast. He withheld judgment where others were quick to condemn. Let's not judge each other. Let's not decide who among us is truly doing the Lord's work. Let's just be a church family. Because as flawed and as imperfect as we all are, we are still — every one of us — Christians. And we are all members of St. Lucas United Church of Christ.

Finance Ministry Report

September 2025 Financial Report

	<u>September 2025 MTD</u>		<u>September 2025 YTD</u>	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Total Regular Offering	\$38,242.21	\$57,396.33	\$411,959.42	\$516,566.97
General Fund Income	\$70,593.10	\$118,285.21	\$615,730.69	\$744,576.41
General Fund Expenses	\$95,358.68	\$101,514.35	\$793,930.43	832,186.15
Gen. Fund Excess (Deficit)	(\$23,120.58)	(\$16,770.86)	(\$149,972.23)	(\$87,609.74)

The regular offering for August was \$38,242.21. This offering amount is under budget for the month by **(\$19,154.12)**. The total income was \$70,593.10 and is under budget by \$47,692.11. Key things that contributed to the total General Fund income were the PET distribution for the amount of \$28,305.28. The actual year to date General Fund Income total is \$615,730.69 which is under budget by **(\$128,845.72)**. The total expenses for September were \$95,358.68 which is under budget by **(\$6,155.77)**. The total expense year to date is \$793,930.43 which is under budget by **(\$38,255.92)**. The deficit for September was **(\$23,120.87)** making the total deficit for the year **(\$149,972.23)** which is over budget by **(\$62,362.49)**. This all leaving the balance of the General Fund at \$470,866.36 down from last month by \$37,211.07 but up over last year to date by \$67,848.64. This is due largely to the down trend with expenses.

Respectfully submitted by
Wanda Gillman
Financial Secretary

Plans for Rev. George Miller's Installation Service

- President Barbara Smith will lead the service and present Rev. George Miller as the called pastor
- The St. Lucas Preschool prerecorded a video
- Evan Backer is excited to serve as liturgist
- 25 members of the Gateway Men's Chorus plan to attend
- Katy Forand will decommission the Pastoral Search Committee
- A representative from the Committee on Ministry and the St. Louis Association will be present
- Linda Radick has chosen to prepare a rendition of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah
- San Jose Mexican Restaurant will cater a taco bar and dessert with staff to serve the meal at 5 pm
- Karen Papin created the artwork for the Bulletin, which can be used for cards in the future with the St. Lucas UCC logo superimposed
- Pastors are encouraged to wear the colors of the Synod and will enter from the South Narthex
- Reserved pews will be necessary
- Offering revenue will be donated to the Gateway Men's Chorus
- Expenses will be covered by the Special Events line of the budget
- The choir will wear robes