

SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
August 28, 2023, 6:00 pm - Zoom Hybrid/Room 19

*(*This meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm by President, Marty Schmidt.)*

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

STAFF PRESENT: Rev. Dr. Carole Barner, *(Staff Absent - Rev. Vicki Hampton)*

VISITORS PRESENT: Dan Herron

ZOOM VISITORS PRESENT: Bill Brinkhorst & Joy Dressel | Two visitors.

OPENING PRAYER:

The meeting was opened with a prayer by Barbara Smith.

GUEST COMMENTS: There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A.V. Ministry - August 2, 2023 Minutes
- Council Meeting - July 25, 2023, Minutes
- Facilities Ministry - July 20, 2023 Minutes
- Finance Ministry - July 18, 2023, Minutes
- Preschool Board Meeting - August 8, 2023, Minutes
 - Marty advised the Council our Preschool has approved their budget for next year. It includes an additional \$500/month to be paid to the church for rent. In addition, their annual gift to the church will increase from \$10K to \$20K. *(Many wonderful comments about their generosity!)*

Barbara moved and Kathy seconded the August 28, 2023 Consent Agenda as submitted for approval. The motion was accepted unanimously by a show of hands.

STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor Vicki - She is on vacation but a written report was submitted to the Council.

- Marty addressed her idea within that report about possibly moving the piano to a different location within the Chancel. The current location -right on top of a heating/AC vent- is not conducive to keeping the piano in tune nor comfortable for the pianist. Her thought is to remove the first two pews -near the organ- and then tile the floor for better resonance of the piano.
 - Upon reviewing the entire Chancel space, Marty also came up with an idea to renovate the choir loft into a flat space so that the full corner could be used for the piano and other musical instruments. For the times the choir does sing, they can sit in the first two pews then sing up front near the altar to allow for better acoustics.
 - Both ideas will cost money. Yet Marty feels we need to think of a better way to be good stewards of the piano. Barbara also mentioned that our new Music Minister may want to have some input into a big decision like this. Marty agreed.
 - Additional discussion continued about the location of HVAC vents on the Chancel plus the audio recordings from last Sunday's service. Marty shared he spoke with Barb Beck from the Memorial Committee and there is money available if it is decided to move forward with this new arrangement. Donovan pointed out it is a big decision and recommended the best plan for future use needs to first be identified.

Pastor Carole -

- Pastor Carole participated in the August Blood Drive as a donor and feels it is an important membership mission for St. Lucas UCC.
- Pastor Carole advised the Council to be aware of the Pet Blessing scheduled for October 8th. She intends to be in charge of the event and feels it's a wonderful way for community outreach, as many people who have participated in the past do not attend St. Lucas UCC. She will recruit helpers.
- She is also researching a second community event regarding the Opioid crisis. More details will follow once she hears back from Dr. Joe Forand.
- Barbara asked if we only have one confirmand committed to class this year. Pastor Carole answered yes, but the enrollment window is still open to receive more. Plus there are other ideas in the works if only one remains on the list. She will be able to share more information at a later date once that enrollment window/orientation closes. She does know that she wants to be able to offer a meaningful experience to students whether it is one or more.
- Pastor Carole answered Barbara's question about being on-call/funeral coverage. She was recently available for assistance to an Oakville congregation while their husband/wife team were on vacation. In the end, her services were not needed.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Paul Simons advised the following information -

- General Fund Cash was \$686,326 at July 31, 2023, versus \$538,780 as of July 31, 2022. These balances included Money Market funds of \$407,812 in 2023 and \$519,684 in 2022.
- Regular Offerings for the month of July were over budget by \$17,000. Year-to-date Regular Offerings are \$16,000 under budget but are \$47,000 over July 2022. Miscellaneous General Income for July reflects the receipt of a \$49,257 insurance check and quarterly income from the Perpetual Endowment Fund of \$26,793. Year-to-date, Miscellaneous General Income was over budget due to the insurance check, the Pfister bequest, and the ERC money, which was partly offset by the absence of money from the Shirley Beyersdorfer Fund. This fund fell below \$200,000 on December 31, 2022, and, therefore, can't pay any money to the General Fund in 2023.
- July General Fund Expenses were under our anticipated budget by \$19,000. This variance was primarily caused by the absence of custodial wages, Search Committee expenses, and the quarterly insurance package payment, which was paid in June. Year-to-date, General Fund Expenses were over budget by \$45,000, which primarily reflects the storm-related expenditures, West Lot resurfacing, ball field maintenance, and parsonage flood remediation. These additional expenses were partly offset by the absence of Search Committee expenses.
- This all resulted in a July General Fund excess of \$63,404 and a year-to-date excess of \$127,897, caused by the variations discussed above. The Net Excess for July was \$35,636, while the year-to-date excess was \$76,265, compared to a July budgeted deficit of \$49,131 and a year-to-date budgeted deficit of \$140,230. These positive variations principally reflect the insurance refund, Shirley Pfister, and ERC monies received, coupled with the absence of Search Committee Expenses, which were partly offset by storm-related expenses and various facility repairs discussed above.

Paul asked for questions or comments. Pastor Carole commented that rather than saying there are no expenses in the report for the Search Committee, perhaps it would be better to advise it another way. The Search Committee is working hard at their assigned task. However, due to many Zoom meetings and the fact that Search Committee expenses are typically not filed until the end of the search process, this should not be viewed as a difficulty or as unusual within this process.

Physical Facilities Ministries:

Donovan presented the following information to the Council -

- The Facilities Ministries is currently seeking bids for roof repairs and tile replacements to resolve the leak issues on campus. One bid to complete all work is close to \$50K. However, that team has not completed securing additional bids for the work.
- Tomorrow Donovan will be meeting with the carpet cleaner our Preschool currently uses. He'll be meeting with him to discuss the cleaning of the sanctuary carpet and also the carpet at the top of the stairs in the Welcome Center. That person's opinion plus cost will determine if/when future action is to be taken.
- There are new preschool toilets that are in the process of being installed on the lower level. As a reminder, the preschool is paying for that work.
- There were some problems in the Victory Garden. Debbie Ball advised Donovan of some vandalism and someone leaving the water on. However, after more research and discussion these issues appear to be isolated situations. As an FYI there is a main valve to open the water source to the gardens near the maintenance building. In addition, each raised bed has its own faucet. So if someone leaves one faucet open they may not be aware that two shut-offs are needed. Therefore, nothing will be done at this time unless there are more occurrences.
- In light of these concerns -vandalism/theft- we're still discussing possible cameras in the pavilion, garden, and ball field areas. There are "game" cameras which are less expensive, although there is limited time that they can record. Again, nothing will be done at this time unless more occurrences can be documented. Also, as a reminder it was determined that no picnic table was stolen.
- Violet and Donovan met with Lindbergh athletic people to discuss adding more teams to their roster, but are hesitant to do so due to the quality of our fields. Their concerns are bare spots and the grass length is too high for soccer play. Donovan has discussed cutting the grass shorter with our lawn care company. Lindbergh also suggested overseeding and aeration. Donovan will be getting bids for this work. We're interested in pursuing that work as it will allow us to justify a price increase with future field rentals.
 - Violet shared that Debbie in our office notified her of parts addressed to Lindbergh Schools being delivered to the church for soccer field use shortly after she and Donovan's meeting with them. Donovan was surprised to hear that, as a final decision had not yet been given to Lindbergh. Violet notified Lindbergh to pick up the parts and not deliver them to the church.
 - Violet also added that if there's nothing in the budget to allow for outdoor security cameras, she feels at minimum we should consider installing "Private Property" signs. As an FYI, the surrounding neighbors of our fields reported a big party on our property over the 4th of July which included quite large fireworks. The neighbors reported it to Debbie Ball when she was in the gardens recently. She asked them to email the church office with details. They also advised her there was a lot of debris left behind that they came across and picked up on our behalf during their daily walks. Katy added she called Sunset Hills PD to report the party.
- Per Phil, to avoid liability of the church, we need to post No Trespassing signs otherwise it is implied consent. He'd actually post several signs. Per Donovan, we do have a set sign near the pavilion stating the use of our pavilion is "By Permission Only". And there is a sign near the gardens as well, so we can do the same for the fields.
- Violet added that another incident was reported to her about a sports mom allowing her child to pick vegetables from our gardens without authorization. Violet did send a follow-up notice to all of the coaches and plans to insert a comment into future sports contracts concerning the same issue.
- Under the same category, Katy advised there were teenagers in the preschool playground recently that she spoke with while out on a walk. The preschool playground is locked, therefore these individuals would have had to climb the fence to gain access. Plus they were much too old for our preschool equipment.

- Marty added we have asked for more patrols by Sunset Hills PD with the hope that would discourage this type of activity.

OLD BUSINESS:

>Constitution and Bylaws - Marty proceeded with a discussion about the recent revisions. Joy Dressel -on the committee- is aware of the changes, so Marty did not feel uncomfortable discussing this topic in her (visitor) presence. Regarding The Constitution, Paul questioned the removal of The Covenant. Marty responded that he didn't have a clear definition of it early on. He feels it needs to be better defined before insertion. He did add a supermajority vote along with a six-week notice regarding the dismissal of a pastor. In addition, disaffiliation from the UCC will also require a six-week notice as well. Those are the only changes to The Constitution since our last meeting. No constitutional questions were raised at this point.

Regarding the Bylaws, under Part I, a language change was made to "other" lay delegates to distinguish between the youth delegates and regular delegates. In addition regarding the discussion of the election of delegates, Marty spoke with our current delegates regarding the election of delegates vs. being appointed by the Council. Several of them have been unable to attend some of the meetings due to scheduling conflicts. Those that Marty spoke with felt appointment by the Council is an appropriate thing to do since it is difficult for future delegates to know what their schedules will be two years in advance. Another option was to remove the restriction that elected officials to the Council could not hold any other elected office in the church other than a delegate to the conference meetings. Marty feels many times our Council members may have the most interest in being a delegate. Therefore, he asked if anyone had any other concerns about the Council appointing the delegates to the conference and the association. A brief discussion was held about this point.

Barbara asked about Kathy's question last month regarding delegates reporting back to the Council with information secured during those meetings. Pastor Carole suggested adding a brief comment to tell the delegates about their responsibility to the Council and the congregation. Marty feels that is best suited under number nine to advise delegates are "encouraged" to report their findings back to the Council/congregation. He will wordsmith.

Under Part IV, Marty added item four which details the dismissal of a pastor and/or withdrawal from the UCC to require a six-week vote. Pastor Carole asked if withdrawal from the denomination is in the current constitution. Her point is that it raises a red flag if that statement is now added. Therefore, additional discussion concluded that disaffiliation from the UCC should be removed from the constitution.

Moving on to Membership, Marty struggled with this section. He did some research on the topic. He wants to clearly define an active member from an inactive member. He appreciated Phil's comment last month about aspiring toward membership. Therefore, he changed the wording under 3-a. to include aspire. He also added 3-a.-v. to include the wording that Pastor Carole is well known for emphasizing by speaking only for one's self and not diminishing or debasing anyone. It allows the expectation to remain within that section about staying in covenant with other members of the church. Marty did receive pushback from the Membership committee about shortening the length of time of inactivity from four to two years. And since it was not specifically mentioned previously he feels that two years is an appropriate length of time. In addition, he was not able to find any other church offering a length of time over two years. This extra length may have contributed to our delayed work on the inventory of the roster. With these guidelines now in place, it helps determine best practices for all members.

Under 4 - Forfeiture of Membership, section 3-b. The word "general" will be removed from before "operation of the church". Health issues, college attendance, military service, and pastoral counseling are all listed under sections 3-d & e. A lengthy discussion continued about what specifically defines participation in membership or what is service to the church. Donovan feels we should leave 4-e. "in" and be cognizant of the difficulties that may arise. Marty added we need to better define financial contributions to the church. Phil commented we need to articulate some type of verbiage or boundary. Barbara added perhaps Pastor Vicki could contribute a comment

since she first questioned the discipline point. Financial contribution is what Marty is most concerned with. Due to time constraints, this will be tabled for now. We all need to consider this more before our next meeting.

Under Part VII - Church Council, Organization - Marty has limited the number of ministries the Council will directly oversee to Finance, Personnel, and Physical Facilities. Kathy Herron questioned the number of needed Council members. Is dropping from 12 to 9 prudent? Marty mentioned if we don't drop to 9, we'll need to find four new Council members for 2024. Marty has been looking at the typical number of Council members for a church that has a regular attendance of 125. Pastor Carole advised if you double your regular -active- attendance that is most likely closer to a true membership number within the congregation. Marty pointed out that a 12-member Council is approximately 5% of the church. Kathy asked if that is enough for the Council to make all the decisions we have to make for the church. And is that enough for all of the tasks that need to be done? Marty replied that we don't make all the decisions. The congregation does that.

Phil commented that what supports Marty's argument is that this is a very transparent Council. Members can come to a meeting or Zoom in to listen. We publish information, we talk in front of the church, we have Council Conversations, etc. Phil thinks we could probably get by with seven Council members. Marty chuckled that he had that thought too but didn't think he'd "get away with it". Kathy commented that with seven there would never be enough people to do offerings or communion. Marty reminded her those are the policies we have in place now. However, policies can be changed. Paul agreed, although both concurred "That's a discussion for another time.

Also, just because that's always been the job of the Council doesn't mean it has to stay that way. Marty would like to see more people in leadership roles within the congregation. However, if the leaders of our church are on the Council it depletes the pools for other groups/ministries.

Paul also shared that our insurance is written as two people to be handling the money. Whether that is locking it away after each service or counting it on Mondays, two people are required.

Marty asked that we suspend the discussion of the Bylaws for the time being, as we still need to cover many other topics this evening. But before ending this discussion he asked if everyone was okay with twelve being changed to nine people being on the Council. The majority agreed.

>Endowments - Phil shared he has spent a lot of time reviewing our current trust to get the "total sense" of it. He feels strongly that in parts 15 through 19 of the PET additional language can and should be added to sub-paragraph six to say "The trust may be amended by the congregation periodically as permitted under the law and as permitted in clause six of the PET". He feels the trustees need to know that the congregation has the power to do things, for example, changing the investment strategy. If they have too much of the trust money in equities, we can amend this agreement. Phil personally feels our current trust gave much too much power to the trustees, and he doesn't understand why.

Marty met with a trust attorney. The attorney's opinion is that when the grantor and the beneficiary are the same thing, they are then allowed to amend the trust any way they choose. The attorney's word for our document was a "quasi-endowment". Marty feels this endowment does not serve our church for today's needs. Marty has asked him for a legal written opinion and that cost? Phil advised there is a decanting statute. But in this case, the trustees have the power to do the decanting. Marty advised he has this trust attorney working on that very concern.

Marty feels right now we have a "trifecta going on" which is: (1.) incredibly risky investments that are working against each other, (2.) the trustees are concentrating on growth while trying to receive income, (3.) these are two different things working against each other. Per Phil, you don't get income from equities unless they have a dividend. Many agreed you can take the dividend and interest but you can't take the capital gain. Phil added if you get a realized capital gain, it has to immediately go back into the principal. Marty added there are better ways to invest this money that are safer and give a better return. Phil added we can do that now. If they choose to, we can have the congregation vote now to amend this and accomplish that very task. Phil is referring to clause six which

relates to the investment powers of the trustees. Phil feels the investment power right now is carte blanche to do whatever the trustees choose to do.

Marty is waiting to hear back from this trust attorney so it's a work in progress. If we can get a statutory, definitive way from him to update the content, he thinks there's a better way to write a new endowment. If not, then we'll have to use the powers that are given to us within the current trust. Phil would advise to go with the trust attorney's recommendation.

>Open & Affirming Update - Marty shared that Kirk Dalgaard has agreed to be on the task force which is good as we needed more men. Student Maggie Finn has agreed to be on the task force. Marty has not heard back from student Alyssa Blanke. Therefore, we need to move forward. Katy advised Maggie prefers to have another student on board with her. Perhaps Lynn or Amy can suggest another student.

>Accounting Software Update - Marty asked Paul if we are any farther along on this task Paul advised they're waiting to hear back from Realm to answer whether they can handle Balance Sheet presentations by department. That will help with the multi-user fees for the preschool and cemetery. However, if they cannot, Ken Graesser/Preschool is not opposed to the \$79 fee to do so. Paul will report back once Realm responds.

>Land Use Task Force - Marty sent an email to Miller and Neff, a real estate appraisal firm. This firm knows the South County/Sunset Hills area well. He let them know we have a church, two houses, a cemetery plus ten acres of undeveloped land and we don't know what any of it is worth. What would be the cost to do an appraisal to show a current value as well as consider the potential value for developing the land? Their quote is between \$3,500-\$4,500 for an answer. Marty thinks we need this. Pastor Carole added without one we'll continue to guess.

Donovan asked, "What is the value of knowing that information right now?" In recent months we've talked about having that information for potential use whether that's a loan or a transaction. Marty replied he'd like to know the value of the two houses and the ten acres. Plus he'd like the congregation to start thinking about what's the best stewardship of those properties. For example, if an appraisal comes back to advise the properties are worth \$2.5-\$3M and we'd sell it to a developer, it doesn't mean we'd do it. But if we did, and took the money to put into an endowment to generate 5% each year, we could have \$150K/year for 10 acres of land. Compare that to the current \$6K sports contracts minus upkeep fees and \$1K for concessions and goodwill each year. It's a vast difference. Our congregation needs to start thinking about the value of those fields, specifically the potential use.

Katy feels certain there is no one in the congregation who'd approve of selling that property for housing. She asked if there was a way to sell some or all of it for the benefit of St. Lucas UCC. For example, could we develop some of the land for our use and keep the remainder for sports fields? Will an appraisal tell us things like that? Marty shared that Miller & Neff have offered to sit down with us to define what we want to know. For example, is infrastructure available to us for our use? Phil added probably not, yet continued to say in his opinion a perfect fit would be a brand new preschool to benefit St. Lucas UCC.

Jack commented that another thing to consider is we have the opportunity to do whatever we want with that land because our church of the past did nothing with it but let it sit. That speaks volumes. What if we developed it 20 years ago into something not beneficial by today's standards? We'd be in a mess. We may get only one chance to get it right. Marty asked if it was okay with the group for him to speak with Miller & Neff. All agreed.

Katy suggested checking the comps is not difficult and could get us close to the value without paying a fee. There has been enough development of land in Sunset Hills alone to average out close to a true value.

>Intruder Training - Since Marty was not there his understanding is that it is now in Terry Marcille's court. Donovan's opinion was that the essence of the training was that you run, hide, fight. People of semi-authority -ushers- need to be aware of the exits. They need to try to appraise things if some unknown person comes in, i.e. why is this stranger wearing a winter coat in the summer? These are valuable things to know. And it would be

easy to get the Fire District to come in and speak to safety, i.e. weather, disasters, fire as well. Then we'd probably be up to speed. Donovan sent a memo to Terry. Terry asked him to share that summary with the Pastors and the Council which he'll do soon. Kathy added the police officer also recommended that we get our emergency preparedness processes in place now that we're coming back into full operation after the pandemic.

>Other Old Business -

Per Barbara: Two questions from the Membership team:

1. Will there be a Cabinet meeting in the future? Per Marty - yes, that should probably fall in his lap. He will put it on his radar.
2. Who is responsible for the duties of the communion? Per Marty, he thinks this needs to be done by the Worship & Music Committee. Kathy commented that two of us were here. Seth, Pastor Vicki, and Lois Simpson were the others. However, we only met once. Marty and Paul feel this needs to be driven by the pastors and Stephen Jones. For now though until Stephen gets up to speed it will be handled by the Council, although he doesn't envision that for the extended future. Donovan asked where communion goes from here. The answer is the plastic juice cups and real cut-up bread passed by trays. Melvin Amann has volunteered to oversee and cut bread for this upcoming weekend.

NEW BUSINESS:

>Bridge Minister -

- Last year the congregation voted to have two ministers through 2023. However, Pastor Carole will be leaving on October 15th which is before the next congregational meeting. Marty asked if he needed to contact Damian in the conference office to request a Bridge Minister. Paul advised that the Constitution advises it is the Council's responsibility to fill a pastoral vacancy. A Bridge Minister is a contracted position whereas a Supply Pastor will only perform sermons with no other church work included. Per Pastor Carole, we will not know anything about this year's confirmation class until next week's orientation class on 9/6/23. Plus, Marty will need a job description to know what to ask if/when he calls the conference office.
 - Kathy wanted to make clear that she is for two pastors at St. Lucas UCC. She senses many of us are leaning toward one pastor and she is not. Most of the group did not agree with her perception. Marty added there are too many things in flux right now.
 - A brief discussion continued about a second minister whether that be for two months or 14 months. And then will it mean a Supply Pastor for a brief time with a Bridge later? Many questions/comments. Pastor Carole reminded all a Senior Minister is going to eventually be called and that person will need to have input into this decision as well. Again, no immediate decision will be made before the 9/6/23 Confirmation Orientation.

>Monitor of Offering Sign-up -

Marty asked Jack to oversee the offering sign-up so it does not go undone. In previous Councils typically the President took on this task, but Marty has not been able to keep up with it. Jack graciously agreed.

>Other New Business -

- At the Finance Committee meetings, Marty advised they discussed investing some of the cash on hand right now. They plan to purchase CDs from US Bank which is currently advertising a 4.5% rate. The intent is a "ladder" of \$100K every four months which will help us earn up to \$20K annually.
- Kathy asked for a favor. If any of the Council members are available on 10/4/23 it would be wonderful if they could come to the Sr. Luncheon to say hello and give our regards. Some offered they were already on the volunteer sign-up.

- Kathy also asked if there is some way for us to THANK the Community Meal ladies for their many years of service. Katy offered the video she took last year. It could be shown on October 1st during church.
 - Marty shared it would be sad if that mission went by the wayside. Even if we could just cut back to every other month to continue on. Pastor Carole shared perhaps there's a way to join with other churches to tag-team this effort. She will review her email to find one she received about other churches interested in pursuing this endeavor.
- Katy commented that the Cemetery Board has no work for the workers to do on our 10/15/23 work day which seemed as a surprise to the team. But Katy's point is that if there are any projects that people need to have done that day, please email her the details.
- Katy also asked if alcohol would be allowed that day. If so, would we follow the same guidelines followed at last Spring's Youth Trivia Night? Marty advised that night was strictly BYOB. St. Lucas will not supply liquor to the workers that day.

At this time, Marty requested a motion to adjourn. Barbara made the motion and Kathy seconded it. The motion was accepted unanimously by a show of hands and the meeting was adjourned.

In closing, *The Lord's Prayer* was recited.

(*The length of this meeting was 2 hours | 25 mins)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Smith,
Recording Secretary