

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

*(*This meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm by President, Marty Schmidt.)*

MEMBERS PRESENT: Phil Denton, Katy Forand/Zoom, Kathy Herron, Donovan Larson, Jack Laudenslager, Marty Schmidt, Paul Simons, Barbara Smith, and Juanita Wagner/Zoom | Nine members.
(Council Members Absent - Violet Brooks & Marsha Fey)

MINISTER/S PRESENT: Rev. Vicki Hampton & Rev. Merrimon Boyd

VISITORS PRESENT: Wanda Gillman

ZOOM VISITORS PRESENT: Marsha Armentrout, Bill Brinkhorst & Joy Dressel, Ken Hamilton, and Ellen Littleton | Five visitors.

OPENING PRAYER: The meeting was opened with a prayer by Paul Simons.

GUEST COMMENTS: There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A.V. Ministry - October 4, 2023 Minutes
- Council Meeting - October 23, 2023, Minutes
- Council Meeting, Executive Session - October 23, 2023, Minutes
- Finance Ministry - September 19, 2023, *Amended* Minutes
- Finance Ministry - October 17, 2023, Minutes
- Physical Facilities Ministry - October 19, 2023, Minutes
- Preschool Board Meeting - November 14, 2023, Minutes

Jack moved and Barbara seconded the November 27, 2023 Consent Agenda as submitted. The motion was accepted unanimously by a show of hands.

STAFF REPORTS:

Pastor Vicki - Pastor Vicki had nothing more to add to her submitted, written report. There were no questions from the group for her.

Pastor Merrimon - As a newly called minister who's just recently started at St. Lucas UCC, Pastor Merrimon will have a report for the Council next month.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Paul Simons advised the following information for October 2023:

- General Fund Cash was \$609,435 on October 31, 2023, versus \$486,498 as of October 31, 2022. These balances included Money Market funds of \$409,250 in 2023 and \$430,012 in 2022.
- Regular Offerings for October were over budget by \$12,000. Year-to-date Regular Offerings are only \$3,000 under budget and are \$42,000 over October 2022. Miscellaneous General Income for October was under budget due to the budgeting in October of an anticipated \$10,000 gift from the

Preschool, which was subsequently received. Year-to-date, Miscellaneous General Income was over budget due to the Pfister bequest and the ERC money, which was partly offset by the timing of the Preschool gift and 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.

- October General Fund Expenses were under our anticipated budget by \$19,000. This favorable variance was primarily caused by the departure of Pastor Carole and the absence of Search Committee expenses, which were partly offset by higher ball field maintenance and payment of the annual HVAC service fee. Year-to-date, General Fund Expenses were over budget by \$16,000, which primarily reflects the West Lot resurfacing, ball field maintenance, plumbing repairs, and parsonage flood remediation. These additional expenses were partly offset by the absence of Search Committee expenses and the departure of Pastor Carole.
- This all resulted in an October General Fund deficit of \$28,132 but a year-to-date excess of \$14,782, caused by the variations discussed above. The Net Deficit for October was \$24,649, while the year-to-date deficit was \$30,740, compared to a budgeted October deficit of \$46,893 and a year-to-date budgeted deficit of \$194,097. The October favorable variance principally reflects the increase in Regular Offerings coupled with lower-than-budgeted spending. Year-to-date, the favorable Net Deficit variance reflects the Shirley Pfister and ERC monies received, partly offset by the absence of the Shirley Beyersdorfer income, coupled with the absence of Search Committee Expenses and various facility repairs discussed above.

Paul asked if there were any questions. There were none. However, Donovan did offer a comment for Pastor Merrimon's benefit and gave a summary regarding the condition of the budget and our budget deficit over the last few years.

Physical Facilities Ministries:

Donovan presented the following information to the Council -

- Donovan secured an updated bid from Old World Roofing for approximately \$49,500. Their workload is ten months out. Plus he has received a bid from Glandt Roofing for approximately \$30K. Their workload is 3-4 months out. In addition, he has received a bid from a third roofing vendor for over \$120K. (Donovan's impression is that they are not interested in pursuing our job hence their costly bid.) He plans to follow up with Glandt to be sure the work projected in their bid is comparable to the work in the Old World bid. He has received good reports on Glandt. If after reviewing their bid to be sure all work is being adequately covered, Donovan would like to have the Council's permission to pursue their bid.
 - Donovan asked if that summary was enough information for the Council to entertain a motion this evening. Paul and Marty both agreed they'd prefer to have more specific monetary details before making a motion. However, both did state that an emergency meeting could be called once Donovan has the figures in place from Glandt to help expedite that timeline.
- Donovan advised all the hanging ceiling lamps in the sanctuary have had their light bulbs replaced with LED bulbs. (This does not include the ceiling lamps in the balcony.) Because of this work, Donovan now has 70 compact fluorescent bulbs -still in working order- in his car that

he will attempt to donate them to Habitat for Humanity or another charitable group for their own use. We have Bob Beck and Adam Rustige to thank for that completed project.

- Donovan is still in possession of the 15+ newly printed Trespass signs. But as discussed last month the wording on the signs seems too harsh. Donovan will continue to pursue Violet for her input on the topic. Plus he will continue to work with Phil about the best wording for our purpose.
 - Barbara asked if some of the new signs could be used temporarily until the new wording is achieved so that there are trespass signs on the property for the time being. Donovan answered yes.
- Donovan also spoke with the Sunset Hills P.D. Something to consider by the Council is if a future security system in place would track a license plate or identify a perpetrator, the question becomes would St. Lucas UCC be prepared to press charges and/or follow through with prosecution. More discussion may be needed.
- Donovan also understands that both the Preschool and the Cemetery boards are considering the purchase of security cameras for those areas of the property. However, to avoid any duplication of efforts he has not gone any further than to request a bid from Beishir Locks -\$4K- for church security cameras. According to the Preschool report from November 14th, Kelly is still working with the Cemetery Board to coordinate efforts with the security camera for the playground. Donovan will reach out to both groups to coordinate efforts for the church property.
 - Marty expressed that we need to put “something out there”. (We don’t need to be “draconian” about how we enforce it at the outset.) The general trend is people are getting more aggressive with time. If there is not something in place if/when a situation arises, then that “is on us”.
- Donovan also reported he’s secured two bids for paving the large church lot to the north and east of the sanctuary including the single cemetery drive immediately north of the North Narthex. One bid was from Pioneer Paving who did the resurfacing of the Preschool lot earlier this year. The other is from Emeier Construction who did paving for us some years ago. Those bids were within a few hundred dollars of each other. The difference however is that Emeier will put down two coats of paving instead of one as Pioneer proposed. Plus Emeier will repaint all of the parking space lines when finished. Donovan has awarded the bid to Emeier. They cannot do the work until they have a few days of guaranteed temps of 50+. Therefore, the job may not be completed until springtime.
- Donovan and Bob Beck will be doing basic inspections of the houses at 11815 and 11825 Denny Road soon. This task has not been completed in some time. It will entail checking plumbing, electrical, and HVAC to document the overall conditions of both homes.
- Juanita asked if there is a “checklist” of some type that is followed for those inspections, as she knows Friendship Village uses a checklist. His answer was currently no, although it is a good suggestion. Donovan did offer that the church building stays in compliance with inspections between municipalities/county/state requirements, etc. in addition to the maintenance work Charlie performs. Marty asked if DECA is to be responsible for something like that. Donovan’s answer was no. Their responsibility is to answer emergencies.
- The Physical Facilities Ministry will eventually work with the church to determine the best way to alter the front choir space in the sanctuary. However, this group will not be taking the lead on that project. Rather they’ll work with our church staff to determine the best use of that space.

OLD BUSINESS:

>Open & Affirming Task Force - Barbara Smith advised that current information concerning ONA was well detailed in Pastor Vicki's Council report. She showed the physical copies of the workbook and paperback the group is working through. She also advised the group recently took a Faith Community Assessment within the workbook to get a baseline of where we think the congregation stands with this topic. The group also identified about two dozen people within the congregation with whom we can begin our one-on-one discussions. The next meeting for this task force is scheduled for January 2nd.

>Accounting Software Update - Paul shared that REALM is on its way to "conversion". Conversion and training are tentatively scheduled for January. Jeff is working with REALM to coordinate training and installation within the same month. They anticipate having the old version and new version to run parallel in January to be sure they get the same results from both before discontinuing use of the old version.

>Land Use Task Force - Marty has nothing new to report about the progress of this group. This is still far off in the future. Yet, he intends to approach some local Adult Day Care Facilities to partner with us. Donovan asked for clarification of profit versus non-profit organizations to understand where our focus is. Pastor Vicki contributed that she believes Cape Albeon is a non-profit plus it is a UCC organization. Their seed money came from the Deaconess and Good Samaritan organizations.

>Choral Area Changes - Per Marty, he feels the Council needs to be the one to oversee this project and make decisions. If we are considering a change to the choral area to preserve the piano, many pre-steps need to be considered such as:

- Where can we move the piano to preserve its life/tonality?
- How can the choir loft be reconfigured so the director can easily view the choir and piano?
- Is there a better acoustical location in the sanctuary for musical instruments or vocal choirs?
- How does the permanent placement of the organ factor into these moves?
- Do we need to rearrange the pews? Should we remove the pews?
- If pews are removed, what do we use as replacements?
- And, if pews are removed then we need to consider the overdue need for new carpet.

>Additionally, if changes such as these are being discussed then we also need to address:

- The never-ending subject of a handicap-accessible ramp for access onto the Chancel.
- In addition, a viable space close to the sanctuary for children who are infants or upset during a church service needs to be reviewed beyond what was recently added to the South Narthex.
- A movable baptismal font.
- The current imposing pulpit.
- And finally, Kathy Herron advised the A.V. Ministry would love to have more space at their desk. This also raised the question, is the balcony space usable for anything.

There are many things to consider. Marty asked the Council members who will be moving into the 2024 term to give this topic a lot of thought as it will be on the agenda for our winter retreat.

>Other Old Business - Paul asked what the status is with the revision of the final ByLaws/Constitution approved at the annual meeting. Marty answered nothing at the moment. There have been so many strike-outs and rewrites that he needs to work on first getting it reformatted. Paul advised if it would help he has a WORD doc original of the former version before the new changes were added. Barbara offered

her assistance to type, as she had retyped a long-ago -poor- photocopy for Carol Keller. Marty accepted her offer. The two will work on it after the new year so it can be posted to the website before the semi-annual meeting in May.

NEW BUSINESS:

>Contact with Missing Members - The executive committee of the Council received a letter stating one of our families required Pastoral care over the summer, yet none was offered to the family. This discussion will not name names. Rather this discussion is to discuss the process used to identify people we have been missing from church. How do we as a church family assist someone in need? One consideration is that even when asked to do so, not everyone in church will sign the Friendship Pad. This is one method of determining who is or is not present. There was no mention in the letter that this family attempted to contact the church to request a visit from the minister/s. Paul interjected that it is one of the duties of a member. Pastor Vicki confirmed with the family that they had *not* contacted the church to make the ministers aware of their medical situation. Marty also spoke with the family to let them know that their letter would be discussed in Council this evening. This family also included in their letter that they were aware of another family -hearsay- who also were not contacted in their time of need. However, Pastor Vicki clarified with the letter writer that she knows for a fact the other family named was contacted by our ministers multiple times. Marty brought up the subject only to make the Council aware as an example for future reference. He feels that multiple postings within the eBlast or a slide on Sunday screens could be a way to remind people the ministers and Caring Ministry want to assist families in need. Barbara took the opportunity to mention a version of the “Wailing Wall” example in the Presbyterian Church of Webster Groves and how beautiful it is. Marty stated it is fairly new. He will speak with their lead elder, as that person participates in the same community choir that Marty sings in.

>Fellowship Hall Use Policies - Marty and the church office have been approached with requests to rent out space at St. Lucas UCC. Using Christ Memorial’s building usage policy, Marty created a rough draft that could be used by St. Lucas UCC. 12 bullet points of information were presented and discussed with the group. This initial discussion covered the number of participants, reasons for rental, fees, alcohol use, kitchen use, clean-up and trash, damage, insurance, scheduling around 5:00 pm Saturday church service, etc. Due to the ideas and responses shared, Marty will revise the document and bring it forward to a future Council meeting for additional discussion.

>New Council Member Orientation - With the number of Council members now dropping to nine in 2024 a New Member Orientation will only be needed for Wanda Gillman joining in January. Therefore, Marty will meet with her separately to discuss the functions and practices of the Council. Pastor Vicki suggested that Pastor Merrimon be included in that meeting for his benefit as well. Those three will schedule a time accordingly.

>Other New Business -

- Future meeting dates - As Christmas Day this year is on the 4th Monday of the month, the December 2023 Council meeting has been changed to Monday, December 18th. The Finance Committee will reschedule their December meeting to follow our lead so their data will be available to the Council on the 18th. Also, 2024 Council meetings will continue to be held on the 4th Monday of the month. Regarding the annual Council retreat typically in January, that date is pending Marty’s neck surgery date. He’s expecting it to be in early January. However, thankfully

it is not the invasive surgery that was originally discussed last fall. More information will follow once the details are finalized.

Marty asked for the Council to go into an Executive Session at this time. The Council said thank you and good night to all the visitors. Marty closed the Zoom session and Wanda left the room so the Council could continue this meeting privately.

*NOTE - This ended the Public Session of the November 2023 Council meeting.

(Minute marker: 1 hour / 24 minutes)

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Smith,
Recording Secretary