

SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHURCH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Church Council Regular Meeting
November 24, 2025**

CHURCH COUNCIL – PUBLIC SESSION

The Church Council gathered for the public November Regular Meeting on Monday, November 24, 2025, in Room 19 and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 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
Kirk Dalgaard
Phil Denton

Also Present

Rev. George Miller, Senior Minister (Zoom)

Bill Biedenstein, Chris Blanke (Zoom), Bill Brinkhorst (Zoom), Kristin Buckholz (Zoom), Joan Dalgaard (Zoom), Joy Dressel (Zoom), Ken Fey, Marsha Fey (Zoom), Pat Fribis (Zoom), Bo Frumson, Janet Frumson, Ken Hamilton (Zoom), Stephen Hanpeter (Zoom), Dan Herron (Zoom), Kathy Herron (Zoom), Julie Kies (Zoom), Donovan Larson, Paul Litzsinger (Zoom), Cynthia Rosfeld (Zoom), Adam Rustige, Marty Schmidt, Margit Scott (Zoom), Kim Witbrodt (Zoom), Jackie Zeiting (Zoom)

GENERAL BUSINESS:

Opening Prayer – given by Tracy Mulderig

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:

- Rev. George Miller's Installation Service
- Completion of the Annual Meeting
- Little Free Pantry donations
- Chiefs / Taylor Swift Watch Party

- New Coffee Hour volunteers

The President summarized themes from the Council Covenant (Church Council Policies 1.4.2).

Guest Comments – provided by Marty Schmidt and Adam Rustige

Marty Schmidt read a prepared statement regarding the Social Justice Ministry that called on the Church Council to restore a spirit of harmony in the Congregation (appended).

Adam Rustige expressed concerns about St. Lucas UCC's ability to adequately cover the demands of maintaining the physical property due to the planned turnover of Charlie Singler (Maintenance Manager) and Donovan Larson (Chair of the Physical Facilities Ministry). Adam's recommendations included 1) revising the job scope / hourly rate of Charlie's replacement to include soliciting bids and coordinating contractors, and 2) and increasing the size of the Physical Facilities Ministry to 10+ members. Treasurer Carol Stelmach recommended building a list of recent subcontractors plus church members with relevant businesses.

Action Items by Consent – The following items were adopted by consent agenda as provided to the Church Council for review and approval (documents on file).

It was moved by Treasurer Carol Stelmach and seconded by Melinda Borman that the following items be approved by consent agenda:

Consent Agenda

- Minutes, Cemetery Board Meeting – October 15, 2025
- Minutes, Council Regular Meeting – October 27, 2025
- Minutes, Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – October 27, 2025
- Minutes, Council Special Meeting | Executive Session – November 3, 2025
- Minutes, Finance Ministry Meeting – October 21, 2025
- Minutes, Membership & Evangelism Ministry Meeting – October 7, 2025
- Minutes, Open & Affirming Task Force Meeting – October 15, 2025
- Minutes, Social Justice Ministry Meeting – October 14, 2025

The motion carried unanimously (9-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

Staff Reports – no discussion was necessary (reports on file)

- Senior Minister Report - November
- Associate Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation Report - November

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

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

Concerns were raised about the size of the deficit relative to unrestricted assets. On behalf of the Stewardship Ministry, Recording Secretary Tracy Mulderig added context that the \$200k deficit was roughly \$1,000 per giving household and proposed a stewardship drive for December.

It was recommended that Treasurer Carol Stelmach reconvene meetings of General Endowment Fund immediately instead of waiting until 2026, as quarterly meetings are mandated by the Bylaws (Part XIII) and a quorum remains possible with two vacancies.

Physical Facilities Ministry Report – presented by Kirk Dalgaard, Council Liaison to the Physical Facilities Ministry, and Donovan Larson, Chair of the Physical Facilities Ministry

Kirk Dalgaard and Donovan Larson reported the following items:

- Two bids were solicited for a new exterior sign. The location of the current exterior sign is only 70 ft from Denny Road, which is an insufficient distance for an electronic sign without a variance from Sunset Hills. Donovan planned to proceed down the path of requesting a variance, which was expected to cost \$790. In the meantime, Kirk agreed to purchase new letters for the existing sign and take ownership of updates to the display.
- One of the roof leaks in the South Narthex was repaired. Glandt Roofing has not responded to repeated requests to return for repairs.
- Mud-jacking of the sidewalks will occur on November 27th.
- Adam Rustige relocated the Little Free Pantry.

The Council requested additional information about the external sign including the total expected cost (\$35k - \$40k), how long the permit would be valid if the variance request is successful, and options for funding the costs within the permitted timeframe given the current budget deficit.

As Council Liaison to the Preschool Board, Amanda Boyer requested an update on the Preschool door. Donovan Larson agreed to attempt to resolve the issue before pursuing bids for a replacement.

President Barbara Smith agreed to follow-up with Jeff Wagener regarding the status of contract negotiations for the sports fields, lawn care, and snow removal.

Disaster Response Ministry Report – presented by Rev. George Miller and Amanda Boyer (workbook on file)

- Disaster Preparedness Guide for Local Churches: A Workbook (October 2024)

Rev. George Miller and Amanda Boyer reported the following items:

- Dr. Mary Schaller Blaufuss presented themes from her book on November 10th and may return for an Adult Education program in February 2026. All ministries were encouraged to think about how to address something related to disaster preparedness.
- Joshua Rau will be presenting on February 3, 2026.
- The health episode during the November 16th worship service was handled well. Members are auditing and/or acquiring additional emergency supplies including a glucometer, an XL blood pressure cuff, baby aspirin, water bottles, etc.
- Tornado preparedness educational activities are planned for March 2026.

Worship Ministry Report – presented by President Barbara Smith

President Barbara Smith reported the following items:

- A newly formed body called the Chancel Crew will be responsible for communion set-up, changing the paraments, and changing the flowers. Members include Carol Huster, Fay Schneider, Barbara Smith, Kay Zink, and Cynthia Rosfeld as back-up.
- President Barbara Smith agreed to meet with Rev. George Miller to discuss the expected scope of the Worship Ministry relative to the Chancel Crew.
- Hanging of the Greens is planned for November 28th.

Youth Ministry Report – presented by Amanda Boyer, Council Liaison to Youth Ministries

Amanda Boyer reported the following items:

- A mission trip meeting is planned for December 7th.
- The Epiphany Box Project planned for early January 2026.
- The Soup & Chili Cook-off is scheduled for January 24, 2026.

OLD BUSINESS:

Installation of Rev. George Miller – presented by Rev. George Miller

Rev. George Miller reported that the event was a success and that \$1,060 was raised for the Gateway Men's Choir.

Council Conversations – presented by President Barbara Smith

The tentative date of November 30th was canceled. It was recommended that the Council return with a proposed 2026 calendar at the December meeting.

Reactivation of the Special Events Ministry – the appointment of a Council Liaison was postponed for the 2026 Church Council.

Event Planning Guidelines – postponed until Recording Secretary Tracy Mulderig has an opportunity to draft a checklist framework for discussion.

Food Insecurity Concerns – presented by President Barbara Smith

The Wednesday bulk collections for the Little Free Pantry will end later this month. Melinda Borman recommended adding better signage to direct individuals to the new location. Amanda Boyer agreed to check with Pat Stephens on the status of new signage. Vice President Katy Forand agreed to add an insert into the backpack meals. Treasurer Carol Stelmach agreed to contact Michelle Studer at the Lindbergh School District.

NEW BUSINESS:

Governance Recommendations – presented by Recording Secretary Tracy Mulderig (document on file; summary appended)

Recommendations were made regarding how to improve Church Council meetings. The Church Council was asked to reflect on the recommendations for discussion at a future meeting. One additional suggestion was to move the Consent Agenda to the end of the meeting.

The following motion was presented to illustrate topics appropriate for Executive Session for future use:

It was moved by [First] and seconded by [Second] that there shall be an executive session with a closed record and closed vote of the Church Council Regular Meeting on [Date], for consideration of confidential topics such as:

- Legal matters (e.g., legal actions, causes of action or litigation, confidential or privileged communications with counsel)
- Real property matters (e.g., the leasing, purchase, or sale of real estate)
- Contract matters (e.g., sealed bids and related documents or proposals, documents related to a negotiated contract)
- Personnel matters regarding identifiable personnel records (e.g., hiring, firing, disciplining, promoting, performance evaluations)
- Membership matters regarding identifiable member records (e.g., member inactivity, disciplinary proceedings)
- Finance matters (e.g., privileged communications between a body and its auditor)

2026 Council Officer Elections – presented by President Barbara Smith

This year's Church Council officers were elected during the December 2025 Executive Session. The Council debated whether this met the criteria for Executive Session and if it would be more appropriate to wait until the new members are installed.

December Meeting Date – presented by President Barbara Smith

It was moved by Vice President Katy Forand and seconded by Treasurer Carol Stelmach to change the December meeting date to December 29, 2025, at 6:00 pm. The motion carried unanimously (9-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

Chiefs Party: Taylor's Version – presented by Vice President Katy Forand

The event was a success. Dan Herron was recognized for his A/V assistance and Linda Taylor for her chili. A similar event could be held for a Mizzou game in the future.

Social Justice Ministry Feedback – presented by Treasurer Carol Stelmach

Treasurer Carol Stelmach encouraged the Social Justice Ministry to consider combining with the Mission & Outreach Ministry due to a partial overlap in objectives. Recent educational programs have been perceived by some members as divisive (e.g., Christian Nationalism speaker, banned books display). There is an opportunity to unify the Congregation around missions to achieve social justice goals.

The Council discussed the broader need to update documents regarding the purpose, membership, and goals of each ministry while also considering opportunities to consolidate as part of a broader church reorganization plan.

Treasurer Carol Stelmach also suggested using the phrase “Informational Meeting” instead of a “Membership Meeting” when recruiting new members. Recording Secretary Tracy Mulderig agreed to ensure that this feedback is shared with the Membership & Evangelism Ministry.

Meals on Wheels – presented by Treasurer Carol Stelmach

Efforts are ongoing to pursue a \$10,000 grant for the Backpack Program.

Rental Properties Status – presented by President Barbara Smith (documents on file)

Jeff Wagener will become the point-of-contact for DECA if any property management or maintenance questions arise. The parsonage tenant is caught up on rent payments. Minor repairs are needed at the sexton’s house; the water heater is also making suspicious sounds and may need to be replaced in the foreseeable future.

Donovan Larson requested that the list of repairs needed at the sexton’s house be submitted to the Physical Facilities Ministry for their records.

Staff Holiday Gifts – reserved for Executive Session

Resolution for Executive Session – presented by President Barbara Smith

It was moved by Kirk Dalgaard and seconded by Amanda Boyer to close the public session and move into executive session. The motion carried unanimously (9-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

The public session of the Church Council meeting concluded at 8:08 P.M.

(Minute marker: 2 hours/5 minutes)

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Mulderig
Recording Secretary

The next regular meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for Monday, December 29th at 6:00 pm.

Approved by the St. Lucas UCC Church Council on December 29, 2025

Guest Statement from Marty Schmidt

My apologies to the Church Council and the congregation of St. Lucas United Church of Christ for my abrupt resignation in September. Hopefully my story, personal interpretations, and suggestions that follow will help shed some light on my decision.

I attended the September 9 SJM meeting for the purpose of sharing my own reservations, and those of multiple congregation members, regarding the Christian Nationalism event on September 26. At that time my intent was not to stop the event, but to convey, as an individual and Council Member, a request that the SJM proceed carefully given the diverse viewpoints of our congregation.

The next day a conservative voice that had brought thousands of American youth to Christianity was silenced by an assassin.

It was only then that I petitioned the SJM to consider postponing the event given the emotions felt by me and several other members. We were dismissed with a near unanimous vote by the SJM to proceed with the event.

After 6 years of working on the viability of St. Lucas, and an intense 14 months defending attacks on my reputation, refuting lies about me and our new Senior Minister, and standing up to former and current members of the Council who would like to see him leave, the defiance of the SJM, despite knowing that fellow congregants were grieving, finally broke me.

After some time of healing and reflection, I challenged the SJM to discuss hosting a viewing of Erika Kirk's tribute to her husband at his memorial service to counterbalance the Christian Nationalism event. I suggested only this one speech – in which Erika Kirk forgives the man who murdered her husband. The minutes of their October meeting revealed how my suggestion was addressed:

The question came up about “presenting both sides” of a question. One comment was to ask how you present “the other side of white supremacy?” Should Social Justice Ministry present a consideration of Charlie Kirk’s funeral and the speeches therein? The resounding answer was no. Our mission statement above is not consistent with the values of Turning Point USA (Charley Kirk’s organization). If others in the church want to present “the other side,” let them organize and present it.

This short paragraph suggested to me how those with more conservative political opinions are viewed by the SJM. The claim that TPUSA's values are inconsistent with the SJM Mission statement is not supported by any primary source examples but stands as fact because that is what the SJM believes. The “white supremacy” comment and the placement of any consideration of alternative sides in quotation marks suggests that there is no middle ground between what the SJM believes and extreme right Christian Nationalism. Furthermore, despite my conservative views, I would never organize and present “the other side” given the angst, fear, and resentment that this action might create for my friends. The SJM, in my opinion, either lacks awareness, or doesn't care, that these reactions occur in fellow members.

Social Justice implies fairness in our relational interactions. The rhetoric of the SJM reminds me more of divisive, left-wing propaganda.

In my opinion, the most important duty for the Church Council is stated in Part VII.B.7 and reads: ***“It shall be the aim of the Church Council and Pastors to keep all members in a state of vital relationship to the Church and in a spirit of harmony within the Church.”***

I believe the power, and the defiance of the unelected SJM is creating an inharmonious spirit in this congregation. I have personally witnessed several SJM members bullying our Senior Pastor. I have also witnessed the use of half-truths and lies to create discord. Now I find myself worshipping alongside members who may consider me a “white supremacist”.

It is the Council’s responsibility to discern whether the SJM is contributing to a spirit of harmony within St. Lucas UCC, and if its agenda is consistent with this core belief stated on our website: ***“We believe in being a united and uniting Church for and of diverse Christians.”***

We can only live up to this belief if we stop demonizing opposing opinions, check our egos at the door, and work together towards social justice and creating heaven on earth. Perhaps this could start with the mission statement of the SJM having a more biblical basis. Maybe James 1:27 – ***“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.”***

Friends aren’t afraid to speak hard truths while at the same time caring about each other. Most of the members of the SJM I consider my friends. Can’t we find some middle ground where we can Unite St. Lucas?

October 2025 Financial Report

	<u>October 2025 MTD</u>		<u>October 2025 YTD</u>	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Total Regular Offering	\$34,194.85	\$54,747.75	\$438,058.77	\$547,477.50
General Fund Income	\$38,766.32	\$68,286.57	\$654,507.01	\$812,862.98
General Fund Expenses	\$98,964.89	\$89,396.35	\$873,382.62	\$921,582.50
Gen. Fund Excess (Deficit)	(\$60,188.57)	(\$9,568.54)	(\$218,821.61)	(\$108,719.52)

The regular offering for October was \$34,194.32. This offering amount is under budget for the month by \$28,421.68. The total income was \$38,766.32 and is under budget by \$29,510.25.

The total expenses for October were \$98,964.89 which is over budget by \$9,568.54.

The large contributors to the expenses were \$10,107.48 for HVAC repair to control board, a \$3,260.50 for IFS annual Maintenance Agreement along with \$420 for backflow inspection and \$416.33 for quarterly water treatment.

The deficit for October was **(\$60,188.57)** making the total deficit for the year **(\$218,821.61)** which is over budget by **(\$110,102.09)**.

The General Fund balance with the Asset Accounts is \$426,521.05. The Asset Accunts total \$101,576.91.

Respectfully submitted by
Wanda Gillman
Financial Secretary

Governance Recommendations (Excluding Examples)

Prepared by Tracy Mulderig for discussion at the November 2025 Church Council Meeting

Executive Summary:

There are opportunities to improve the productivity of Church Council meetings. This analysis illustrates of how two other public governing boards address the challenges of balancing accountability, transparency, and privacy. The goal of this document is to seed discussion about strategies that St. Lucas UCC could adopt to 1) streamline meetings, 2) build trust with the Congregation, 3) ensure that all expected action items are completed, and 4) reduce effort to product the minutes.

Recommendations:

1. Distinguish between “inform” items and “action” items explicitly on the agenda.
2. Shift from lengthy verbal ministry updates to submitted written reports for “inform” items. Speak to the written documents without reading verbatim, prioritizing time for questions and discussion as needed.
3. Draft anticipated motions for “action” items to be sent with the agenda.
4. Use the consent agenda for “inform” items and “action” items that do not require discussion (e.g., appointments, anticipated expense approvals)
5. Publish the (preliminary) agenda with the non-confidential written reports / documents in a location that can be accessed by all members
6. Distribute the meeting notice to the Congregation with the link to the combined pdf agenda / reports at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.
7. Eliminate the need for separate “confidential” Executive Session minutes by following the meeting minutes strategy used by the University of Missouri Board of Curators (i.e., documenting motions passed during closed session in the public minutes).

Other Notes:

1. Both example boards use a motion to approve the consent agenda.
2. Both example boards pass a motion to hold a closed session, citing the specific provisions allowing for the meeting to be closed due to Sunshine Laws. Something simpler could be used here (e.g., “privileged communications with counsel, personnel matters, negotiated contracts”).