

Cathedral of Hope
Board of Stewards Meeting Minutes
 January 26, 2026

Regular Session

Attendance:

X	Dusty Darrow, Chair	X	Vicki Saulnier, Vice Chair	X	Brian Lewin, Treasurer
X	Greg Gifford, Secretary	X	Ronald Myles	X	Jon Nelson
X	Doug Waite	X	Angela Whorton		
	Rev. Neil Thomas				

- 1) Call to Order/Opening Prayer
 - a. Dusty Darrow called the meeting to order at 7:00pm
 - b. Greg Gifford took the roll call (8 present, 1 vacant)
 - c. Ronald Myles opened the meeting in prayer
- 2) Agenda
 - a. **Motion: Approve Agenda**
 - i. **Made by: Ronald Myles**
 - ii. **Seconded by: Angela Whorton**
 - iii. **Vote (Y/N/A): 8/0/0 – Motion Approved**
- 3) Consent Agenda
 - a. **Motion: Approve Consent Agenda**
 - i. **Made by: Angela Whorton**
 - ii. **Seconded by: Vicki Saulnier**
 - iii. **Vote (Y/N/A): 8/0/0 – Motion Approved**
- 4) Committee Reports
 - a. Committee:
 - i. Development Committee
 1. Feb 19th Bell Wall Society dinner
 2. Stewardship month
 3. No actions for the board
 - ii. Strategic Planning Committee
 1. Committee report sent during the board meeting
 2. Projected date is currently not available
 3. February 17th is next committee meeting
 - iii. Vacancies on Congregational Enhancement committee

1. Dawson and Andria have items for the committee and need the committee's involvement. Vacancies are slowing down progress.
 - a. Vice Chair is likely to step up to the chair position following the Chair's decision to step back from that role.

- 5) Finance Report – Brain Lewin, Treasurer, and Randal Langdon, COO, presented financial reports
 - a. No financial reports available – delayed due to weather
 - b. Short \$149k for contribution revenue for 2025 – but we were able to have positive expense savings and positive impact in other revenue categories that may offset this shortfall.
 - c. Considering a special finance committee meeting to review the 2025 financials ahead of the next board meeting.
 - i. Concern raised about finance committee meetings being canceled.
 - d. Lighting Project update
 - i. Small delays due to weather but project remains on track to be finished ahead of Easter.

- 6) Church Report from Rev. Dr. Neil Thomas
 - a. Submitted via email:

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF STEWARDS – January 2026

Hopefully by now, I am safely on board the Carnival Breeze with fellow clergy of the South Central Conference of the United Church of Christ. This is the reason that I am unable to join you for our regularly scheduled meeting. Thank you for the grace of being able to make my report in writing.

2026 is our year for learning what it means to be “Grounded” in our faith, leaning into the strength of God and our community of faith in difficult times. It is, in my opinion divinely inspired and timely, building on our theme for 2025, “Be the Church.”

The year has started out well and we are already seeing an increased attendance in worship as well as a commitment to the work and ministry of Cathedral of Hope. While we are yet to establish an approved new “dashboard”, the data collected in 2025 is still being recorded and benchmarked against the goals set for 2026. It is my hope that a new dashboard will be ready and available by March 2026. This would be utilized in conjunction with a new strategic plan. Consultants to be used in establishing our “Vision 2030” are still being sought and interviewed by the

Strategic Planning Committee and a recommendation, along with budget requirements by March 2026 as well.

As you know, the Lighting Project is now well underway and should be completed in time for Holy Week and Easter celebrations. This will not only enhance the worship space and bookstore but makes our facility more attractive for rental use. This is a major investment that will have long term impact. We are already talking with our community partners about future use and rental possibilities.

January is “Stewardship Month” and our stewardship mailing went out as planned. We are grateful to the volunteers who helped with the mailing and to members of the congregation who have already responded with pledges. Our commitment Sunday will be on February 15 which is also “Jazz Sunday” leading into Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent.

Our “All Church” book study through Lent is “Good Enough” and will continue our “grounded” theme.

Reviewing the statistics for January 2026 our social media presence remains very strong and we continue to build this work through our daily posts, worship services and social justice, using both Cathedral of Hope and Believe OUT Loud as our primary platforms. For reporting purposes, Believe OUT Loud currently has 194,000 likes and 188,000 followers. That is a huge audience that regularly engages with us, impacting lives and offering hope to people of faith and people of no faith. We should be proud of this work.

Small groups, volunteerism, outreach opportunities, and engagement and worship numbers point to a church that is vibrant and, in these difficult times where it seems that the world, and certainly our own country has lost its moral compass, Cathedral of Hope offers a beacon of light. This is evidenced not just on Sunday but throughout the week as ministries continue to grow and impact people’s lives.

The main area that we continue to struggle is in our financial goals. Growing ministry without growing financially puts a strain on staff who spend many hours taking on more responsibilities and resourcing such. It is imperative that we address this together. It is for this reason that I have been having conversations with consultants to assist in managing and adding expertise to our Development Committee. I believe that we will need to invest in this soon and, while we are not in a position to hire a full-time Development Director, I would like request that we consider using some of the windfall that we received from IRS in 2025 to fund a part time position. I am happy to address budget but I would suggest that we look to approve a budget of

\$40,000 in 2026 to facilitate this necessity. Sometimes we have to invest in order to get to the goal of financial security. While we can continue to diversify our income streams, specifically through rental income and investing our money wisely, we cannot do this in isolation. We must find ways to increase our general giving and grant funds. I believe that we need to recruit a member of staff whose sole purpose is to focus on this. I sincerely hope that the Board of Stewards will work with me and approve this funding in the near future.

I want you to know that the entire staff work hard every day to ensure that we do our work in support of the vision and mission of Cathedral of Hope and we are proud of what we are able to achieve. Your support is both appreciated and vital to make real on the mission, to “proclaim Christ, through faith, hope, and love.”

We are making a difference every day, one life at a time and, as we deepen our faith experience in real and practical ways, as we remain “grounded” in our faith, exploring its truth in both good and difficult times, Cathedral will have a vibrant present and future.

I remain honored to serve you and this congregation.

7) Continuing Business:

a. Special Congregational Meeting results

- i. Those responsible for counting votes were: Dusty, Vicki, Angela, Rev. Andria, Linda Walls, Judy Pringle, Joyce Spooner
- ii. Total Votes: 264

Two-third majority to pass: 176

Number of ballots with all 4 questions marked "yes": 174

Affirmative Votes:

Ballot Question #1: 215

Ballot Question #2: 202

Ballot Question #3: 210

Ballot Question #4: 227

8) New Business

a. **Motion: Release of temporary restricted funds of \$40,000 from IRS ERTC tax rebate for development director position**

- i. **Motion to Table the Appropriation**
- ii. **Made BY: Vicki Sauliner**
- iii. **Secded by Jon Nelson**
- iv. **Motion passes – 8/0/0**

9) **Motion to Adjourn**

- a. **Made by: Brian Lewin**
- b. **Seconded by: Vicki Sauliner**
- c. **Motion passes – 8/0/0**

10) Meeting was adjourned at 7:44pm