

**SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**Minutes of the Church Council Regular Meeting**  
**September 22, 2025**

The Church Council gathered for the public September Regular Meeting on Monday, September 22, 2025, in Room 19 and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:06 P.M. by Barbara Smith, President of the Council.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** *Amanda Boyer/Zoom*, Melinda Borman, Kirk Dalgaard, Phil Denton, Katy Forand, Wanda Gillman, Tracy Mulderig, Barbara Smith, and Carol Stelmach. || Nine members.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Rev. George Miller, Senior Minister

**VISITORS PRESENT:** *Donna Alexander/Zoom*, Bill Biedenstein, *Joan Dalgaard/Zoom*, *Marsha Fey/Zoom*, *Ken Fey/Zoom*, *Pat Fribis/Zoom*, *Dan Herron/Zoom*, *Kathy Herron/Zoom*, Jack Laudenslager, *Paul Litzinger/Zoom*, *Kim Witbrodt/Zoom*. || Eleven Visitors.

**OPENING ACTIVITIES:** Katy Forand opened the meeting with a prayer. Every Council member shared one aspect of their lives for which they were thankful. The Council recognized successes from the past month including Council Conversations, Celebration Sunday, a sizable increase to the number of families served by the backpack program, a commitment service at Friendship Village, the reception of new members, participation in the Christian Nationalism presentation, the start of Confirmation / HS Youth Group.

**GUEST COMMENTS:** Bill Biedenstein shared information about upcoming guest speakers including the Institute for Family Medicine (Sept. 28), Heartland Industries (Oct. 19) and Jeanette Mott Oxford (Oct. 26). Bill also thanked Tracy Mulderig for the quality of the Church Council minutes.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** It was moved by Melinda Borman and seconded by Katy Forand that the following items be approved by consent agenda:

- A/V Ministry Meeting – July 22, 2025, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – June 23, 2025, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting – August 25, 2025, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting | Executive Session – August 25, 2025, Minutes
- Finance Ministry Meeting – July 15, 2025, Minutes
- Membership & Evangelism Ministry Meeting – August 5, 2025, Minutes
- Open & Affirming Task Force Meeting – August 19, 2025, Minutes

The motion carried (8-0) by show of hands with Carol Stelmach abstaining.

**MINISTRY REPORTS:**

**Staff Reports** – Two written reports were submitted to the Council prior to the meeting.

- Senior Minister Report – September
- Associate Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation Report – September

A question was raised about the Small Town and Rural (STAR) Coalition. Rev. Miller explained that this body ensures that churches in smaller communities have a voice in the denomination. He was one of the founding members and currently serves in a leadership position as Secretary.

**Finance Ministry Report** – Financial Secretary Wanda Gillman submitted two written reports to the Council prior to the meeting.

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

Wanda supplemented the written reports with an oral update. While the August 2025 Regular Offering (\$35,251.05) was underbudget, the August 2025 Total Income (\$79,263.48) was over budget due to distributions from the General Endowment Fund, the Beyersdorfer Fund, and a bequest from Wanda Winter. Total Expenses for the month (\$81,277.05) were under budget. The actual Total Deficit year-to-date was \$133,867.70, which was over budget by \$29,487.10.

Council members requested clarification about why the numbers shared in the update did not match the Total Revenues and Total Expenses in the written report. Wanda Gillman explained that Asset Fund Revenue and Asset Fund Expenses should be subtracted from the General Fund totals. While Jeff Wagener annotated the MTD Actual totals, the YTD Actual totals and Deficit totals were not adjusted to reflect the revised numbers. The Council requested that Jeff Wagener annotate all relevant totals in next month's report to prevent future confusion.

- 1) **2026 Budget Status** – Wanda Gillman reported that the Finance Ministry has reviewed all expense requests except for the Personnel Ministry's forthcoming recommendations for staff compensation adjustments.
- 2) **External Audit Status** – Three bids were shared with the Council. The Finance Ministry recommended Catlett & Associates. Timing would be determined based on the availability of the firm, so it was unclear whether the costs would hit in 2025 (requiring Council approval as an incremental expense) or 2026 (not requiring Council approval if accounted for in the new budget).
- 3) **General Endowment Fund Vacancy** – Bob Mandava's vacancy on General Endowment Fund remains unfilled. While the President of the Church Council can name a replacement for the remainder of 2025, a permanent replacement will need to be approved during the Annual Meeting in November.

**Physical Facilities Ministry Report** – Kirk Dalgaard reported that the Physical Facilities Ministry did not meet in the past month due to scheduling conflicts.

- 1) **Cooling System** – Integrated Facilities Services (IFS) concluded that the Fellowship Hall A/C system problems were due to a faulty circuit board. A technician was able to repair the existing circuit board and will return to repair a coil. Hopefully, unplanned expenses for a circuit-board replacement (\$3,700) and coil replacement (\$2,500 - \$3,000) will be deferred. The Council requested more information about the age of the system, the costs of replacing it, and whether monthly energy costs would be reduced with a new system.
- 2) **Sexton's House Repairs** – Donovan Larson checked on the property and did not identify any obvious issues that would prevent an occupancy permit. Bo and Janet Frumson volunteered to tackle a few minor improvements.
- 3) **Carpet Cleaning** – Status was unknown. Ideally, this would be completed prior to Rev. Miller's Installation.
- 4) **Camera Updated** – Tabled.
- 5) **Roof Leak Repairs** – Tabled.

6) *External Sign* – Tabled.

7) *Sidewalk Repairs* – Tabled.

**Stewardship Ministry Report** – Katy Forand shared that the Fall Day of Service is planned for October 12, 2025, at 10:45 am. Stewardship and Physical Facilities are coordinating to finalize what tasks will be prioritized (e.g., the Sanctuary).

Rev. Miller raised the idea of turning the Semi-Annual Day of Service into a year-round campaign in 2026 to complete 12 monthly projects or focus on one room each month. Smaller tasks could be delegated with sign-up sheets in the Fellowship Hall. A Year of Service campaign would enable more tasks to be completed and create a shared goal over a sustained period.

**Disaster Response Ministry Report** – Rev. Miller reported that the Disaster Response Ministry met on September 15, 2025. Another meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2025.

- 1) *Emergency Preparedness Class* – Council approval was requested for Amanda Boyer to host an emergency preparedness class on March 8, 2026. No concerns were raised.
- 2) *Disaster Relief Fund* – Council approval was requested to hold a raffle fundraiser in March 2026 to generate seed money that can be released immediately in the event of an emergency. Kirk Dalgaard confirmed with Jeff Wagener that a dormant line item exists in the budget for a Disaster Relief Fund (41001).
- 3) *Collaboration Opportunities* – The ministry is exploring opportunities to collaborate with other church groups such as Women with a Mission for hands-on work and Membership & Evangelism Ministry for the Blood Drives.
- 4) *Proactive Disaster Plans* – Rev. Miller reported that Joe Forand will be responsible for checking on the St. Lucas UCC property and ministers in the event of a disaster.

**Worship Ministry Report** – Barbara Smith reported that the first meeting of this ministry remains pending.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Donor Recognition Wall** – Kirk Dalgaard confirmed with Jeff Wagener that it is possible to identify historical donors for recognition. Work by Kirk and Joan Dalgaard is ongoing to determine a cutoff for donations that will be recognized, how to handle donors who wished to remain anonymous, how best to honor founding members, where this could be located, and what it would cost for Arch Engraving to create leaves for a tree.

The Council agreed to table this topic for a few months while the proposal is being developed.

**Rev. Miller's Installation Service** – Rev. Miller shared an update on plans for the Installation Service. Gateway Men's Chorus has committed to performing during the service and will be receiving the offering. San Jose Restaurant estimated that a taco bar would cost \$11/person for 175-200 people. Adding margaritas would be \$15/person. San Jose Restaurant would come set-up on Saturday. It was unclear whether they would have staff available to deliver or if the food would need to be picked up on Sunday.

More information was requested about when the final headcount would be due and how to handle the payment.

Kirk Dalgaard shared a recommendation that the property be decorated for fall prior to Rev. Miller's Installation. The Council suggested that Joan Dalgaard connect with Pat Stephens. Rev. Miller commended

Joan Dalgaard, Joan Morris, and Kirk Dalgaard for their efforts to maintain and beautify the exterior of the property year-round.

Melinda Borman offered to design a template for new banners to decorate the Fellowship Hall and to estimate the costs. The bulletin boards could also be improved. Rev. Miller encouraged the Council to remember that the Fellowship Hall is one of the most photographed spaces on the property and should communicate who St. Lucas UCC is to visitors. Ideas discussed included Kristen Buckholz's proposal to decorate the kitchen windows with historical photos of members serving food & a potential mural with birds to tie in with the Preschool. Rev. Miller acknowledged how well the Social Justice Ministry decorates their bulletin board near the main entrance.

**Council Conversations** – Barbara Smith initiated a discussion about the recent Council Conversations event. While the Council intended to host this event in the Fellowship Hall, a decision was made to switch to the Sanctuary due to the unresolved A/C problems. Roughly 50 people attended with 5 or so members participating online, which was a significant increase from past events held in Room 19.

Barbara Smith was congratulated on running a successful event that achieved the intended goals of large turnout and online participation. The Council also recognized Dan Herron for advocating in favor of holding the event in the Sanctuary, which ultimately worked well.

Suggestions for future events included the following:

- Serve Ted Drewes again
- Test holding the event in the Fellowship Hall to determine whether sitting in small groups or a circle creates a more informal, conversational dynamic
- Implement a method for members to submit questions in writing
- Shorten the time spent on introductions before the Q&A portion

Future Council Conversations are expected to occur every 3-4 months after worship. This would create a predictable opportunity to celebrate successes and receive feedback from members. In the interim, an "Ask Council" table could be staffed periodically with 2-3 Council members during coffee hour in the Fellowship Hall.

**Celebration Sunday** – Tracy Mulderig shared lessons learned from hosting Celebration Sunday. Ideally, next year's event should be held immediately after worship to improve attendance by retaining in person worshipers and avoiding nap time. Logistical issues this year led to a Noon start, which was suboptimal. Ted Drewes could be ordered for pickup on Saturday and stored in the kitchen freezers.

A question was raised about whether costs exceeded the \$1,000 estimate approved at a previous meeting. Kitchen costs were mostly offset by free will offering donations. Incremental expenses were Ted Drewes, basic decorations, and supplies for a few games.

**SunCrest Fest** – Rev. Miller reported that Membership & Evangelism decided that there was insufficient time to adequately plan for the event. Members of Council were encouraged to attend the event on October 25, 2025, to evaluate whether it makes sense for next year.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**External Audit Bid Approval** – The Finance Ministry recommended hiring Catlett & Associates to perform the external audit due to the thorough letter of intent, reasonable cost (\$8,000), and multiple references from other non-profits.

It was moved by Amanda Boyer and seconded by Barbara Smith to accept the Finance Ministry's recommendation to hire Catlett & Associates to perform the external audit. The motion carried (8-0) by show of hands with Carol Stelmach abstaining.

**Security Assessment** – Tracy Mulderig shared that the head of security at Nestle Purina offered to perform a courtesy audit of the St. Lucas UCC property to identify any risks or opportunities.

Rev. Miller recommended that this be scheduled for January 2026. It was determined that this consultation could be scheduled without additional alignment with the Disaster Response Ministry.

**Communion Practices** – Rev. Miller recommended that the Council practice serving Communion to avoid obstructing the table and prevent confusion about who is taking each position. He stated that the existing Communion Table is smaller than ideal and may be worth discussing at a future date.

Council members agreed to practice on October 5, 2025. Carol Stelmach shared that a "Communion Captain" would historically gather everyone in the South Narthex to assign positions before proceeding to the Chancel.

**Treasurer Appointment** – Barbara Smith welcomed Carol Stelmach, who agreed to fill the vacancy created by Marty Schmidt's resignation until a permanent replacement is elected at the Annual Meeting in November. While the Bylaws state that the Council President has the authority to appoint a temporary replacement for a vacancy on a governing body, it was determined that Carol could not backfill Marty Schmidt's role as Treasurer without broader Council consent.

It was moved by Barbara Smith and seconded by Phil Denton to appoint Carol Stelmach as Council Treasurer. The motion carried (8-0) by show of hands with Carol Stelmach abstaining.

**Reinstatement of the Special Events Ministry** – Tracy Mulderig presented a proposal to reinstate the dormant Special Events Ministry (see attached). Responsibilities outlined by the proposal were not intended to be exhaustive. If approved, next steps would include designating a Council liaison, finding members to serve on this ministry, and requesting a budget.

There was discussion about the existence of reference materials from former iterations of this ministry (e.g., Confirmation Luncheons, Installation Services, Easter Egg Hunts). Barbara Smith stated that she had materials regarding the Easter Egg Hunt and Advent Giving Trees. Tracy Mulderig provided a summary of post-Covid Celebration Sunday events from Marsha Fey's documentation (see attached).

It was recommended that the designated Council liaison meet with Michele Ottinger to gather feedback on the ministry's proposed responsibilities and whether to plan an Easter Egg Hunt for 2026.

Carol Stelmach stated that the proposed budget of \$2,500 sounded roughly equivalent to what was allocated previously. She recalled that some budget was allocated to staff Christmas gifts, but the meal was funded by members of the Church Council. Tracy Mulderig agreed to email Wanda Gillman and Jeff Wagener with the budget request of \$2,500 for 2026.

It was moved by Phil Denton and seconded by Barbara Smith to reinstate the Special Events Ministry. The motion carried unanimously (9-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

**Special Events Ministry Council Liaison** – Tabled until next month.

**Staff & Member Appreciation** – Rev. Miller shared a new initiative to recognize individuals who volunteer their time and energy for the betterment of St. Lucas UCC. The initial idea was to designate four Sundays each year to

express gratitude for a particular ministry during the worship service. Individuals would be asked to stand and receive a certificate with a card.

10/26/25	Cemetery Board & Preschool Board
11/23/25	Staff
02/15/26	Volunteers
05/17/26	Perpetual Endowment Trust & General Endowment
TBD	Music

The Council expressed support for this initiative. A question was raised about potential expenses, which were expected to be minimal. A cake or special dessert could be ordered. Another question was raised about how to handle the Sunday for volunteers given that most members serve in some capacity. One suggestion was to do a rolling “ministry spotlight” in the worship bulletin or on Fellowship Hall bulletin boards.

**2026 Nominating Committee** – Barbara Smith reported that this group is being formed. Members include herself, Linda Taylor, Linda Simons, and possibly Joy Dressel.

**Annual Meeting** – Barbara Smith shared that the Annual Meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2025.

**Christian Nationalism Presentation** – Barbara Smith reported that she attended the Christian Nationalism presentation virtually and found it informative. This led to a broader discussion about the event and the need for better communication between the Social Justice Ministry and the Church Council.

The Council recognized the strong attendance, particularly by members of other congregations who were inspired by St. Lucas UCC’s Social Justice Ministry. Attendees were warmly welcomed.

Multiple Council members expressed disappointment with the divisiveness of the content and the timing of the event. One perspective was that hosting inflammatory presentations can be counterproductive to Council’s broader goal of strengthening fellowship among members who hold different political beliefs. Another perspective was that the event should have been postponed after Charlie Kirk’s murder to allow for the Council to discuss whether it was still in the best interests of St. Lucas UCC to proceed. Tracy Mulderig advocated for improving the technological capabilities of the Fellowship Hall to create an alternative large presentation space for controversial topics to preserve the sanctity of the Sanctuary.

There was disagreement about whether it was the right decision to continue advertising the event on social media in the days that followed Charlie Kirk’s assassination and on September 11<sup>th</sup>. A breakdown in communication occurred such that the Council member who requested a temporary suspension of social media ads felt ignored. Rev. Miller advised leaving the post up with an amended description, which was not communicated back to the Council.

Discussion occurred about whether there should be a different, more formalized communication standard about potential new events in the name of St. Lucas UCC or on the property. Bill Biedenstein acknowledged that the Social Justice Ministry answers to the Church Council and assured members that explicit direction from the Church Council would be followed. The intent of this event was to discuss a difficult topic respectfully and to welcome different perspectives.

Wanda Gillman shared that she planned to serve as Council liaison to the Social Justice Ministry. It was expected that this would improve communication between the two bodies. Moving forward, the Council requested that the Social Justice Ministry submit meeting minutes to Denee Bowers for the monthly Council packet instead of emailing copies to St. Lucas UCC email accounts.

**Cemetery Rate Increases** – Katy Forand presented the Cemetery Board’s proposed price increases to grave opening rates. These new rates were benchmarked against other cemeteries and were deemed comparable to competitors. Costs have increased with the contractor who performs this service beyond what the Cemetery Board can absorb.

It was moved by Katy Forand and seconded by Carol Stelmach to approve the Cemetery Board’s new grave opening prices for weekday openings (\$1,900), weekend openings (\$2,220), ash burial weekday openings (\$1,100) and ash burial weekend openings (\$1,400). The motion carried unanimously (9-0) by show of hands with no abstentions.

**Youth Ministry Council Liaison** – Amanda Boyer volunteered to serve as Council liaison for Youth Ministries, which was a role requested by Amy Bush and Lynn Fey. She intended to check-in with them weekly, attend relevant gatherings, and share information back with the Council. Amanda could not guarantee that she will be able to attend the 2026 Mission Trip.

**Quarterly Calendar** – Amanda Boyer requested that a list version of the calendar be added to the weekly eBlast to communicate all activities planned for the next 3-4 months.

**Mission Trip Reunion Planning** – Tracy Mulderig reminded the Council that Ken Fey and Jack Laudenslager volunteered to lead the planning of a Mission Trip Reunion and asked for the Council to give them the encouragement needed to proceed.

The Council expressed support for this initiative. In the interim, one idea was to send a postcard to promote upcoming family events once contact information for former youth becomes available. Multiple ideas were suggested for the potential timing of the event (e.g., Mission Trip Sendoff, a holiday when people are back in town). It was recommended that adult participants (e.g., Joan Hensley) be included as well.

**Church Retreat Planning** – Rev. Miller suggested that Kathy Herron’s idea for an all-church retreat be added to the October or November agenda. Amanda Boyer recommended that someone connect with Rev. Pillman regarding any related work that may be in progress.

The public session of the Church Council meeting concluded at 8:37 P.M.

*(Minute marker: 2 hours/31 minutes)*

Respectfully submitted,  
Tracy Mulderig  
Recording Secretary

*The next regular meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for Monday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.*

Approved by the St. Lucas UCC Church Council on October 27, 2025

## **Special Events Ministry Proposal**

### **Background:**

Tracy Mulderig met with Marsha Fey on September 3, 2025. Historically, there was a Special Events Committee with a Council liaison to plan events such as Celebration Sunday. Marsha Fey stated that written documents from past events were provided to Barbara Smith in a binder earlier in 2025.

### **Recommendation:**

The Council should reinstate this ministry and identify a Council liaison. Otherwise, relevant duties are the responsibility of the Church Council. A budget line should be requested for 2026. It would be beneficial for the newly formed ministry to meet with the Director of All-Church Programming to refine the initial scope proposed below.

### **Ministry Scope:**

To plan the following events (and others as delegated):

1. Celebration Sunday / Ice Cream Social / Homecoming
2. Preschool Easter Egg Hunt
3. Advent Workshop and/or Advent Giving Tree Collections
4. Staff Anniversaries & Celebrations
5. Installation Services

### **Responsibilities:**

1. Communicate the event date to the Director of All-Church Programming and Administrative Assistant to ensure scheduling on the calendar
2. Partner with the Communications Coordinator to advertise the event, including contacting the Preschool Director
3. Coordinate any kitchen needs (shopping for food, serving food)
4. Submit facilities work orders for table set-up at least 2 weeks prior to the event
5. Identify volunteers & execute the event
6. Submit a brief event recap report to Council with approximate attendance, cost, and lessons learned for next year

### **Initial Budget: \$2,500**

- Supplies for the Easter Egg Hunt + Young Adult Volunteer Hunt (\$400)
- Entertainment for Celebration Sunday (\$600)
- Food for Celebration Sunday (\$600)
- Staff Christmas Party (\$400)
- Other miscellaneous supplies (\$500)

### Celebration Sunday / Homecoming Recaps

Notes:

- Historically planned food for up to 150.
- Better attendance immediately after worship but difficult to prepare
- Novel entertainment attracts preschool families if avoiding nap time

	2025	2024	2023	2022
<b>TIMING</b>	12:00 – 1:30 pm	10:45 am – 1:00 pm	3:00 – 5:00 pm	3:00 – 5:00 pm
<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	60	90	Unknown	75
<b>LOCATION</b>	Fellowship Hall	Fellowship Hall & Memorial Grounds	Memorial Grounds & Appel Property	Pavilion
<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>	Indoor games & drawing Lego free build Yard games (unused) Bluetooth music playlist Cake walk (39)	Petting zoo (\$600) Cake walk (40) Corn hole Bluetooth music playlist	Live band Magician Corn hole	Petting zoo Live bluegrass band
<b>FOOD</b>	Hot dogs & chips (\$150) Ted Drewes (200 @ \$489) Lemonade & iced tea	Hot dogs & chips (\$225) Drumsticks (\$42) Lemonade	Hot dogs & chips	Hot dogs & chips Root beer w/ ice cream cups for floats
<b>FREE WILL OFFERING</b>	\$125	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>GAME PRIZES</b>	McDonalds toys Dollar Tree candy / treats Stickers		Costco candy bars	
<b>COMMENTS</b>	Beautiful weather but most people stayed inside. Moved cake walk inside. Strawberry ice cream was popular. Soft attendance due to limited advertising.	Petting zoo brought back many families of members. Serving food immediately after worship increased participation.	Magician was very successful. Many enjoyed the music. Challenges transporting food from kitchen to outdoor site.	Windy weather. Challenges transporting food from the kitchen to the pavilion & clean-up. Preschool families came for the petting zoo & stayed for music.