

SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Minutes of the Church Council Regular Meeting
July 28, 2025

The Church Council gathered for the public June Regular Meeting on Monday, July 28, 2025, in Room 19 and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 6:07 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, Marty Schmidt, and Barbara Smith. || Nine members.

STAFF PRESENT: Rev. George Miller, Senior Minister, and *Rev. Janet Pillman, Associate Minister of Pastoral Care and Visitation/Zoom.*

VISITORS PRESENT: *Bill Brinkhorst/Zoom, Joan Dalgaard/Zoom, Joy Dressel/Zoom, Marsha Fey/Zoom, Dan Herron/Zoom, Kathy Herron/Zoom, Donovan Larson, Ellen Littleton/Zoom, Adam Rustige, Sara Savat/Zoom, and Kim Witbrodt/Zoom.* || Eleven Visitors.

OPENING PRAYER: Kirk Dalgaard opened the meeting with a prayer.

ONE WORD "THANKS": Every Council member shared one aspect of their lives for which they were thankful.

2025 SUCCESSES: The Council recognized successes from the past month including the completion of the Youth Mission Trip + Service + Luncheon, the passage of the STAR Coalition resolution by the General Synod, a spirit of community among the staff, enthusiasm during the Summer Cabinet Meeting, completion of the July Pass the Bricks event, and the positive impact of messages shared via the bulletin tear-off slip collected with the weekly offering.

GUEST COMMENTS: Donovan Larson and Adam Rustige joined the meeting on behalf of the Physical Facilities Ministry to discuss open items (see the Physical Facilities Committee Report).

CONSENT AGENDA:

It was moved by Melinda Borman and seconded by Marty Schmidt that the following items be approved by consent agenda:

- A/V Ministry Meeting – May 27, 2025, Minutes
- A/V Ministry Meeting – June 24, 2025, Minutes
- Cemetery Board Meeting – April 16, 2025, Minutes
- Cemetery Board Meeting – June 11, 2025, Minutes
- Council Regular Meeting – June 23, 2025, Minutes
- Finance Ministry Meeting – June 17, 2025, Minutes
- Open & Affirming Task Force Meeting – June 17, 2025, Minutes
- Physical Facilities Ministry Meeting – July 23, 2025, Minutes

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

MINISTRY REPORTS:

Staff Reports – Two written reports were submitted to the Council prior to the meeting. Barbara Smith shared that Rev. Pillman welcomes calls if anyone wishes to speak with her while her wrist heals.

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

The Council thanked the staff for their thorough reports.

Physical Facilities Ministry Report – Kirk Dalgaard, Donovan Larson, and Adam Rustige provided an update on behalf of the Physical Facilities Ministry.

- 1) ***Sexton's House Property Analysis*** – Adam Rustige presented an analysis of 11825 Denny Road property (see attached).

The negative 2025 profit number is driven by the lost revenue while unoccupied and the recent roof replacement expense. The furnace / HVAC system remains original to the house and may require replacement near term.

DECA estimated that the market rental value of the property is \$1,600 - \$1,700 / month. Adam's estimate was closer to \$2,000 / month based on comparable properties in the area. If St. Lucas UCC chooses to pursue a new rental lease with DECA as the administrator, DECA would receive the first month of rent and 8% of each subsequent month. Selling the property would likely generate \$353,000 - 369,000 in profit depending on the final price, closing costs, and repair expenses.

The Council thanked Adam for producing this thorough analysis. It was recommended that Adam investigate whether property insurance costs could be added to the expenses for a revised estimate of the net profit. Adam estimated that insurance could be approximately \$2,000 / year based on his own home.

The Council asked about the current state of the property. Adam confirmed that cleaning and minor repairs (e.g., faucet replacement, painting) are expected before listing it for lease or for sale.

Rev. Miller shared that he is responsible for lawn care at his rental; therefore, the Council could increase the profit by delegating this responsibility to tenants in future leases. A secondary discussion occurred about what is most appropriate for landlords to maintain vs. tenants given that incentives can be misaligned.

The Council questioned whether the cost of using DECA as a property manager was worth the benefit of their services. Adam responded that it depends on who in the church would assume responsibility for vetting tenants, collecting the rent, and responding to urgent calls 24/7.

Rev. Miller suggested that another in-between option could be to sell the house to a young family at a discount as a form of mission.

- 2) ***Roof Leak Repairs*** – Donovan Larson reported that the leaks in the Preschool and South Narthex remain unresolved due to Glandt Roofing failing to return his calls. The repairs are guaranteed under the roof replacement contract. Donovan intended to approach them in person for an update before pursuing an alternative roofer and charging back the expense.

The Council asked whether documentation existed for the failed contact attempts to show cause for pursuing an alternative roofer. Donovan confirmed that this documentation could be compiled if this route is needed.

- 3) ***External Sign*** – Bob Beck is continuing to gather bids for a new digital sign. For now, a message was added to the current display to communicate that the church is active.
- 4) ***Camera Update*** – Beishir Lock & Security met with representatives from the Cemetery, Preschool, Victory Garden, and Physical Facilities about the feasibility of installing motion-sensor activated deterrents and/or filming functionality. Beishir wants to hold a second meeting to discuss their proposed solution.
- 5) ***Sidewalk Repairs*** – Bids to mudjack the Denny Road path are pending and expected by the next Council meeting. The path around the Parsonage was practical years ago when members parked along Fox Glen Drive and accessed the church from the Preschool entrance. This path can be removed without needing an external bid.
- 6) ***Neighbor Light Complaint*** – Donovan Larson reported that a good faith effort was made to reduce the light pollution impacting a neighbor along the main church parking lot, yet the neighbor remains dissatisfied with the solution. A different neighbor trimmed a tree that previously obstructed the light. For now, Donovan recommended waiting to see if the tree fills in and postponing expensive interventions (e.g., \$300 scissor lift rental, new equipment, \$1,000 commercial contractor).

This issue raised concerns about the new digital sign and the need to avoid disturbing the neighbors once installed. The Council asked whether anyone affiliated with St. Lucas UCC has access to a scissor lift to avoid rental expenses and whether disabling the offending light is possible. The Council agreed to revisit the topic at a future date. Amanda Boyer

made a motion to follow Donovan's recommendations that was deemed unnecessary and withdrawn.

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

- Balance Sheet Analysis as of June 30, 2025
- Analysis of Revenue and Expenses as of June 30, 2025

Wanda supplemented the written reports with an oral update that the June 2025 Regular Offering (\$36,364.65) and Total Income (\$68,766.38) were both under budget. Total Expenses for the month (\$73,582.36) were under budget. The actual Total Deficit year-to-date was \$80,382.45, which was over budget by \$15,216.41.

Clarification was requested regarding the Total Offering Revenue for 2025. While consistently under budget, the 2025 Total Offering Revenue has exceeded that of the prior year by roughly \$3,000. Therefore, giving has increased but not to the extent expected in the budget to avoid a deficit. The deficit is about \$29,000 less than what it was at the same point in 2024, which is a second sign of improvement.

- 1) **2026 Budget** – Wanda informed the Council that the 2026 budget process has started. Difficult decisions are anticipated due to the deficit.
- 2) **Property Tax Assessment** – Marty Schmidt shared that Bo Frumson confirmed the accuracy of St. Louis County's parcel records. The Sexton's parcel is listed as a house and a 1/3 acre. Barbara Smith reported that Jeff Wagener is working to challenge the assessment, assuming the deadline has not passed.

The Council questioned whether the Parsonage property should be treated as tax-exempt if a minister of St. Lucas UCC is not in residence. Donovan Larson responded that it was his understanding that churches are allowed to have a maximum of one tax-exempt property but that he did not know the prerequisites for it to be tax-exempt. Phil Denton advised consulting with a tax attorney. Barbara Smith agreed to discuss this concern with Jeff Wagener to gather the facts.

The Council discussed whether challenging the assessment was still necessary given that the parcel is listed accurately with St. Louis County. Appealing is worthwhile if the benchmark properties were a poor match; however, the assessed value was comparable to what Adam Rustige proposed in the Sexton's House Property Analysis based on similar properties in the area.

- 3) **External Audit Status** – Tabled.

Personnel Ministry Report – Barbara Smith reported that Charlie Singler's retirement is officially planned for December 31, 2025. More discussion will occur in Executive Session.

Worship Ministry Report – Barbara Smith reported that the first meeting of this ministry will be scheduled soon.

Disaster Response Ministry Report – Rev. Miller shared that this ministry held its first meeting on June 30, 2025, with the next meeting scheduled for September 15, 2025.

OLD BUSINESS:

Parsonage Lease – Barbara Smith shared that a response from the Parsonage tenant was received by the Church Office regarding the immediate removal of the pet dog residing on property.

The Council expressed disappointment with the communication breakdown that occurred with this incident. Donovan Larson was told that the dog would be removed within 24 hours, which was not clearly communicated to the Council. Confirmation of the pet's removal was not communicated by the tenant as requested by the Council's certified letter until recently. DECA may not have been informed of this situation by either party.

This situation illustrated the need for 1) better written documentation summarizing communications with the tenant and 2) consensus around the role of DECA as the property manager. Today, the tenant sends the rent payment to DECA but contacts

Donovan Larson directly if issues arise. A decision is needed about whether DECA should be the primary contact for all property concerns from both parties based on the terms of the contract. If so, then clear guidance must be given to DECA about who to contact from St. Lucas UCC. Suggestions included the Council liaison on Physical Facilities (for Council transparency), the chair of Physical Facilities Ministry (for timely problem-solving), and/or Jeff Wagener as the Business Manager (for day-to-day consistency). Barbara Smith agreed to meet with Jeff Wagener and return next month with a recommendation.

Sports Contracts – Barbara Smith reported that no written replies have been received for the volunteer position to shadow Violet Brooks. One individual expressed interest verbally if no one else volunteers. The position will remain posted for a few more weeks.

Council Conversations – Following from last month’s request, Dan Herron shared feedback on the feasibility of hosting the event in the Fellowship Hall from the perspective of the A/V Ministry assuming the goal is for everyone to be both seen and heard. The general conclusion was that it is possible, but the effort involved would be extensive to enable two-way audio and video (see attached).

The Council questioned whether an audio-only experience would be sufficient given that this is not an official meeting and intended to be informal. Dan strongly advocated for video to ensure the highest quality event possible. The Council acknowledged the value of nonverbal communication, while also recognizing that more complex technological requirements increase the risk of something going wrong. This first attempt could be more “rustic” as an experiment to see if in-person attendance improves without excluding virtual participants.

The original goal was to encourage participation by co-locating with the coffee and donuts in a casual setting while still allowing a Zoom virtual connection. The Fireside Room was suggested as a larger alternative to Room 19; however, the OWL struggles in this space and it would require members to relocate. The Sanctuary remains an option for large meetings but also requires members to relocate.

Rev. Miller acknowledged the missed opportunity to align everyone to the goals of the new Council Conversations meeting before seeking feedback on the technological feasibility. The vision was for a simple, well-attended gathering in the Fellowship Hall with refreshments. The focus would be on recent accomplishments to celebrate, a brief update from the Council President, and then opening the floor.

This discussion revealed the long-term opportunity to add more technological capabilities to the Fellowship Hall for streaming events such as Preschool concerts, Polka Worship, and the Youth Mission Trip Luncheon for those who would like to participate from home.

The Council and Rev. Miller thanked Dan for the many hours devoted to evaluating this opportunity.

The Council moved the upcoming Council Conversations event from the tentative date of August 31, 2025, to September 21, 2025. This would allow more members and Council representatives to attend due to Labor Day Weekend conflicts. Dan agreed to confirm whether this date works with Christ Memorial for the camera loan. November 30, 2025, was tentatively selected for the next Council Conversations but may be adjusted at a future meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Celebration Sunday – Barbara Smith reported that the Council is responsible for coordinating the food and activities for the annual church picnic on September 7, 2025. Delegation of who would own the event planning was tabled until later in the meeting and not resumed.

The Council discussed the history of this event and what was successful in the past. Collaboration with the Preschool was proposed to increase participation.

Sanctuary Accessibility – Barbara Smith expressed the need for the Sanctuary to better accommodate individuals with mobility challenges. Building on the current need for a more accessible Sanctuary, Marty Schmidt introduced Michele Ottinger’s idea for St. Lucas UCC to set itself apart from other churches by becoming open and affirming for families of children with special needs. This was proposed as a potential idea to unite the Congregation around a transformative campaign to improve the experience of worship for current members and an underserved demographic in the community. He suggested a capital campaign to raise funds, exploring the

option of borrowing against the endowments to be paid back with future offering revenue, and/or using the profit from selling the Sexton’s property as the seed money for the renovations.

The Council discussed that funds were previously offered for a ramp in the Sanctuary, but the donor passed away before agreement could be reached on the design. Ultimately, addressing the accessibility issue would be for the benefit of current members regardless of whether the new special needs mission is adopted by the Congregation in the future. Questions were raised about whether it would be difficult to recruit these families.

Rev. Miller emphasized that having a goal breathes life into a church and communicates that there is a future. He reminded the Council that there are opportunities to leverage social media and the local news media, especially for heartwarming stories. There may be opportunities to invite representatives from local organizations (e.g., ARCH, Paraquad, Emmaus Homes) to get their input and build awareness that families can be directed to St. Lucas UCC if they are looking for an accommodating faith community.

The public session of the Church Council meeting concluded at 8:15 P.M.

(Minute marker: 2 hour/8 minutes)

Respectfully submitted,
Tracy Mulderig
Recording Secretary

The next regular meeting of the Church Council is scheduled for Monday, August 25th at 6:00 pm.

Approved by the St. Lucas UCC Church Council on August 25, 2025

11825 Denny Road Analysis
July 28, 2025

Built: 1999
 SF: 1,260
 Bedrooms: 3
 Bathrooms: 2
 Vinyl and Brick Exterior
 Two car garage
 Full unfinished basement

	# Months	Income	Expenses					Total Expenses	Profit
			Lawncare	Repairs	Utilities	DECA	RE Taxes		
Future	12	\$21,148	\$1,810	\$0	\$0	\$3,454	\$3,666	\$8,931	\$12,218
2025	4	\$5,600	\$700	\$11,184	\$194	\$0	\$3,666	\$15,744	-\$10,144
2024	12	\$16,800	\$1,810	\$533	\$0	\$0	\$3,560	\$5,902	\$10,898
2023	12	\$16,800	\$890	\$1,073	\$0	\$0	\$3,550	\$5,513	\$11,287
2022	12	\$16,800	\$1,013	\$100	\$0	\$559	\$3,238	\$4,909	\$11,891
2021	7	\$9,800	\$2,080	\$2,437	\$815	\$0	\$3,096	\$8,427	\$1,373
2019	9	\$8,469	\$3,170	\$8,525	\$724	\$0	\$3,840	\$16,260	-\$7,790
	56	\$74,269	\$9,663	\$23,851	\$1,732	\$559	\$20,950	\$56,755	\$17,515

Occupancy: 88%

Component Repair or Replacement

	Age	Condition	Replace \$'s	When
Carpet (400 SF)	Unknown	Fair	\$2,000	Now
Faucets (Qty 3)	1999	Fair	\$300	Now
Furnace	1999	End of life	\$12,000	< 5 Yrs
Gas DHW	1999	End of life	\$1,000	< 5 Yrs
Roof	2025	New	NA	
Panel 200A	1999	Good		
Kitchen Cabinets	1999	Good		
Countertop	1999	Good		
Shades	Unknown	Good		
Vinyl Tile	1999	Fair		
Sump Pump	Unknown	Unknown		
Chain Link Fence	1999	Good		
Concrete pad	1999	Fair		
Concrete driveway	1999	Good		
Frig	2019	Good		
Dishwasher	Unknown	Good		
Elec Stove	2009	Good		
Washer	2021	Good		
Elec Dryer	2016	Good		

Rental Info

Rent	SF	Bed	Bath	\$/SF	Zip	Date
\$1,762	1,260	3	2	\$1.40	63126	NA
\$2,500	1,224	3	2	\$2.04	63126	9/2024
\$2,200	1,500	3	2	\$1.47	63126	6/2025
\$2,190	1,750	3	2	\$1.25	63126	8/2024
\$2,000	1,684	3	2	\$1.19	63126	2/2025
\$1,750	1,050	3	2	\$1.67	63126	9/2024
\$3,500	1,783	3	1.5	\$1.96	63126	6/2025
\$3,000	2,137	3	2	\$1.40	63123	5/2025
\$2,850	1,655	3	2	\$1.72	63128	5/2025
\$2,700	2,326	3	3	\$1.16	63123	5/2025
\$2,600	1,945	3	2	\$1.34	63127	2/2025
\$2,590	2,114	3	3	\$1.23	63126	9/2024
\$2,587	1,008	3	2	\$2.57	63123	12/2024
\$2,500	2,200	3	3	\$1.14	63128	8/2024
\$2,495	1,470	3	2.5	\$1.70	63123	3/2025
\$2,300	1,026	3	2	\$2.24	63123	5/2025
\$2,170	2,368	3	2	\$0.92	63123	8/2024
\$1,950	1,328	3	1.5	\$1.47	63126	2/2025
\$1,845	1,040	3	1.5	\$1.77	63126	2/2025
\$1,790	960	3	2	\$1.86	63123	12/2024
\$1,760	1,250	3	1.5	\$1.41	63126	3/2025
\$1,745	1,200	3	2	\$1.45	63122	11/2024
\$920	1,428	3	2.5	\$0.64	63123	11/2024

\$1.40

Sell Property

Zillow	\$415,000
Realtor	\$375,000
Redfin	\$390,000
Average	\$393,333
Closing costs	\$24-\$40k
Profit	\$369,000-
	\$353,000

Could need to spend some \$'s
to prepare house to be sold.

Potential return on profit from keeping the home.

Year 1: 3.4%

Year 2: 3.9% (Based on renewal of lease)

Social Hall Zoom Council Conversation

I am speaking regarding the feasibility of having the August 31, 2025 Council Conversation in the social hall on Zoom. Having the meeting in room 19 or in the Sanctuary are possibilities but intentionally excluding the Zoom participants is a mistake.

Using the Meeting Owl in a large, spread-out meeting that the social hall would be--does not work.

The requirements for a Zoom meeting like this are:

- All Zoom participants to be seen by everyone
- All Zoom participants to be heard by everyone
- All in person participants to be seen by everyone
- All in person participants to be heard by everyone

To do this we will need:

- A camera (or cameras) to see the in-person participants—including the council members.
- Video monitors in the social hall so that the participants, including the council, can see the Zoom participants.
- Speakers in the social hall so that the Zoom participants can be heard.
- Microphones in the social hall so that the in-person participants including the council members can be heard by everyone.
- Computer to conduct the Zoom meeting.

I have borrowed a camera and tripod from Christ Memorial Lutheran Church. I have tried it out in the church and it will work. Someone will need to operate the camera so that it will move between persons from the in-person congregants to the council participants. I need to return the camera this week and pick it up again the week before the meeting.

Having two cameras would work better but we would need to find another camera from somewhere. We would also need to use one of our old switchers to switch between cameras. This would involve three people—one for each camera and one for the switcher.

The video monitors would include the rear projection screen and projector that are on the stage to be seen by the in-person participants and a roll around monitor that is in room 18-20 to be seen by the council members. We probably have sufficient cables and splitters to hook up multiple monitors.

The sound system speakers would be the social hall sound system.

The microphones would be the one handheld wireless microphone in the social hall plus a wired mic.

The computer would be the laptop computer that we normally use with the Owl.

If council decides to go forward with the social hall meeting I along with some help from other AV members will set it up and run it.

I don't recommend having the meeting in the Social Hall.

Due to the complexity of the setup including borrowing a camera, I will do this for the August 31 meeting but **I will not do it again.**