

**Minutes of the Visioning Committee
Front Street United Methodist Church
January 22, 2026**

The Visioning Committee met at 7:00 p.m. in Room 402 with the following persons in attendance:

Lee Conner, Chair	Pastor Ray Warren	Daniel Polito
Steve Cecil	Gary Harris	Marianna Harris
Jan Davis	Rett Davis	Shane Stadler
Dex Peach	William Inabnit	Melissa Miller
Tom Sineath	Carol Sineath	Matt Estes
Julia Huneycutt	Marty Strickland	Betty Massey
Curtis Price		

OPENING

Lee greeted everyone and asked that everyone introduce themselves and state which committee or staff position they represented. Then Pastor Ray opened with prayer.

OCTOBER MINUTE APPROVAL

A motion was made by Steve to accept the October 2025 minutes, seconded by Curtis and unanimously passed.

MEN'S BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY

Dex shared that they continue to work through the early parts of the Book of Isaiah. In case of inclement weather, the in-person meetings defer to the ABSS schedule and may be held via Zoom.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE /
WHEELCHAIR RAMP MINISTRY

Tom stated that he is the single lay delegate this year for the Annual Conference being held in Greenville this June. Regarding the wheelchair ramp ministry, 18 different projects were completed during 2025, not all ramps, but a tremendous accomplishment! Steve added that a team of 4-5 volunteers built the Merrill's son, Kincaid, a tree house in their backyard. Such extreme generosity showcases the Spirit at work in this church and Christ's ministry.

PLAYSCHOOL / VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Julia shared that the Playschool oversight board is active and meeting. This board had been lacking over the past 8 years. Lots of opinions are being shared and considered. Everyone is very supportive of our teachers. Tuition will be increasing to be more in line with other local programs. Enrollment is full with a waiting list.

Vacation Bible School – Julia and the Wilsons will be co-directors of our Vacation Bible School program this summer. Dates (August 3-7) have been purposely chosen with the intent of VBS being an outreach program, with a time closer to the start of public school opening when less summer programs and camps are available options for childcare. Over 80 children participated last year, and we hope for more this year. Please calendar this week and volunteer to support our children!

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Melissa shared that this past Sunday, regular Sunday School attendees were recognized for having attended 8-9 Sundays from August through December.

Children participating in children's choir and music has increased. Acolytes continue to serve during the 11:00 worship service, and hopes to involve more participants while enlightening young people that serving is an important part of worship and an honor and not see it as a chore.

C4C is always busy and continues to deliver 100 food bags each Friday to families at Eastlawn. The need is great and donations are more important now than ever!

A new playgroup is being planned to include birth through age 5 years to introduce parents and children into a community not currently served and bring families together into new friendships!

Summer Camp at Chestnut Ridge will be July 13-17. Always need volunteers!!

We will have another Playschool Sunday, April 19 – (last one was in November). The goal is to invite Playschool parents and families into the church and become more visible. Our 4-year-olds may perform music for the congregation, our teachers will be recognized etc. and we will celebrate that our Playschool has been serving the community since opening 1970!

FELLOWSHIP

Carol shared that our next 5th Sunday Fellowship gathering (held during the Sunday School hour between Aldersgate and traditional worship) will be on Palm Sunday, March 29. The first one combined with the Advent workshop went well and allows people to connect between services.

MUSIC

Matt shared that as music director, he tries to honor past practices along with singing a new song! This year will be a year of rebuilding our choirs. Handbells have restarted, chancel choir is growing in number of participant, and children's choir averages 8-12 kids singing. He is currently teaching the children to read the hymnal. Matt enjoyed performing for several groups in the church over the Advent holidays and looks forward to the opportunities to come.

A tremendous shout out to Tim Laverty, who as a piano tuner in a past profession, has been giving volunteer tuning to multiple pianos throughout the church and the sounds are amazing! Many notes of thanks to our brother Tim!

TREASURER REPORT / FINANCE

William announced that the good news is for the first time in several years, December 2025 actually saw a \$30,000 surplus for the month. We still ended the year with a \$275,000 deficit (still better than prior years) causing the need for a loan through our bank which will be paid off using designated endowment funds. The positive future outlook is that our 2026 budget is \$200,000 less than our 2025 budget, and the projection is to break even by next year! Thanks to all of the finance members and committee chairs that worked diligently during our budget planning last year! Now we move forward as good stewards, including inviting and bringing more people to experience the Christ here at Front Street UMC!

TRUSTEES

Jan shared that the Trustees met and elected Lizzie Hill as vice-chair and Emily Conner as secretary. There are several projects underway around the church which are being paid through designated funds specifically identified for such projects and are not being paid out of the budget. It is important to communicate to our congregation that there are several designated funds that can only be used for their intended purpose, and thus the costs for certain projects do not come out of our congregational giving which covers the budget for church operation. Some of these projects include sealing leaks around the stain glass windows, repairing broken organ pipes (which have been silent), and Heritage Center painting (possibly in the Spring) as well as reviewing furniture needs.

LAY LEADERSHIP

Rett is getting a handle on attending 7 committee meetings and his role to funnel communications with Pastor Ray.

WORSHIP

Marianna commended a BIG THANKS to Glenda Blue and her team, along with Hannah, for the beautiful Christmas decorations throughout the church, and the amazing poinsettias! The time involved and detail to place all decorations truly enhanced the Spirit of the Christ coming into the World. (And Hannah showed no fear in climbing really tall ladders!)

MINISTER OF DISCIPLESHIP

Daniel is wearing lots of hats now. As minister of discipleship, he has visited each Sunday School class and is working through meeting with several church groups. He is trying to build community among parents of youth and children. A new Bible study group will be meeting on Wednesdays, 7-8 pm starting on February 26, entitled “Unlikely Lent.” There will be a companion sermon series during Lent for cohesive preaching/teaching.

Aldersgate service is steady, a little less attendance and less volunteers, Josh and Daniel will be stepping in to assist. Traditional worship is moving forward.

Market for Missions is seeing Suzie Lambeth (thanks for all you did over the past 3 years!!) step down and turn over this event to the congregation. That means to continue to generate funds for mission projects, we will need new folks to step up to help, lead and take over. First meeting to be held in February – please pass the word – it takes a lot of dedicated people to pull this together!

All mission projects – Daniel met with other local partners/agencies/churches in the community to discuss to how to better coordinate help to support needs of people in the community, such as to pay bills. We currently have been assisting paying a person’s utility bill up to \$100 once a year with specific documentation, but that does not necessarily meet a need. Launching a new group, intake at Women’s Resource Center to vet needs for utilities and rent, providing funds and develop criteria – look for more information to come.

Confirmation/Youth – Currently have 8 confirmands in 6th and 7th grades. Daniel is tagging with Josh on the Confirmation Retreat coming up February 20-22. Youth Ski Trip just happened. Chris is working with Daniel to transition the Youth group in June/July. Transitions are always tough so please keep these youth and leaders in our prayers as they continue to guide our young to a stronger connection with our Lord.

LEAD PASTOR

Pastor Ray promoted our annual Pancake Supper to be held Sunday, February 15th. Funds go to support our Playschool and Camp Chestnut Ridge scholarships.

Pastor also reminded us to let our pastors know of anyone needing anything – that we are a Christian community and need for communication to be shared.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Steve shared that on a side note, that the Genesis/Rachel Vogler Sunday School class would not be following the lectionary lessons this month but he will be teaching on the same topics as Ray's sermon series, so the lessons will go hand-in-hand. For all interested, please join the class whenever possible. There is also a Zoom invitation each week for those who cannot attend in person.

Lee shared that our Community Medical Closet, started by his daughter Caroline, has now come to the attention of Cone Health and Duke Hospital and they are getting the word out for people in need of medical equipment. Pastor Ray stated that there are people coming to the church at least 2-3 times each week seeking equipment. There is a big need for wheelchairs and transport chairs. Please pass the word to anyone that may have or know of wheelchairs that could be donated. These items are sometimes returned and reused. This is a wonderful ministry! Please continue to support it and pass the word that donations continue to be needed and distributed!

On a side note – it was mentioned that many of our ministries have been started by our youth: the wheelchair ramp was originally a Boy Scout Eagle project, food bags to school children, medical equipment closet. "...and a little child shall lead them."

CLOSING

Daniel offered the closing prayer and the meeting was ended.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betty Massey
Recording Secretary