

**Minutes of the Visioning Committee  
Front Street United Methodist Church  
October 23, 2025**

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

Jim Roberson, Chair	Pastor Ray Warren	Curtis Price
Gary Harris	Marianna Harris	Betty Huneycutt
Tom Sineath	Carol Sineath	Betty Massey
Luci Adams	Marti Strickland	

**OPENING**

Jim greeted everyone and opened the meeting with prayer that we would be attentive to God's guidance.

**SEPTEMBER MINUTE APPROVAL**

A motion was made by Tom and seconded by Curtis that the Minutes of the Visioning Committee as recorded by Jim last month be accepted. The motion passed unanimously. Many thanks to Jim for handling the minutes last month.

**MEN'S BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY**

Dex was not present as he continues to recover from shoulder surgery. We will remember him in prayer as he heals.

**UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH**

Per Carol, the women are focused on supporting Suzie and the Market for Missions. Many casseroles have already been made and are in the church freezer awaiting sale on November 8<sup>th</sup>.

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

Now that Front Street only has one ordained pastor, we will only have one conference delegate, Tom Sineath, and Carol Sineath will be our alternate delegate.

**TRUSTEES**

Gary stated that they are focused on the biggest issue at hand which is to gain full legal access to all of our church property. Tom Steele continues to work on the paperwork. Gary spoke with Gene Fonville recently and there was nothing new to report on Buildings and Grounds.

**WORSHIP**

Marianna had nothing to report, however Pastor Ray commended her for leading the group which oversees our worship services, acolytes (kudos on finding a solution to the alter

candles and finicky wicks on the candle lighters). Marti asked what time our Christmas Eve services will be held this year (Pastor Ray announced planned for 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm). A discussion followed regarding younger children napping around 2:00 pm, some families celebrating with dinners during 5:00-7:00 pm. Ray shared that the change to have the children's non-traditional Christmas Eve service in Aldersgate last year saw a large increase in the number of attendees participating. We invited the Playschool families to attend and resulted in a tremendous outreach opportunity. Many families attended that were not regular Aldersgate attendees. Churches are still adjusting to the pre-COVID services (Ray previously served churches with 4 services: 5,7,9 and 11 pm; some churches have midnight services; Betty mentioned her prior home church had 2:30, 5, 8 and 10:30), however church attendance has fallen off since COVID. Ray proposed asking the congregation for a poll on which time best suited the majority of members planning to attend: 5:00 pm or 8:00 pm to consider. (NOTE: timing of services to be coordinated with staff, music, accompanist, ushers, nursery workers, etc.).

#### GENEROSITY/STEWARDSHIP

Charles was not present due to illness, Pastor Ray shared that this committee has 10 items that they are working on throughout the year. Estimate of Giving letters and cards are being mailed this week.

#### FINANCE

Curtis commended the various committees for taking a hard look at their respective budgets and making cuts where they could while maintaining their ministries. Committees have responsibilities to monitor expenses and to stay within their budget. Those reductions, along with changes in staffing positions, have helped to propose a realistic budget for 2026 and Tammy has agreed that the proposed budget is achievable. We cannot cut more budget items without hurting programs and impacting services and ministries. We need to grow contributions, along with membership, which go hand-in-hand.

A question was posed as to our title of our new associate. Daniel will be the Minister of Discipleship, as he will not be called a pastor due to not being ordained. For all practical purposes, he will be our associate minister.

Another question asked was why our apportionment increased, and the answer is that the Conference looks at the actual budget expenditures from 2 years ago to assess the amount. So although we have reduced the proposed 2026 budget, the apportionment is based on the 2024 expenses. This will improve going forward as we will now be tracking our fundraisers and other funds that come into the church and then go back out, which reduces our income. This new focus on transparency will not only show how much money is received by the church for operation, but also as a pass-through for other benevolences where funds are received but then sent out, which will help as these funds are not considered for apportionment.

Finance asked the Visioning Committee to approve the proposed 2026 budget. No motion was required since the request came directly from a committee. The budget was unanimously approved and thanks went to all involved in reducing costs and drafting the budget.

#### WHEELCHAIR RAMP MINISTRY

Tom stated that ramp #420 was completed last week. They have 7 approved ramps on the schedule for next year. Due to contributions and donations, this ministry is almost self-supporting. They will have completed 16-17 projects by year-end for 2025.

#### STAFF PARISH RELATIONS

Scott was not present due to illness, submitted a report which Jim circulated. Highlights were onboarding of Matt Estes as Director of Music and confirmation of acceptance by Daniel Polito to fill the role of associate minister. Daniel's first day will be October 27, 2025. SPRC is planning a welcome reception on Sunday, November 2, 2025 following the 11:00 am worship service.

Staci Poplin has been hired as our new Playschool Director to officially start on November 7, 2025. She will be introduced to the congregation during both worship services in the near future, with the Playschool teaching staff invited as part of the renewed effort to increase communication and visibility between the Church and the Playschool.

Other new business revolved around efforts of SPRC members Kathy Roberson, Margaret Pardue and Amy Chandler to re-establish oversight and volunteer committees for Playschool and Children's Ministry. These committees had been active prior to COVID and had ceased during and after. They are critical to the oversight, growth and success of our Children's Ministry and Playschool and will be a welcome return!

#### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Melissa was not present, but submitted a report which Jim circulated. Highlights included:

- Sunday School continues to thrive – Having Children's Choir on Sunday morning is helping with attendance (17 kids in choir and learning to sing like professional under Matt's direction!)
- November 30<sup>th</sup> – no Sunday School as this is our first 5<sup>TH</sup> Sunday gathering AND our annual Advent wreath workshop in Aldersgate. Adults are invited to join this year for a joint event with Melissa and Carol Sineath working together!
- Acolytes doing a great job – need more participants! Lizzie Hill is assisting on Sunday mornings. We have a new attachment (thanks to Marianna and Pastor Ray) which will assist in keeping our wicks in the lighter lit!
- C4C food bag distribution is going great. Our youth put bags together last Sunday event for Eastlawn families and Fresh Mobile Market. Thanks to Chris and the youth and to all the much-needed volunteers that run Fresh Mobile Market. [NOTE: A

question was asked how many Eastlawn backpacks we are distributing this year and Betty H said this year is it 79 (vs. last year at 65). The need is greater, but Betty M has noticed a decline in weekly contributions. We need more donations on a consistent weekly basis to provide food over 3 weekends per month for 79 kids – we do not distribute food backpacks on the Fridays when Fresh Mobile Market distributed food on the prior Wednesday – however, it has been reported previously that we have notice more elderly people in line for the Fresh Mobile Market as well.]

- Next week, treats will be taken to the Eastlawn teachers – thanks to United Women of Faith for providing these items!
- Currently collecting funds for Thanksgiving meals (\$40 buys one family a meal). Distribution date is Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup> from 11 am-1 pm.
- Christmas – Eastlawn has already reached out about help for Christmas with some families, but waiting for more details about needs.
- Excited that our new Playschool Director, Staci Poplin, starts on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Although Melissa will continue to be involved in some capacity, she is happy to be able to return to her main role as Children’s Ministry.
- Finally, preparing for family Christmas Eve service – more details to come!

#### YOUTH MINISTRY

Chris was not present due to a conflict but submitted a report which Jim circulated. Chris states that all is well with our youth! We continue to have strong attendance at Breakfast Club and Youth Group. Looking forward to Packathon on November 9<sup>th</sup> around 3-5 pm. First Presbyterian youth and some from the Williams National Honor Society will be joining us for the Packathon fun!

Also, Chris is looking forward to working with Daniel with the youth – his coming to Front Street and transitioning to assist with youth is truly an answer to prayer!

#### LEAD PASTOR

Pastor Ray shared many exciting upcoming dates:

- Daniel Polito will begin working with us on October 27<sup>th</sup>.
- All Saints Day will be celebrated at 9:00 and 11:00 am on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. This year we remember 17 members (last year, we had 31!)
- Charge Conference follows on November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00 pm – we are hosting several other churches as well as our own. The Visioning Committee members are voting members, but all members of the congregation are welcome for this service. Please come.
- Market for Missions – November 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. His art teacher has arranged for a vendor booth for his students. This is a great outreach to highlight talents and invite others inside our doors! Don’t forget to buy a frozen casserole (the going rate is \$25, plus you get the recipe, so it’s really a bargain!)

- November 9<sup>th</sup> – Playschool Sunday – inviting all teachers and their families to join us in worship to be recognized and included in our Front Street family of faith!
- November 16<sup>th</sup> – Columbarium will be dedicated immediately following the 11:00 am traditional worship service, conducted by retired clergy, Reverend Doctor Bill Simpson.
- November 30<sup>th</sup> – our first Fifth Sunday Fellowship gathering, combined with our annual Advent Workshop to be held in Aldersgate as a joint effort and family activity.

#### CLOSING COMMENTS

Thanks and appreciation were extended to Scott, SPRC, Curtis, William, Tammy and the Finance team for their tremendous work over the past several months in reducing the budget, redefining staffing, positions and responsibilities, with many hard decisions and much prayer.

Also, keep William Inabnit in prayer.

Luci, visiting the Vision committee for the first time, shared that in her prior church in Virginia, the organist started playing an additional 1-2 pieces following the benediction, and over time, many people began staying in the sanctuary to hear the music, rather than leave.

The meeting was closed with a prayer offered by Pastor Ray.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betty Massey  
Recording Secretary