

**SAINT LUCAS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
CHURCH COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
September 23, 2024, 6:00 pm - Zoom Hybrid/Room 19**

*(This meeting was called to order at \*6:04 pm by President, Marty Schmidt.)*

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Phil Denton, Marsha Fey, Katy Forand, Wanda Gillman, Kathy Herron, Donovan Larson, Marty Schmidt, and Barbara Smith. || Eight members. *(Absent - Violet Brooks)*

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Bill Biedenstein/Zoom, Pat Fribis/Zoom, Ken Hamilton/Zoom, Dan Herron/Rm. 19, Ellen Littleton/Zoom, and Linda Taylor/Rm. 19. || Six Zoom Visitors.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Rev. George Miller, Senior Minister, Rev. Merrimon Boyd, M.O.C.L./Zoom

**OPENING PRAYER:** The meeting was opened with an audio recording provided by Kathy Herron.

**GUEST COMMENTS:** None

**COUNCIL PRESIDENT COMMENTS:** Marty shared a prepared apology statement regarding his perception of unease within the Council regarding former discussions about relocation expenses for the Sr. Minister.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A/V Committee - August 27, 2024, Minutes
- *(Council Meeting - July 22, 2024, Minutes) - \*Previously pulled for corrections*
- Council Meeting - August 26, 2024, Minutes
- Council Meeting | Executive Session - August 26, 2024, Minutes
- Finance Ministry - September 17, 2024, Minutes
- Membership & Evangelism - August 6, 2024, Minutes
- ONA Task Force - July 16, 2024, Minutes
  - *(7) REPORTS*

Barbara moved to accept the September 23, 2024 Consent Agenda. Wanda seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

**Pastor George**—One correction from him: the MO Clergy Gathering via Zoom, which he did not attend. FYI, Bob Brockhaus's funeral will be at St. Lucas UCC on October 12, 2024, at 10:30 a.m., with a follow-up luncheon at Friendship Village. (There were no follow-up question/s for Pastor George.)

**Pastor Merrimon** - No written report was submitted tonight. He will send it to the Recording Secretary tomorrow. Since back from vacation he has been witnessing good “connections” regarding home visits and Saturday people connecting during the week. (No follow-up question/s for Pastor Merrimon.)

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

The Financial Secretary reported the following information for August 2024 -

- The regular offering for August was \$46,163.65.
  - This offering amount is over what was on the budget for the month by \$3,663.65.
- The total income for August was \$60,523.34. It is over budget by \$7,898.33.
  - Two items that contributed to these figures were:
    - The Kitchen Revenue of \$1,789.25.

- The Pre-School building fee of \$2,000.00.
- The total expenses for August were \$105,907.82 which is over the budget by \$17,075.76.
- The deficit for this month is (\$45,384.68).
  - The total deficit for the year is (\$180,370.73).
  - This total deficit -YTD- is under the budget deficit amount by \$24,028.89.
- The large amounts that made a huge impact on August's expenses were:
  - Building Maintenance of \$26,016.30.
  - Plus, Search Committee expenses of \$5,437.82 are being moved to another account for reimbursement to Rev. Miller.

Phil wanted to be clear about Wanda's personal opinion about the state of our current budget "eating up our General Fund quite fastly". He agrees wholeheartedly. Marty delayed any further commentary until the 2025 budget proposal can be discussed during tonight's executive session. (No follow-up question/s regarding the Financial Report.)

### **Physical Facilities Ministries:**

Due to the Physical Facilities facilitator's absence from vacation, no September meeting was held. However, he provided the following written status updates for the Council regarding the Physical Facilities Ministries:

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- The Preschool roof repair is complete and insurance may cover the \$21,000 cost.
  - The Financial Secretary advised that two insurance checks had been received for that work.
- The Athletic field rental charges for 2025 have been set to \$15/hour.
  - Topsoil is to be delivered and spread by Lindbergh Schools to cover low spots.
- Exterior security cameras status—he plans to install minor cameras as a temporary measure in the Pavillion due to a recent fire set out there.
- Parsonage subsidized weatherization approved by Council; tenant to pursue.
  - Our tenant is up to date with rent.
  - The question was asked what that plan would cover.
    - This facilitator advised potential HVAC, windows, roof, and insulation. Anything to make the house more energy efficient; the auditors of the grant program will make the decisions and hire their contractors for any work approved under the grant. No work or expense is expected from the church.
- Multiple faucets were replaced.

\*The next Physical Facilities Ministry meeting is Thursday, October 17, 2024, at 2:00 pm  
(No other follow-up question/s regarding the Physical Facilities Report.)

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

>Nominating Committee - A Council member reported they're getting close to filling the Cemetery Board slots and the P.E.T. Board slots. They're still working on the open Council slots.

>Stewardship - Marty advised he has been attempting to connect with a company that has experience working with churches and their finances. He received the name of the group from a St. Lucas member. He was able to leave a message today for a call-back. He'll report next month on any information he receives.

A question was asked about the status of a Stewardship campaign. A Stewardship member advised she and Marty have been working up a plan to move forward. Their next meeting will be tomorrow night. She'll have more to share after tomorrow's meeting.

Pastor George interjected there has been Stewardship activity from the pulpit, in addition to discussions happening daily regarding the best route to use. He'd like to clear up the narrative that's been discussed outside of meetings, and outside of Sunday service that nothing is being done. That is incorrect. The committee is actively working to finalize their plans for sharing with the congregation. More to be shared after tomorrow's meeting.

Pastor George has received positive feedback on how his lectionary messages from the pulpit have been viewed up to this point. Many have been working behind the scenes to develop a plan for Stewardship. Pastor George stated he felt it was smart to hold off on a campaign until a new Sr. Minister was in place. He doesn't know what could have been accomplished before his arrival. But the lectionary narrative he's been using the past weeks about sowing the ground and planting the seeds has been a good foundation. He's fully confident about the work being performed behind the scenes.

The question was asked if Stewardship and Finance communicate with each other. Marty advised Stewardship used to be run by Finance "They were one and the same". Another member shared that two years ago there was an effort to split them and become two different entities with two different sets of committee members. One Stewardship member shared last month the committee had discussed a need to join forces with Finance.

Pastor George interjected about the negative energy he's felt regarding this topic since his arrival. He doesn't feel it is having a positive impact on the goal of being the Hands & Feet of Christ.

A comment was shared that before tonight people have been free to express their opinions in any meeting without fear of criticism. She feels it's important for everyone to be able to openly share their opinions. Pastor George agreed. Yet he added we can share opinions without hurting someone.

Much of the same back-and-forth dialogue continued for another seven minutes with Council members airing their concerns and opinions. Marty eventually asked if the meeting could move on to the next topic... Agreed.

>P.E.T. - Marty advised he had a meeting last week with Parkside Financial, an investment firm whose expertise is in working with nonprofits, trusts, and endowments. They have an in-house legal team, so they are very familiar with all aspects of trusts. No agreements have been made. The decision to meet with an outside group came from the P.E.T. trustees due to the request from the congregation at last year's annual meeting.

The question was asked if this was the same group as "Mr. Anderson", who the P.E.T. trustees had already met. Marty advised "No". Mr. Anderson is an attorney for one P.E.T. trustee. This is likely to be a conflict of interest.

Another question was if they'd be willing to meet with the Council. Marty answered most likely, but that decision can't be made until they review our trust bylaws. For that reason, they've received our document for review.

>Constitution & Bylaws Changes/Revisions - Prior to the meeting, Marty shared a document showing two proposed changes. Regarding the Constitution, wording was updated in the Search and Call process (Part VIII, B). Regarding the Bylaws, Part VII., B., 1., (Responsibilities), all prior wording shown as "Core Leadership Team" will now be referred to as "Officers of the Church Council".

Marty stated these changes need a vote so Debbie can add them to the annual meeting agenda.

Barbara moved to accept the proposed changes. Kathy seconded the motion. No additional discussion occurred. The motion was approved unanimously.

>Land Use Task Force - No change since last month - Tabled.

> Worship Area Changes - No change since last month - Tabled.

> Delegates - Several people have contacted Marty to request to be a delegate to the UCC meetings in October. Bill Biedenstien, Joy Dressel, and Dan & Kathy Herron have volunteered to be delegates at the St. Louis Association meeting. Bill Biedenstien, Joy Dressel, and Dan Herron have volunteered to be delegates at the M.M.S.C. Annual Gathering. Pastor Merrimon asked if St. Lucas was planning a watch party for the M.M.S.C. Gathering. Marty wasn't aware it was an option. He'll check with Debbie on room availability and get back to Pastor Merrimon.

Wanda made the motion to accept the list of St. Lucas UCC delegates as presented this evening. Barbara seconded the motion. With no additional discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

> ONA Update - Information was shared with the group regarding the July discussion about what is mandatory of an ONA church by the ONA Coalition. An answer has been secured. With Barb Biedenstien's assistance, regional consultant for the Coalition, The National Office advised each church -just like within the UCC- is allowed to determine its own level of advocacy. Marty found this answer acceptable. The task force was glad to receive the question now, early in their process rather than much later.

Another question was raised about the safety of ONA churches. The group discussed the educational processes received to date. All agreed we need to do more educational opportunities and set firm policies for safety.

Pastor George shared his insight. The question that Marty asked regarding mandatory advocacy for all areas of LBGTQ, i.e. transgender reassignment of children, is often asked within the LBGTQ population. It was a great question to ask, as he feels it would have come up eventually here.

Another question Pastor George recommended the task force ask the Coalition is what type of violence, number of instances, etc. have been documented against ONA churches in our area. He feels confident they'd have data.

Pastor George also shared he's proud to hear us talk about safety in our church. Not many churches ask these questions. If we plan an event to discuss safety issues, he's confident we'd have a good attendance response.

Pastor George added he always has his phone with him in the event 911 is needed. He'd suggest one AV person do the same.

> Other Old Business - There was none.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

> Purpose of Minutes - Pastor George asked for time to speak about meeting minutes. His observation is St. Lucas over-communicates with some things yet under-communicates with other things. For example, the first draft of the minutes from last month's executive session was rich with detail that didn't necessarily need to be expressed. The idea is to be transparent and straight to the point. Yet information should never be so detailed it could hurt someone, or cause arguments or divisiveness. Not everything needs to be written. Keep it as streamlined as possible. Pastor George took the opportunity to read the minutes he'd been taking during *this* evening's meeting. He also invited anyone with "minutes-questions" to contact him for assistance. He's a "minutes-geek".

The question was raised if we follow Robert's Rules. If so, technically, we only need to document the motions made during a meeting. Marty agreed.

> Personnel Committee - The former Personnel Committee was known as the Church & Ministry Committee. It was disbanded by a former Council group some years ago. Since that time it's been an ad hoc committee. Marty asked if there was a reason the Council shouldn't oversee this function. The Council knows the staff and is

familiar with confidential matters with the staff. Employee handbooks, job descriptions, and discipline are also under the purview of this group. Is there a reason to bring in laypeople to perform those duties? Or should this be a sub-committee of the Council? Additionally, if kept as Council-only members, meetings could be scheduled as an extension of the Council meeting nights to cut out additional meeting dates/times for the members.

A current member of the Personnel Committee said he appreciates the makeup and size of the current group. The current members are Phil, Joy, Katy, Sue, and Marty. Their meetings are scheduled once per quarter, or as needed.

Pastor George suggested we first speak with Rev. Lake/conference office before we finalize plans on the makeup of this committee. His experience is traditionally Sr. Pastors sit on this committee. However, when a staff member needs to be reprimanded, disciplined, or let go, the minister never wins in that scenario. Yet, a Personnel Committee is always welcome to meet with the Sr. Pastor for observations, views or to ask questions. The Sr. Pastor would act on the recommendation of the Personnel Committee. There needs to be a report from the Pastor as head of staff to the Personnel Committee prior to any employee meeting. A suggestion was offered to get the opinion of current committee members before any changes are made.

>Charlie's Anniversary - Charlie is celebrating 20 years with St. Lucas tomorrow. One Council member is underwriting the staff lunch, and gift card for him. She shared a greeting card for him from the Council to sign.

>The First Team Meeting - The third Thursday of every month will be used for an all-staff meeting facilitated by Pastor George. It will include lunch for everyone each time. A lot of great sharing time happened last week. Pastor George has requested \$732 in funds to provide this monthly lunch/meeting. His hope is someone in the congregation may underwrite the cost of each future lunch. He will research that. Until then this figure gets him started for the first year if needed. The group agreed it's great for morale/team building. Barbara made a motion to allow \$732 for monthly staff meeting meals. Donovan seconded it. The motion was approved unanimously.

>Church Service Attendance -The weekend totals since Pastor George arrived were reported: 8/3-4/24 = 156, 8/10-11/24 = not recorded, 8/17-18/24 = only Sat recorded; 22, 8/24-25/24 = 151, 8/31-9/1/24 = 140, 9/7-8/24 = 145, 9/14-15/24 = 146, and 9/21-22/24 = 106.

Marty asked if there was any other New Business to discuss. There was none.

Without any further New Business to discuss, the Zoom guests were released from the meeting and the Council moved into an Executive Session.

\*This now ended the Public Session of the September 2024 Council meeting.

*(Minute marker: 1 hour/35 minutes)*

Respectfully submitted,  
Barbara Smith,  
Recording Secretary

NOTE - the next regular Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 28, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.