

ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MINUTES FROM MEETING OF
Tuesday, September 9, 2025

Council Members Present: Pam Lange, Jane Dykowski, Michael Isaacs, Toni Hill, Wendy Warner, Dan Case, Tim Ruffner, and Conrad Heidt.

Excused: Jeannette Wackro and Mark Ennis

Guests: Worship/Music Planning Ministry: Music Director, Ava Janus; Pastor, Rev. Anderson; and Altar Guild Representative, Sue Mrowka

Meeting was called to order by President, Tim Ruffner, at 6:33 p.m. followed by opening prayer led by Tim Ruffner.

Council Guests: Worship planning began the first discussion. Sue Mrowka, as a member of that group, related that they had been having difficulty gathering to meet. Therefore, there has been some confusion in some of the worship services. She expressed concern over planning with the holiday, Totenfest, etc. fast approaching. Dan Case felt the necessity of reporting that schedule in the Tidings before December and even by October. Also, scheduling communion dates and methods was discussed. Pam Lange reported that there is a schedule available. Jane Dykowski asked if more council members coming to a scheduled worship planning meeting would be helpful. Tim Ruffner asked if there were needs required from us. The response was that they were good. Also, Sue Mrowka, as chair of the Altar Guild, reported that there were fewer members now, but people have been stepping up to do what was necessary. As part of the holiday discussion, the question arose of having the Easter Cross Spray in artificial flowers. The consensus seemed to be that there would be a storage issue. Also, there were far too many palms ordered for Palm Sunday in 2025.

Ava Janus, Director of Music, reported that she had engaged harpists for December 21 and Christmas Eve. She continues to search for special music. There had been some confusion relative to having checks ready for those who perform on the day of performance. She also reported that Choir Practice begins on Wednesday, September 10, 2025.

Rev. Anderson was out of town, therefore not in attendance.

The guests were thanked for their continued dedication and service and excused.

Approval of the Minutes: Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Pam Lange, to approve the minutes of the August 25, 2025 Special Council Meeting. Motion carried. The minutes of the June 10, 2025 regular meeting were unavailable. They will be addressed at the October meeting.

Agenda Additions/Deletions: To New Business add: New Cabinet meeting date and Taylor Choir request.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

Treasurer's Report: Written report. Dan Case expanded on the financial summary. July was a "bust" as income was about \$7600 under expenses. However, August included some annual giver's income that resulted in income greater than August expenses by about \$4200. Over all months, we are losing approximately \$500 per month. The general fund is good for the remainder of the year. Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to approve the Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Ministry Department: No report.

Trustees/Building and Grounds: Toni Hill reported that there is almost enough money to repair the steeple and the parking lot. The carpeting throughout the church has been cleaned. The West Room floor has been stripped and re-waxed. The statue of St. Paul is almost ready for seal. Shelving will be built in the hallway between the sanctuary and fellowship hall for first aid equipment. An electrical, thermal test will be done to test for “hot spots”. The work has been completed by a diligent group of volunteers. Wendy Warner expressed thanks to all for the hard work.

Deacons: No deacon was in attendance, but Dan Case related that 2024 average Sunday worship attendance was 68 and so far in 2025 it has been 62.

Elders: Pam Lange reported that the September communion had 53 participants.

Search Team Update: Tim Ruffner reported that a candidate is coming to visit next week and the team is in contact with another candidate. Expenses for the candidate visit are covered partially by church funds and partly by accommodation points donated by a committee member.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Status of Member Drops: The drop letters were sent in late August. Each contained a self-addressed stamped envelope for return of the questionnaire. At present, a couple were returned for an incorrect address and two requested a transfer. Dan Case suggested the council and elders meet to review the results and move forward. (He would arrange such meeting.)

(Conrad Heidt was excused at 7:22 pm because of a leg pain issue.)

2. By-law Review: Dan Case will chair a group to review the by-laws. Tim Ruffner, Dan Case, and Wendy Warner volunteered to work on this issue. Also, it will be announced in church and the Tidings inviting others to participate. The goal is to have any changes ready for the annual meeting in January, 2026.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Evangelical Homes of Michigan Foundation Donation: Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Wendy Warner, to donate \$200 to the Evangelical Homes of Michigan Foundation. Motion carried.

2. Christnet Donation: Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to donate \$200 to ChristNet. Motion carried. Pastor Schalm is doing one lunch to be prepared here at the church and delivered to the ChristNet Center in late September.

3. Prayer List and Altar Flower Policies: Dan Case read the Prayer List Policy which basically is to remove a name from the list after 4 weeks unless a different request is received. Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to approve the Prayer List Policy. Motion carried.

Dan Case then read the Altar Flower Policy. Basically the office personnel needs to maintain request and payment information for follow through on ordering and paying for altar flowers. Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to approve the Altar Flower Policy. Motion carried.

4. New Council Candidates: No new candidates have been identified. A discussion followed regarding whether those wishing to serve an additional term should announce that before new people may volunteer to serve. There are two sides to this. If a current candidate announces early to return, it may discourage new people to step up. And if the current candidate feels they want to serve another term to complete work started in the first term, maybe they should announce their interest early.

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

5. 2026 Budget Development: Dan Case reported that he has sent letters to all of the ministries to send in evaluations of their needs. He is awaiting their responses. October 14, 2025 – Initial budget draft to council; November 3, 2025 – Budget Ministry Meeting; November 9, 2025 – Congregation's opportunity to discuss after worship; November 11, 2025 – Final Budget to Council. There are minimum wage and employee raise issues to consider.

6. Steeple Repair: Motion by Michael Isaacs, seconded by Toni Hill, to pay for any overage of the \$17,000 available for the steeple repair to come from the general fund. Motion carried.

7. Thank you Card – Rev. Drutchas: Dan Case read a thank you note from Rev. Drutchas for being recognized and remembered with a Tree of Life Leave in honor of his being named Person of the Year and his many outreach mission initiatives and their success.

8. Confirmation Plan: Jane Dykowski read an announcement to appear in the Morningtide (Bulletin) beginning September 14, 2025 announcing a plan for a confirmation class to begin in October. She then explained the journey taken in beginning to develop the plan with input from Doreen Thompson, Lori Rogers, Pastor Schalm, and Debbie Case. Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Wendy Warner to approve the announcement and plan development. Motion carried.

9. Cabinet Meeting: Dan Case suggested the Cabinet meeting be moved to September 23 because of other activities going on in the church on September 16.

10. Taylor Choir Request: After a phone conversation with Mark Ennis to clarify the Taylor Choir use of our facility on December 19, 2025, all requirements were met. Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Pam Lange, that use of the building by the Taylor Choir be allowed with payment of the sexton's fee. Motion carried.

ROUNDTABLE

Dan Case distributed Emergency Response information and made all aware of our responsibilities of evacuating the church. There will be a surprise drill this fall.

Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Dan Case, to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m. followed by the Lord's Prayer recited in unison.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane L. Dykowski
Recording Secretary.