

ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MINUTES FROM MEETING OF
Monday, October 13, 2025

Council Members Present: Pam Lange, Jane Dykowski, Michael Isaacs, Toni Hill, Wendy Warner, Dan Case, Tim Ruffner, Conrad Heidt, Mark Ennis, Jeannette Wackro, and Rev. Linda Anderson.

Guests: This was a joint meeting of the Search Team with the Council: In addition to the team who are on Council (Tim Ruffner, Pam Lange, Conrad Heidt), John Dykowski, Kaitlyn Isaacs, and Debbie Case (on call in) were present.

Meeting was called to order by President, Tim Ruffner, at 6:30 p.m. followed by opening prayer led by Rev. Anderson.

After the guests were welcomed, there was a motion by Dan Case, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to move to executive session. Motion carried. The executive session began at 6:33 p.m.

to move forward to call Rev. Lesa Branham as Senior Pastor of St. Paul United Church of Christ, Taylor. Motion carried with a unanimous yes vote. John Dykowski reported that she would not be available for a candidate weekend November 4 -11, 2025. The search team members present and on call-in were excused with many thanks. Tim Ruffner announced he would contact the candidate. (After the trustees finalize the compensation package, next steps is a candidate weekend shall be planned by the search team.)

Approval of the Minutes: Motion by Jeannette Wackro, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to approve the minutes of the June 10, 2025 and September 9, 2025 council minutes. Motion carried. (There is no copy of the June 10, 2025 minutes available.)

Agenda Additions/Deletions: To New Business add: Panhandling and Solicitation.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

Treasurer's Report: Written report. Dan Case expanded on his written report that once again we are negative in the month's income relative to expenses by about \$2,500. Our largest expenses are salaries and utilities. Supply costs are higher, too. Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Jeannette Wackro, to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion carried.

There followed a lengthy discussion regarding accountability for expenses. There was a particular concern regarding printing color copies. Michael Isaacs suspected that when printing black/white copies the incorrect choice is chosen. Dan Case suggested most expenses be approved by him. There was general consensus that it is too cumbersome to have every expense approved. Dan Case will be contacting those who have necessary expenses to be aware of "want" or "need."

Ministry Department: Rev. Anderson gave an oral report. Since the money issue was discussed earlier, she suggested we just "ask" the congregation for money needed. (At various times we have had "Catch Up" Sundays to help address specific financial issues.) She noted that the congregation needs to know what's going on. Again, she suggested that we wear our nametags especially with a new pastor being called. An alternate suggestion was to have a lariat. She also noted that Rev. Lawrence Richardson,

Ministry Department: (Continues)

Associate Conference Minister, would be in the pulpit on November 9 and preaching that weekend. He is to receive a \$250 honorarium for his visit. She will also be here that Sunday.

The Bible Study group will be visiting Mt. Carmel Catholic Church in Wyandotte during their next session. Also, at a meeting of regional pastors, she was able to report that St. Paul UCC, Taylor, was the only church with an organized Confirmation Class underway.

Trustees/Building and Grounds: Toni Hill reported that the parking lot re-sealing and striping are complete and the steeple repair should be completed soon. (The painting may not be completed before spring due to weather.) A drain cover is damaged in the West Drive and replacements are not available. (An orange cone currently marks the area.) One of the upstairs bathrooms has a leaky valve. The part is a minor cost, but the labor for installation may be costly. The parsonage is ready for a new pastor except for some window issues. Michael Isaacs will be assessing the situation. Tim Ruffner noted we could have a campaign for “window repairs”.

Deacons: Jeannette Wackro reported that 224 attended services during September. There was a drop in Facebook Live one week. Mark Ennis related that he had trouble with transmission.

Elders: Pam Lange reported that 57 communed in October. For World Wide Communion Sunday four different breads were used.

Search Team Update: This report was covered under Council Guests. The date for a candidate weekend can be set as soon as the compensation is finalized. This should be completed in a timely manner.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Status of Member Drops: Pam Lange, elder, reported that 117 letters were sent. This letter included a postcard for return to the church with choices of how member wanted us to proceed. Five letters were returned for incorrect addresses. Ten postcards were returned: 4 wished to remain members, 1 wish to be dropped, 4 wished to become associate members, and 1 wished to be transferred. Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Toni Hill, to move to executive session. Motion carried. The executive session began at 7:51 p.m. Executive session ended at 8:02 P.M. Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Mark Ennis, to approve the drop list with 4 from that group being moved to associate. Motion carried. Mark Ennis asked how those moved to associate would be notified. They would be sent a letter indicating such.

2. 2026 Budget First Draft: Dan Case provided a first draft of the 2026 Budget. There will be changes with the hiring of a settled pastor. No money is included for the Christian Education Minister as that need is not there at this time. The DTE Budget amount has risen by about \$16,000. Music was increased to compensate visiting musicians. The music budget also included the sound technician. It was felt that if one is given a raise, all paid employees should receive a raise. There followed a discussion about how to reward (additional pay) based on merit. This is a subjective and difficult task.

2. 2026 Budget First Draft (continued)

There should be ways to give one-time bonus, additional time off, Christmas gift and perhaps others. This item was referred to the finance committee, especially in regard to giving everyone a Christmas Bonus.

3. New Council Candidates: No one has stepped forward at this time. Especially with hiring a new settled pastor, it is important that we have a strong council in place. Also, in this category, Dan Case, Tim Ruffner, and Wendy Warner (plus anyone else who is interested) have stepped forward to address the by-laws for fewer council members and/or shortened terms.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Annual Reviews: All reviews should be completed by December 31, 2025.

2. Church Security: One congregation member has again expressed concern about security during worship. Discussion followed relative to locking doors, training on what to do, having security consciousness, etc. It was, again, the consensus of the council that doors should not be locked. This issue was referred to the Safety and Security Ministry.

3. Panhandling/Solicitation: With the approaching cold weather, the homeless have been staying north of the church property. We are considered trespassing if we go on that property. Dan Case will continue to notify the real estate group offering the property, who will contact the owners. Everyone must always be vigilant and take notice, and report strangers hanging around the church buildings. If someone is suspicious during worship services or other events, please notify safety and security who will address the issue and/or call the police. No trespassing signs will be added.

ROUNDTABLE

Jane Dykowski asked that we would like additional security during the Thursday, December 4, 2025 hours 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. when the gift sale will be open to church members and friends and potentially 50 others who received special invites when the Rummage Sale was in session.

There was a discussion regarding merit pay as the pastoral candidate had question about it. It is difficult to judge the success of the minister's work. There could be consideration of worship attendance, increased giving, new events/programs, meeting required duties, etc. This would be true of other employees judged by merit.

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m. followed by the Lord's Prayer recited in unison.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane L. Dykowski
Recording Secretary.

