

ST. PAUL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MINUTES FROM MEETING OF
Tuesday, May 12, 2026

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

Excused: Mark Ennis

Guests: Office Ministry: Senior Pastor, Rev. Lesa Branham; Office Manager, Sue Mrowka, and Administrative Assistant, Cindy Romas.

Meeting was called to order by President, Tim Ruffner, at 7:01 p.m. followed by opening prayer led by Tim Ruffner.

Guests' Reports:

Rev. Branham was welcomed to her first council meeting and reported during the Reports and Update section on the agenda. Sue Mrowka and Cindy Romas were unable to attend the meeting. Cindy's reply was that she could not do Tuesdays. She said Monday would work at this time. She offered to reply to any questions we may have to provide to her. Sue Mrowka provided a lengthy list of responses to the Safety/Security Walk through. (These are covered under New Business.)

Approval of the Minutes: Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to approve the April 14, 2026 Council minutes. Motion carried.

Agenda Additions/Deletions: There were none.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

Treasurer's Report: Written report. Dan Case was happy to report that April was a very good month. The income exceeded the expenses by approximately \$12,500. The regular income was increased as well as the receipt of a QCD contribution. He added that we continue to have considerable reserves. Wendy Warner inquired if the steeple repair was completed. It is finished. Dan Case suggested a plaque be secured recognizing the groups who had contributed. Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to approve the Treasurer's report. Motion Carried.

Ministry Department: Rev. Branham thanked everyone for their preparation for her arrival and her welcoming during the first week here. (There were compliments from every one of the joy of her being here and the wonderful first service.) Besides and uplifting first worship service, she had attended the Exercise Class (Tested her endurance.), gone to lunch with Dave Lange, attended Bible Study (Discussed with Doreen Thompson how they would proceed.), and planned to attend Women's Fellowship meeting this week. In addition, she was settling in to the parsonage and expressed thanks for the work Michael Isaacs had done with painting, fixtures, etc.

Rev. Branham shared a long list of shutins given to her by the office staff. After sharing this with the council, we encouraged her to check with Karen Hill, Kathy Williams, and Pastor Schalm who can better explain where attention is needed and adjustments need to be made.

She plans to seek membership on Christnet and Fist & Loaves Boards. She requested a list of associate members, and hopes to begin daily devotions ready for June to share on line. Dan Case and Michael Isaacs clarified who does email, social media, and snail mail (First Class vs. Bulk Mail.) Rev. Branham

suggested an app – Gloc – that can be texted for rapid communication that is free. She would provide us with the link.

Her inquiry about communion generated a discussion of the way we have been doing it. Because communion has been done by various pastors, she would be checking previous Orders of Communion used. Jane Dykowski suggested she check those items out, but develop a process with which she is comfortable. Finally, a communion walk-through is planned before or after a choir practice as two elders are already here. Pew Communion is scheduled for the next Communion on May 24, 2026.

Trustees/Building and Grounds: Michael Isaacs reported on the work done in the parsonage. Gary Staffeld and Norm (from the hardware store) are working on a plan to restore windows in the parsonage. Attention is being given to side door security and motion detectors relative to the parsonage. The new grates are in the west drive and should be more effective than the light weight ones previously there. The water leak in the West Room is repaired. Monday, May 18, 2026, is planned for a deep cleaning of the kitchen. The inspector has not yet arrived. We were advised to have the boilers certified after the first inspection to correct if there are any issues. After a pressure valve was fixed, both boilers are now certified. Dale Simon fixed the circuit issue with the control panel and now all air conditioners are working. Dale Simon will be here when the organ maintenance person is here this week to help understand the technical issues with the organ. The organ was installed in 1949 and maintenance is difficult.

Deacons: Having no deacon, Dan Case reported that attendance in April was 247 which is somewhat lower than April, 2025. Easter had a lower attendance than in 2025 also.

Elders: Pam Lange reported that Easter communion served 100 congregants. Twenty seven were served communion on Maundy Thursday, which was primarily the confirmands and their families. On May 3, 2026, 42 people communed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Council Dinner: This item is been tabled until Rev. Branham's husband is here. Dan Case offered his home as a possible venue.

2. Stewardship Campaign: This item is tabled until the fall. Planning for it can be done prior to that time.

3. DMA Meeting Notes: Dan Case attended the Detroit Metropolitan Association meeting via Zoom. He provided a lengthy list of items discussed and provided by the speakers. This complete document was available to everyone.

He first corrected the information that he was our delegate to the meeting, not Rev. Linda Anderson as they had it recorded.

Briefly, the information related the loss of churches and fewer UCC pastors. Because of smaller memberships, volunteers at churches are being burned out. The association is being revitalized and will again be collecting dues. Open and Affirming Churches vs. Welcoming Churches was one of the topics. We are a Welcoming Church. There was also discussion about the church's involvement in politics and political activities. Dan felt it was a productive meeting and related that another visit by Rev. Richardson to our church might be good at a later date.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Safety/Security/Housekeeping Walk Through: The complete Walk Through Report was available to everyone. Dan Case began by noting that since we have been doing the walk-through, there has been much improvement.

Tim Ruffner then went through a lengthy list of items addressed by Sue Mrowka in her letter to him. She responded to suggestions for the office housekeeping. Some of which she felt were “Knitpicking”. She also addressed items for which she is not responsible. All items were discussed and how they could be remedied. One item regarding the uneven concrete outside is already on the Building and Grounds agenda. The main issue in the office was the messy work area of the Administrative Assistant. This will be addressed by the trustees. She will be offered what may be needed to remedy the clutter. Also, the emphasis would be on the importance of this area as the “face” of our church.

Jane Dykowski related the help summoned and addressed by Michael Isaacs regarding the pan-handler on Sunday morning. The issue was quickly resolved by him.

Rev. Branham suggested ring cameras for the back of the house and cameras around the church buildings. Motion by Toni Hill, seconded by Wendy Warner, to accept the Safety/Security Housekeeping Walk Through Report. Motion carried.

2. Rev. Branham’s Installation: Dan Case has contacted Meg Wilson of the Metropolitan Association regarding Rev. Branham’s installation. This event should be planned in 2 or 3 months.

3. Small Group Meetings: Tim Ruffner asked that times be set up if we are going in the direction of small group meetings. This is somewhat happening as Rev. Branham visits and meets with already established groups. Toni Hill related that Women’s Fellowship is planning an event around the activities of the Penrickton School for the Blind that was started at this church.

4. Michigan Conference UCC Clergy Retreat: Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Toni Hill, to approve expenses for Rev. Branham to attend this Retreat on May 27 – 29 in Sawyer Michigan. Motion carried.

5. Approval of Rev. Branham’s freedom to contact past ministers: Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Toni Hill, that Rev. Branham feel free to contact our church’s connected pastors as she chooses for support, resources and information. Motion carried.

ROUNDTABLE

Tim Ruffner related that Marjie Barnard will be returning the risers borrowed by the Community Chorus. Toni Hill reported a concern shared from a member that Tim Ruffner avoid commenting and “Kibitzing” during worship. Jane Dykowski asked for a volunteer to take the minutes at the June meeting as she will be on vacation. Dan Case volunteered to do so.

Motion by Dan Case, seconded by Michael Isaacs, to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m. followed by the Lord’s Prayer recited in unison.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane L. Dykowski
Recording Secretary