

# Church Council Minutes – Approved

February 25, 2025

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Present: Mark Johnston, Stacy Honson, Mike Mok, Bernice Lopata, Larry Fuerst, Lynne Snyder, Jody Betten, Dan Plasman, Mike VerMerris

Excused: Jim Kern, Kathleen Mueller

Guest: Nancy DeWitt, Chris Clark, Bob Kenny

1. *Welcome, Introduction, Prayer* – Mark called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm, welcoming: Lewis Corbin, representing the Transition Team; Nancy DeWitt and Chris Clark representing the Creation Justice Team; and Bob Kenny. To better accommodate our guests, Mark suggested we cover their topics first on the agenda. Dan opened the meeting sharing a quote for reflection.

2. *Transition Team* – Lewis distributed information and a flow chart for discussion prior to this meeting.

Flow Chart – A depiction of how the church presently functions and how it might grow into the future.

- a) The Transition Team believes we are transitioning from a Pastoral-led church to a Congregational-led church.
- b) They believe the Action Groups within the congregation should have a connection with the Council and Pastors. ‘Congregation - living our mission; Pastors - encouraging our mission; Church Council - directing our mission’
- c) The chart would evolve and grow as the church evolves and grows.
- d) The Council agrees to move forward with implementation.
- e) Next Step – Council members will decide which Action Team they will be a liaison with.

3. *Creation Justice Team* – Chris distributed a proposed ‘partial ban on single-use plastics’ for discussion prior to this meeting.

Proposal – Effective July 1, 2025, Douglas Congregational United Church of Christ (DUCC) bans specific single-use plastic items in all DUCC buildings and at all DUCC sponsored activities:

- a) Beverage bottles (water, juice, soda, etc.)
- b) Straws and stirrers
- c) Cups and plates
- d) Knives, forks and spoons
- e) K-cups (Keurig-type coffee makers)
- f) Communion cups

This ban includes non-DUCC activities on our campus. Preferred materials include reusable glass, metal, or ceramics; recyclable uncoated paper; and biodegradable bamboo or palm leaf.

Additional Recommendations:

- g) Recycling – Don’t offer bins for plastic, cardboard, or aluminum; only provide bins for printed sheets of paper (not for cups, plates, napkins, etc.)
- h) Plastic wrap and storage bags – Don’t provide them, rather, stock plenty of sturdy reusable containers
- i) Water bottles – Provide an easy way to fill them (e.g. filling station) and loan out metal ones or sell them at cost.
- j) Trash bags – use bags made of biodegradable material
- k) Whenever possible, purchase items packaged in something other than plastic
- l) Encourage congregants to adopt these same measures
- m) Kick off this ban by observing ‘Plastic Free July’

After reviewing and discussing the proposal, Mark recommended the cost of the fill station and its plumbing, along with glass communion cups, to be researched before a commitment is made.

**Motion:** from Mark to adopt the proposed partial ban on single-use plastics and additional recommendations, pending research described above. Mike M. second. Motion approved.

4. *January 2025 Meeting Minutes* – Mike V. distributed the final draft of January’s meeting minutes prior to this meeting. It was brought to his attention that a portion of the meeting was not included. He followed up with an email outlining the missing information and requested discussion on amending the January minutes.

**Motion:** from Stacy to include the information, as outlined by the Recording Secretary, into the January minutes as part of “Executive Session”. Mike M. second. Motion approved.

**Action:** Meeting minutes will be in the E-pistle and posted on the Friendship Hall bulletin board.

5. *Pastor’s Report* – Jody and Dan distributed their separate February reports prior to this meeting.

Highlights:

- a) The Worship Team met for the first time. We created a working mission statement for the team. “DUCC Worship Team is a group of people who meet to support the pastor and other church staff regarding the Sunday morning worship event. This includes but is not limited to – appearance and access to the building, greeters and seating, music including special music, liturgy including readers, Church Year Seasons décor, special offerings, substitute preachers, and changes – understanding the reasons and advocating for them.”
- b) Name tags are very helpful for the pastor and members as we commune together in worship, please consider wearing one.
- c) Jody and Dan asked for the council’s support in finding a third party to assist with issues of conflict – for a healthy church and intuitions. They will bring the name and background information back to the council in the future for a vote.

**Action:** The detailed reports will be in the E-pistle and posted on the Friendship Hall bulletin board.

6. *Financial Report* – Prior to the meeting Stacy distributed January’s financial reports: Profit and Loss Comparison; Monthly Balance Sheet; Budget vs. Actual FY24 P&L.

Highlights:

- a) Quick Books will not allow Stacy access while in Mexico, she has not been able to reconcile the bank accounts for the last two months.
- b) Also, it will not allow any adjustments to be made. The income from the Isabel Graham fund, which was \$7239, is not reflected in the income for the month.
- c) The Mission expense includes the \$12,000 that we paid to the Michigan Conference UCC to catch up with our obligations for the last two years.
- d) Summary, net of Campaign Income and Expense and subject to above:

	Month of January 2025		YTD January 2025	
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income	21,656	34,625	178,571	211,875
Expenses	29,915	20,625	180,756	203,931
Net Income	(8,256)	14,000	(2,185)	7,944

**Motion:** from Mike V. to approve the financial reports as presented. Bernie second. Motion approved.

- e) Stacy’s four-year term is up at the end of this fiscal year. Mark will talk to possible candidates for Treasurer.

7. *Committee/Group Updates* – Prior to the meeting, Mark distributed the DUCC Grant Committee’s application from The Allegan County Community Foundation (ACCF). The committee recommends \$5000 be awarded.

The Allegan County Community Foundation:

- a) All clients of the Allegan County Food Pantry Collaborative (ACFPC) are residents of Allegan County. The eighteen (18) food pantry members that make up the ACFPC are currently serving over 6,200 food insecure Allegan County residents every month. Through this project’s founding, these residents will have access to protein via their local food pantry.
- b) The Pigs to Plate program is a specific, protein-focused program. The ACFPC has developed a positive relationship with a generous local Allegan County farmer who has offered to supply five (5) pigs every month at no cost. The only cost to the ACFPC is the processing fee (\$1.99/lb.). This yields about 915 lbs. each month and would feed about 915 people.
- c) \$5,463 will fully fund three (3) months of the Pig to Plate program. This will provide approximately 2,745 lbs. of pork to food insecure families in Allegan County and provide approximately 2,745 food insecure residents with protein for three (3) months.

**Motion:** from Lynne to commit \$5000 to Allegan County Community Foundation and the Allegan County Food Pantry Collaborative for the Pigs to Plate program. Larry second. Motion approved.

**Action:** Mike M. will inform the Grant Committee, allowing them to proceed with this grant award.

8. *Ongoing Business* – None

9. *New Business*

- a) Wendy Hamlin will be stepping down from the board of Christian Neighbors and will be looking for someone to replace her representing our church.
- b) On May 4, there will be an art show at the Yacht Club. They are looking for two people to help with fund raising.

10. *Next Meeting Dates* – Council Meeting, Monday, March 24, at 6:00 pm.  
Council Meeting, Tuesday, April 22, at 6:00 pm.  
Council Meeting, Tuesday, May 27, at 6:00 pm.  
Council Meeting, Tuesday, June 24, at 6:00 pm.

11. *Adjournment* – 7:35 pm.

**Motion:** from Lynne to adjourn. Stacy. second. Motion approved.