

# Church Council Minutes - Approved

October 10, 2023

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Present: Pastor Sal Sapienza, Mark Johnston, Jim Kern, Kelly Wright, Stan Greene, Mike Mok, Bernice Lopata, Mike VerMerris.

Excused: Stacy Honson

1. *Welcome and Introduction* – Mark called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm and introduced new council member at-large, Bernice (Bernie) Lopata, who spoke about her background and the experience she brings to council.
2. *Opening Prayer* – Pastor Sal opened the meeting with prayer.
3. *September 2023 Meeting Minutes* – Mike V. distributed the final draft prior to the meeting.  
**Motion:** from Jim to approve. Kelly second. Motion approved.  
**Action:** The minutes will be in the E-pistle and posted on the Friendship Hall bulletin board.
4. *Pastor's Report* – Pastor Sal distributed the October report prior to the meeting.  
Highlights:
  - a) On Sunday, October 1, Rev. Ginny Mikita and I officiated the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual “Blessing of the Animals” at Beery Field in Downtown Douglas. A record turnout (over 100 humans and over 75 dogs) received blessings, prayer cards, and treats from Lakeshore Pet Boutique.
  - b) Last week on October 3, I announced to the congregation that I will be leaving Douglas UCC at the start of the new year, as I have been called as the Senior Pastor of a UCC church in Connecticut, The United Church of Rowayton. Though there is great sadness, I am grateful for the amazing outpouring of love, support, and understanding that I have received this week. Douglas UCC is blessed with an abundance of strong lay leadership, as well as seven ordained ministers in our congregation, so I have no doubts that the transition period will be a smooth one.
  - c) On Sunday, October 8, our church participated in the annual CROP Hunger Walk. Though the final tally is not yet in, our Douglas UCC Team raised more than \$12,000, so far, to help the hungry in Allegan County and around the world. We are so grateful for their efforts and to all who sponsored them.  
**Action:** The detailed report will be in the E-pistle and posted on the Friendship Hall bulletin board.
5. *Financial Report* – Stacy is traveling outside the US and will include September financial information with next month's reports. Jim reported that “cash flow is good”.

6. *Trustee Report* – Kelly distributed the report prior to the meeting.

Completed:

- a) Isabel Graham Center (Spring Street):
  - Trimmed tree overhanging and touching the roof at back side of garage.
  - Contacted Lewis Corbin regarding designing signage for exterior of building with new name (Isabel Graham Center). The concept was just received prior to the meeting; the new name in black letters mounted onto the building. All agree, with no concerns, to this concept.
- b) Retreat House and Spiritual Center:
  - Repaired kitchen sink garbage disposal which was jammed and backing up into sink.
  - Installed two new “Reserved Parking” signs.
  - Removed several invasive plant species from the yard, at the request of the Creation Justice Team.
  - Moved four recently donated patio chairs to the concrete pad between the house and garage.
- c) Miscellaneous:
  - Numerous small items addressed: batteries changed, etc.

Pending:

- a) Church/Friendship Hall:
  - Replace consumables (filters and lights), in the air purifiers.
- b) All Properties:
  - Winterize sprinkler system – scheduled for October 13.
  - Complete semi-annual HVAC/water heater inspection and service – scheduled for October 23.
  - Drain and store lawn hoses for the season – late October.

7. *Committee/Group Updates*

8. *Ongoing Business*

Campus Stewardship Drive:

- a) Jim reported:
  - The amount pledged (prior to ‘Pledge Sunday’) is \$89,850.
  - This pledged amount represents 19 giving units.
  - The amount deposited into the bank is \$12,250.
  - There was a large future estate giving pledge made (upon death - not included in tally).
  - Next Sunday (Pledge Sunday – October 15), envelopes for pledge cards will be provided. Pledges can be placed into the collection plate, or boxes at the entrance doors. This will be explained during the service’s opening announcements.

9. *New Business*

UCC support of DUCC during upcoming pastoral transition:

- a) On October 5, Pastor Sal sent an email to members of Church Council, Pastoral Relations Committee, and Church Staff informing them of a visit:

- Rev. Cheryl Burke, our UCC Michigan Conference Associate Minister, will be visiting Douglas UCC on Thursday, October 12, from 10:30 am till noon to meet with us about leading the congregation through the pastoral transition period.
- The meeting will be recorded on Zoom and the link will be shared for future viewing as all will not be able to meet during her visit.
- This is just the first of several visits she will be making to our church in the coming months.
- No decisions will be made at this meeting. It is strictly informational. Rev. Burke will be distributing materials developed by the UCC to aid congregations during the transition period, and she will answer any questions we may have about the process of calling a new pastor.

10. *Next Meeting Date* – Council Meeting, November 14, at 6 pm

11. *Adjournment* – 6:47 pm.

**Motion:** from Bernie to adjourn. Stan second. Motion approved.