

Cemetery Board Meeting  
Minutes  
June 11, 2025

Present: Marilyn Pearson, Jamie Dylenski, Mary Friend, Susan Irwin, Mary Jean Raab and Shannon O'Reilly  
Also Present: Brad Bouchie, Sexton

Meeting called to order at 9:36 am

Jamie Dylenski led us in devotions

Election of Officers: We will finalize the election of officers at our July meeting.

**Brad's updates and discussion of communications, specifically**

- Maintenance issues, new priorities, and unfinished jobs: The water is fixed, but Brad needs to clean up and reseed the area. Added more shutoffs so we can shut off specific areas instead of the whole cemetery. Mulch is spread and billed. Brad met with the Johnsons and that is taken care of. George and Janet Johnson are buried in Block 14, lot 71. An existing headstone has been flipped around so it can be read from the back. A new headstone is being put in for Janet & George Johnson. Cremains are coming from Tennessee for Laverty. Stone with name is already in place. Robert Finkbeiner is about to pass away, and the family has reached out to see what the process is for burial in the Memorial Garden. A support column in the garage is rusting at the bottom, Jamie will ask Kevin who is installing the door in the basement and Mary Jean is going to ask Steve Darr if he can look at it. Security cameras can be installed to see what is happening in the cemetery when nobody is there.
- Upcoming burials: Tidswell on Saturday 6/14/25 in a niche.
- Review submitted invoice for work in April and May not included in the contract: Brad submitted a bill for clearing brush along west fence, mulching around columbariums Memorial Garden and front office, and starting up water system and repairing water leaks. The total of the invoice is \$5,200.00 including labor and expenses supplies). Shannon will pay the labor as normal with an ACH payment to Brad's bank account and will issue a check for the expenses.
- Marilyn's report on Jannette Johnson ashes: Requested to be moved by her daughter. Marilyn has not received any response to her inquiries. Marilyn will send a letter to acknowledge the original request and let her know we are happy to help her when she decides what she wants to do.
- Rebecca Lee's tree will need to be replaced, and she has agreed to pay for it.

**Review proposals for road repair and resurfacing:** Susan received a quote for grading, fixing specific areas, cutting a drainage ditch to lead water away from the road by the pine tree near natural burial Block 18, seed and lay straw. The price is \$3,000 which includes the cost of the James Buono bringing in 2 large pieces of equipment. Susan made a motion that we use the \$2,080.00 current balance from road funds and charge the balance to general balance. Motion passed. James Buono Grading & Excavation LLC is the vendor. Susan will get a quote on resealing the asphalt roads in the whole cemetery. Susan will ask Grant to come out and look to see if we can wait until spring or if we should get it done this fall.

**Approval of May 2025 board minutes:**

In Jamie's report on the Cope-Vogel endowment: Jamie said we "could" not "should" go with the endowment at BOAA. Jamie Dylenski made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of May 2025 Financials:** Jamie asked if we could move Brad's invoices before the investment analysis and investment reports in the financial packets.

- WP Engine renewal invoice submitted by WP Engine Is for a digital experience platform including 1 site and 25,000 monthly visits. The period of service is 05/20/25 to 05/19/26. Mary Friend made a motion to approve this charge, and it passed unanimously.
- Approval of Veddar electric bill. Brad verified that the work had been done. Jamie Dylenski made a motion to approve the Veddar invoice for payment. The motion passed unanimously. There is a pipe in the basement that is from the old well and we have been advised that we should start pouring concrete into the hole to fill it in.
- Jamie's update on completion of the Lutz-Vogel Endowed Fund - We are all set to go with AAACF and just need Jim and Jamie to sign. Interest will go into the Cemetery checking account.
- Request to church leadership to approve our request to have Gwen, corporation resident manager, sign two DBA's. Both are in the name of each of the investment accounts long established by BOAA. Shannon O'Reilly made a motion to present this request for DBAs to the Church Leadership and the motion passed unanimously.
- Review process of payments for work done by funeral homes (and current bounced check): Discussion ensued about payments received for a full burial from the family directly instead of the funeral home.
- Bounced check from Betty Braatz - Shannon will check in the church office as Brad thinks the family was going to leave a replacement check at the church office. If the check is not there Shannon will reach out to Brenda Bucholtz (the niece who contacted us about the bounced check).
- John Finkbeiner, \$25.00 short payment, Phillips Funeral Home in South Lyon. Marilyn had talked to the funeral home, and they said they had received the new price list. The contact information is 248-437-1616, email [info@phillipsfuneral.com](mailto:info@phillipsfuneral.com) fax 248-437-2902. Shannon will reach out to the funeral home.

**Discussion:** Church By-laws as approved, and review of the Annual meeting held Sunday June 1, 2025

**Website status and updates:** We will discuss this at the July meeting.

**General Liability Insurance review of the cost to add coverage of the columbariums:** Jamie is working on getting costs for columbarium and the granite (will reach out to Inch in Plymouth). Total cost for 1 is around \$100,000. The annual cost to have insurance coverage all 5 is \$1,100.00. The Facilities Ministry has approved this addition to the insurance. This will be an addition to the church's insurance policy, and we will reimburse them. Marilyn Pearson made a motion to add to church policy up to \$1,200 per year for insuring the columbariums. The motion passed unanimously.

**Block 18, which is our natural burial area:** Mary Jean will contact Wendy Fry about the wildflowers. The block needs to be pinned by GPS and that could be Midwestern Consulting. We need to figure out a plan for the burials. Do we only sell every other space to begin with? Or do we pin just part of the block for now? We will discuss this further at upcoming meetings.

**Review of what is on the June-July To-Do Calendar sent out by Susan:** Road work in on the list and Susan is currently looking into this and getting quotes.

**Other Updates:**

- Matthew Rettig (attorney) for the case between the cemetery in Dexter and the family who moved their daughter to Bethlehem Cemetery says the trial date is set for July and there may be a settlement. We do not have anything that was relevant to the case, so we are no longer involved.

- The cost to have a Porta potty at the cemetery is \$130/month. If someone reports that it is full or there is a mess, then the company will come and collect it and leave us a new one. We decided to get security cameras installed first before we decide on this.

Meeting adjourned at 11:45 am

Respectfully submitted,  
Shannon O'Reilly, Secretary

**FACILITIES MINISTRY TEAM – BUCC**  
**Meeting Minutes of 6/17/2025**

**Elected Member:** Steve Darr

**Invited Members:** Randy Schneider, Ron Dechert, Jim Rowan EC, John Irwin, Dani Webb, Michelle Loukotka

**Advisors:** Jim Stadel, Bob Loukotka, Gwen Mayes

**Absent:** Dani Webb, Michelle Loukotka, Jim Rowan

Call to order: 3:30 pm

Review of Minutes of 05/20/2025 Minutes were reviewed and accepted with corrections: 1) Feldkamp funds to be used for the pew repair; 2) Hare Krishna group not Buddhist will pay for the replacement of damaged awning pole; 3) Under New Business – item “d” there also appears to be some new water damage areas on the 4<sup>th</sup> Ave canopy wall, inside on the upstairs. We may need a roof inspection this summer.

Financial reports were unavailable due to end of year closing not yet completed. However, no unexpected expenses occurred during the final month of the FY and budgeted & unbudgeted: the overall amounts are appropriate for this time of the year.

**BUILDING MANAGER:**

- a. Bill continues to wash A/C filters for the chapel and lounge and change filters monthly.
- b. He mows, weeds and waters the lawn at the church as needed.
- c. He mows the Hewett parsonage lawn as agreed to with the renters.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. Vedder Electric installed additional surge suppressor dedicated to the line that powers the organ.
- b. Renaissance Organ will schedule a time to switch out the circuit boards in the organ in the near future.
- c. Final disposition of the Cope Funds is still pending due to schedule conflicts.
- d. Ron brought two samples of the reupholstered pew cushions. He will show the congregation the new and improved pew cushions and inform them of the upcoming reupholstering. Approximately 90 yards of fabric will need to be ordered to complete the remaining pews. Estimated cost is \$5000.00 with Feldkamp funds to be used to cover cost.
- e. Corporate Cleaning stripped and waxed Fellowship Hall Floors on June 3. They have been contracted to clean the office carpets and elevator on June 30. Cost does not exceed \$425.
- f. The stairwell light outside of the kitchen has had a cover placed over the light switch so that it remains on. Safety tape has been applied to a number of stairs around the building.
- g. Canopy pole at the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue entrance was replaced on 6/13/25. Invoice was submitted to ISKCON MI to cover the cost as they indicated they would.
- h. Duke Roofing will be contacted to perform roof inspection to determine any roofing issues.
- i. The new 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue closure was adjusted last week. Facilities will monitor to see if we have any additional problems with door closing properly.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. John is monitoring natural gas prices on a daily basis. Due to the unrest in the middle east, it was decided that, if necessary, we could go without a contract for the months of July-September before signing a new contract in the hopes that the political climate settles down and prices will moderate. Should natural gas prices drop to \$4 or under we will sign a 4-year contract immediately.
- b. Chain that blocks of stairwell at the north moat is missing. Will have Bill replace.

**PARSONAGES:**

**ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE TASK LIST:**

- a. Team: keep drain on flat roof clear through fall

**ADJOURNMENT: 4:05 pm**

**NEXT MEETING: Tuesday.** July 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Gwenda Mayes

Bethlehem United Church of Christ  
Member Engagement Ministry Team Meeting  
Wednesday June 11, 2025, at 3:00PM

**Present:** Jenny Foster, Mary Jean Raab, Jacquie Katz, Cathleen Connell, Dindy Haab, Nan Lefton

**Absent:** Pastor Diane White, Judy Coucouvanis, Pastor Dawn Christensen, Karen Goforth

Jenny opened the meeting with a devotional, which compared gardening to a spiritual life rooted in Christ. Colossians Chapter 2, verses 6-7.

### **Quick Summary**

The meeting covered updates on individual members, organizational changes, and community events, including discussions on leadership structure and member care activities. Going forward, Jenny and Judy will attend Leadership Team meetings. The group addressed logistical matters such as coffee hour arrangements, future meeting dates, and plans for supporting homebound members during the Pastor Diane's leave. They also explored ways to improve engagement with the congregation and discussed potential changes to various church activities and processes. Due to the new Bylaw structure, our Team has assumed responsibilities for the Nominating Committee function. Jenny suggested to Jim Rowan that Graduate Sunday planning and College Cards card coordination be moved to the Education Team. This suggestion will be presented to Diana Slaughter and the Education Ministry team at the Leadership meeting at the end of the month.

### **Next Steps**

- All team members to make initial calls to assigned homebound individuals to assess their needs and preferences for ongoing contact.
- Jenny will send out the updated homebound list and summarize the assignments to team members.
- Jenny, Kurt Schmerburg, and Pastor Dawn will meet tomorrow to discuss connection with Homebound people, and about potentially hiring a temporary assistant pastor during Pastor Diane's leave.
- Jackie, Jenny, Cathleen, and Nan to form a subcommittee to brainstorm ideas for revamping coffee hour.
- All team members to talk to congregation members about their thoughts on coffee hour and gather feedback.
- All team members to familiarize themselves with the new bylaws, particularly the sections related to Member Engagement.
- Jenny will follow up with Teresa about potentially joining the Member Engagement team, since her position as Liaison has been eliminated with the new Bylaw structure..
- Jackie and Jenny to handle coffee hour as usual for the upcoming Sunday.
- Subcommittee to revamp coffee hour to investigate power availability at the back of the sanctuary for potential coffee station setup.

### **Organizational Changes and Leadership Updates**

The meeting covered updates on several individuals and organizational changes. Dindy provided updates on Vicki Hoxie's health tests and her move to a new apartment, and mentioned that Dani's surgery was scheduled for today. The group discussed changes to their leadership structure, including Ron Dechert volunteering to be Vice President and the elimination of liaison roles under new bylaws. Jenny also noted that Judy and she would attend quarterly leadership meetings to provide updates to their group.

### **Community Grief and Father's Day Planning**

The team discussed recent deaths in the community and the Journey through Grief series. Nan has sent condolence cards and is following up with several individuals. They also reviewed plans for Father's Day, including the distribution of chocolates to fathers in the congregation. The group reflected on communication challenges with the new pastor, particularly regarding graduation Sunday, and discusses the gifts given to recent graduates.

### **College Care Transition to Education Ministry**

Jenny discussed the transition of college care activities to the Education Ministry team, citing better alignment with their responsibilities and relationships with families. She noted challenges in coordinating graduate information and the importance of accurate data for recognizing students. Jenny and Cathleen also suggested celebrating significant school transitions, such as moving from elementary to middle school, to better engage youth and their families.

### **Future Meeting Dates and Logistics**

The group discussed future meeting dates, with Jenny proposing July 9<sup>th</sup>, August 13<sup>th</sup>, September 17<sup>th</sup> (moved back a week due to her daughter's wedding), October 8<sup>th</sup>, and November 19<sup>th</sup>. They also discussed coffee hour logistics, noting issues with keeping coffee warm due to power limitations.

Jenny suggested finding someone to oversee coffee hour activities, as it's now part of their group's responsibilities, and mentioned that Jane Ziessmer previously handled fellowship activities. The group also briefly discussed moving meetings downstairs to the Fellowship Room during hot weather, though no final decision was made.

### **Simplifying Coffee Hour Tradition**

The group discussed changes to their coffee hour tradition, noting that while it had evolved to include snacks like cookies and lemonade, this had become expensive and difficult to manage. Bethlehem suggested returning to a simpler model where only coffee and tea would be provided, with an optional bring-your-own-sweets approach, and proposed that attendees could submit expenses to the group for reimbursement. The discussion concluded with agreement that the current format might be unnecessary, with attendance typically only 15-20 people, and that a new approach of informal sharing could be implemented.

## **Coffee Hour Logistics and Engagement**

The group discussed coffee hour logistics, including the use of creamer containers versus fresh cream, with a preference for sealed creamer containers that could be stored at room temperature. They noted that while coffee hour is currently held every Sunday, attendance has been inconsistent, leading to a suggestion to survey congregation members for feedback on what they want from coffee hour. Cathleen observed that while people often appear willing to attend coffee hour when prompted by the pastor, many leave immediately afterward, suggesting a need to better understand congregation dynamics and improve engagement.

## **Church Coffee Hour Revamp**

The group discussed revamping the church's coffee hour, agreeing to form a subcommittee to explore new options. They considered switching to self-serve coffee machines and setting up a coffee station in the back of the sanctuary to encourage people to stay after the service. The committee will investigate power availability in the back of the church and gather input from congregation members about their preferences for coffee hour.

## **Homebound Member Outreach Plan**

Bethlehem discussed plans to reach out to homebound church members during Pastor Diane's leave, which is expected to last until September.

The group decided to have each member call two people from a list, checking their needs and preferences for communication. Jenny noted some confusion about the list of people to contact, which had been expanded at the last minute. The group agreed to tailor their approach based on each person's situation, offering calls, visits, or communion as needed. Sally Jaworski will be removed from the Homebound list, as she is able to attend in-person services now.

## **Pastor Leave Coordination and Support**

The meeting focused on coordinating member engagement activities during Pastor Diane's leave, with Jenny outlining plans to contact and support church members through visits or calls. The group discussed potentially hiring a temporary assistant pastor to help manage member care, with Bethlehem planning to raise this idea with Pastor Dawn. They also addressed the need to improve membership processes and review new bylaws related to member care, with team members encouraged to familiarize themselves with the proposed changes before the next meeting.

Next Meeting: Discuss a process to be instituted when membership changes.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nan Lefton

Cc: Gwenda Mayes, [parishadministrator@bethlehem-ucc.org](mailto:parishadministrator@bethlehem-ucc.org)



