

Minutes

Bethlehem UCC Executive Committee

July 24, 2025

Zoom meeting

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Attendees: Jim Rowan, Ron Dechert, P.J. Lindemann; Pastor Dawn is on vacation

Opening prayer – 6:12 pm

Old Business

- 1) June minutes – approval – Approved as amended.
- 2) Organ repair – update – Repurposed boards have been installed. Naki will stop unplugging the organ each time. She has reported there are still some issues. Organ company will be coming back to check further.
- 3) Trust – Barbara J. Cope Endowments – update – BOAA meeting tentative 8/14, 11 am, preferably in person, but depends on the arrival of P.J.'s granddaughter.
- 4) Church financial accounts review – update – This will be included in the 8/14 meeting.
- 5) Pastoral funds for ministry – update – When Pastor Diane is back, we'll move ahead with a debit card from the McKay checking account to be used for congregational benevolence.
- 6) Pastoral Search – update – invite a rep? – Kurt Schmerberg recently announced that they are behind schedule but making progress and will begin working on completing the congregational survey/profile. EC was unsure of when and how feedback will be given re. the profile. Jim will confirm the process with Dawn.
- 7) IT Proposal – update – New equipment has been installed and the office is changing over to utilize it.
- 8) Pew cushion covers – update – Final fabric selection has been made and ordered. Cushions will be recovered on site over the next couple of months.
- 9) Rental updates – ongoing and potential –
 1. Dance studio – finalizing the lease terms and amount, use of gym by church on Sunday mornings occasionally, rate of \$2,400 month. Additional summer day camps will be an additional \$7k annually.
 2. Hari Krishna group asked us to check into portable AC for youth room. Gwen found units, Facilities checked circuits and approved the purchase, but they are waiting for the group to renew their lease before proceeding.
 3. Hewett St. parsonage – tenants to leave late August/early September; Reinhart confirms a shorter lease is possible for income until we would need the house for a new pastor. EC agreed we should pursue this. Jim will have Judy at Reinhart get updated timing from the current tenants.
- 10) Communication page – update – Gwen has deleted/hidden the old communication page, apparently – P.J. can't find it on Facebook anymore. All church announcements will be posted on the official Bethlehem United Church of Christ page.
- 11) Coffee hour proposal from Member Engagement – Pre-worship community time in the lounge is going well. Hopefully the simpler model will attract some new sponsors.
- 12) Meeting with Cemetery Board – We'll change our August meeting to the 21st and see if the cemetery board can join us.
- 13) Account signature authorization –
 1. For general checking account – Ron and P.J. will get set up, in addition to Dawn, Diane, and Jim. (If the 8/14 meeting is in person, then we can do it before that meeting @ 10:30.)

2. For McKay checking account XXXX30477 – current signers are Jim Rowan, John Kennedy, and John Samford. EC discussed and voted to immediately remove John Kennedy and John Samford from the account and proceed with adding P.J. Lindemann and Diane White.

New Business

- 1) Compensation for increased pastoral efforts
 - a. EC discussed and agreed we should increase Pastor Dawn's pay back up to 100% from 75%, retroactive to May, for handling additional duties while Diane is out. Jim will discuss with Dawn how she would like to be paid, e.g. accrual, lump sum now, increase base salary, combination....
 - b. EC discussed and agreed to extend an additional 3 months (through the end of October) of paid leave to Pastor Diane, pending her decision regarding returning to work.
- 2) Policy for response to unauthorized use of church property – Recently, someone has been sleeping on the church property and there have been other incidents. We have no written policy or guidelines for handling this. Ron will write a draft for EC review and then we can share with Facilities and church office.
- 3) Employee meeting – Ron, Dawn, and Jim – Ron needs to review current status of evaluations; merit increases; new state sick time policy eff. 10/1/25;
- 4) Recognition of Barb – Barb is stepping down from her role of secretary due to personal reasons. Jim will get a card for us to sign.
- 5) Signage on front of church – Marquee sign – letters have fallen and needs to be fixed. Jim will check with Gwen.
- 6) Church parking – Art Fair and football - \$2,410 for art fair this year – great results! Football parking signup is up but not all game times available yet. Also, Sept 26th Zach Bryan concert should be added.
- 7) LC vision session – It is time to start having vision/strategic plan meetings this fall, perhaps a couple hour session after church. Need to have an effective structure. Jim and Ron with discuss with Dawn.

Report from pastor – not present

Adjourned 7:39 pm

FACILITIES MINISTRY TEAM – BUCC

Meeting Minutes of 07/22/2025

Elected : Steve Darr, Randy Schneider

Invited Guests: Jim Rowan LC, Gwen Mayes Office Manager, John Irwin, Dani Webb, Michelle Loukotka

Advisors: Jim Stadel, Bob Loukotka

Absent: Dani Webb

Call to order: 3:30 pm

Review of Minutes for 06/17/2025 accepted as printed.

Financials, 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
- d. Bill continues to do chores from the current Essential Maintenance List.
- e. Gwen will also have him keep the weeds down on the “triangle” garden at the 5th Avenue entrance.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. Renaissance Organ has completed installation of the refurbished circuit boards. Per their suggestion, the organ will now be kept plugged in.
- b. The Executive Board has chosen to invest the church’s portion of the Cope bequest with the Bank of Ann Arbor. Representatives will meet with the bank soon to finalize the set up the account.
- c. A new fabric was chosen for recovering the sanctuary pews. Gwen has ordered the fabric and Ron and Randy will arrange installation.
- d. Duke Roofing submitted recommendations following their inspection of the slate roof. Facilities approved the \$3,000.00 proposal to address both the Emergency and the Remedial proposals; funds in M\$R will be used. They anticipate starting the work next week.
- e. The closer on the Canopy entrance door on 4th Avenue will be inspected tomorrow; it may need to be replaced.
- f. The chain on the north moat has been replaced. Someone has been sleeping in that moat recently which prompted putting up No Trespassing signs as well.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. The towel dispenser in the men’s room on the landing of the 1923 addition has been replaced.

- b. The addition of air conditioning units in the Youth Room per request of the Hare Krishna group will be acted upon if they commit to renewing their lease for another year.
- c. John was able to lock in our gas contract with Constellation at \$3.99 per Therm for four years.
- d. We are requesting LC to establish a policy on how to respond to people sleeping and/or storing their personal items on the property.
- e. Gwen and Ron are negotiating with a possible new renter for the gym.
- f. An IT upgrade in the office and the streaming equipment has been completed.

PARSONAGES:

ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE TASK LIST:

- a. Team, keep drain on flat roof clear

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, August 19th at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Loukotka

Meeting summary for Member Engagement Ministry Team (07/09/2025)

Present: Jenny Foster, Judy Coucouvanis, Cathleen Connell, Dindy Haab, Jacquie Katz, MaryJean Raab

Absent: Karen Goforth, Nan Lefton, Diane White

Quick recap

The meeting covered updates on congregation members, including health issues and pastoral care arrangements. They discussed various administrative matters such as building maintenance, financial pledges, and potential rental agreements, as well as community outreach initiatives like scholarship programs and homeless shelter participation. The group also addressed upcoming events, membership changes, and volunteer coordination for church activities.

Next steps

- Judy to finalize sign-up genius for Ron White's funeral luncheon and send it out.
- Judy to coordinate with Sue on finalizing responsibilities for the luncheon setup.
- Judy and Sue to determine a date for cleaning and setting up tables for the luncheon.
- Mary Jean offered to forward the luncheon sign-up link to her contact at Clinton Church.
- Caregiving team to continue reaching out to homebound members and provide updates to Pastor Dawn.
- Caregiving team to discuss membership changes and communication strategies with the pastor at the next meeting.
- Katie Rowan to set up a fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity during community time over the next month.
- Dindy to follow up with Gert Eisele about her medical appointment in October.

Summary

Jenny opens the meeting with a prayer.

Church Member Updates and Announcements

The group discusses updates on various church members, including Ron's upcoming funeral and Diane's plans to visit with attendees during the luncheon. They also mention several members' health updates, including Paul Marshall's knee replacement recovery and Dani Webb's improving condition. Pastor Dawn informs the group via email about her upcoming vacation and provides contact information for emergency pastoral care coverage during her absence. The group briefly touches on the Journey through Grief series, but no new information is reported. Dindy provides an update on the Prayer Chain

Church Operations and Leadership Update

The organ repair is ongoing, with a new surge protection installed and awaiting a new board installation. The stewardship campaign has received 53 pledges so far, with the average pledge up by \$100. Plans are underway to replace the pew cushions in the sanctuary with olive green fabric. A potential rental agreement with a U of M dance professor for the gym is being negotiated, which could bring in around \$20,000 annually. The committee also approved the proposal to move coffee hour before the service for the summer, with positive feedback from attendees so far.

Scholarship Review and Homeless Program

The McKay scholarship committee has received five applications, with Diana Slaughter seeking policies and procedures for reviewing them. The scholarships are now more substantial, with fewer recipients receiving larger amounts of \$3,000-\$5,000 each. MaryJean discusses the church's potential involvement in the rotating homeless shelter program. She has offered to find a leader for the program if the church is added to the schedule, and is considering reaching out to social work students or graduates for assistance.

Church Shelter and Ministry Updates

The group discussed hosting a rotating shelter at the church, considering logistics and potential challenges such as building rentals and volunteer recruitment. They also touch on the financial struggles of local shelters and leadership changes. The conversation then shifts to a Habitat for Humanity fundraising request, where it's clarified that volunteers must raise money to participate. Finally, they begin discussing updates on their homebound ministry assignments, with Cathleen mentioning she left messages for her assigned individuals but hasn't made direct contact yet.

Church Member Outreach Updates

The group discusses updates on various church members they have contacted or attempted to contact.

Ron's Celebration of Life Meal Planning Meeting

Judy is creating a sign-up genius for food contributions and volunteers. The group plans to use china and real flatware, with setup, serving, and cleanup crews needed. They consider floral centerpieces and the use of sneeze guards. The timing of the event is discussed, with the funeral at 1:30 PM and the meal at 2:30 PM. Judy will finalize details and coordinate with Sue on specific responsibilities.

Membership Updates and Outreach Planning: The team discusses membership changes, including the recent passing of Robert Finkbeiner, who was mistakenly thought to have died earlier. They also talk about Lorraine Desprouh who transferred to Bethel Church. The group reflects on their process for tracking and contacting inactive members, considering whether pastors should reach out to those dropping their membership. They briefly mention the search committee's progress and upcoming guest pastors covering for Dawn.

Next Meeting Dates:

August 13th, September 17th, October 8th, and November 19th.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Coucouvanis

Cc: Gwenda Mayes, parishadministrator@bethlehem-ucc.org