

Cemetery Board Meeting
September 10, 2025
Minutes

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

Meeting called to order at 9:35 am

Devotions led by Jamie Dylenski

Board approval of final draft of Brad's Ultimate Services 40-month contract, starting 9/1/2025, followed by signing: Shannon O'Reilly moved to approve the final draft of Brad's contract. The motion passed unanimously.

Brad's update: discussion of communication, specifically

- Maintenance issues: Rocks have been spread, and the pile of left over rocks is gone now. Broken water spicket has been repaired. There are 2 that are bent over, so maybe in the spring they can be repaired and raised if necessary
- Upcoming burials? One today, a full burial for Bill Loyl, tomorrow for Grant Pearson, purchase of 2 spaces and burial of 1 set of cremains, Thomas Mooney, purchase of 2 spaces and a Saturday full burial. The Peters burial took place on 8/23/25 and they are mailing a check to us.
- Review submitted invoice for work in August not included in the contract Brad will submit a bill for spreading the rocks, and the Baka family – disinterred and turned around per the family's request.

Tree trimming and removal, annual work, emailed recommendation from Susan Irwin: Whatever is approved, where will the funds be pulled from? Susan emailed a quote from Amstutz Tree Service which is for 6 Blocks and quoted price is \$20K. There are many trees and some of them are big. They said it would be a 3-day job. Susan did not follow up with anyone else and says this company has the equipment and their clean-up is impeccable. Some of the trees have fall web worm. Jamie Dylenski made a motion to accept this quote. And it passed unanimously. To pay for the trees, we can use the \$1,338.55 that is currently in the tree fund. Jamie Dylenski made a motion to take \$20,000.00 to cover tree work from the Association investment. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of August 2025 board minutes: One change under other business about the phone calls coming into the church office. This was removed from the minutes because it was resolved.

Approval of August 2025 Financials: Jamie Hunter said we could continue to make donations to the fund at AAACF so we could set up a donation button on the cemetery website. Our columbariums are covered under the insurance as of 09/01/25. Pete Hendershot asked Jamie how we determine our prices. Jamie suggested we ask Pete to attend one of our meetings to give us some of his insight as an appraiser. We should schedule a working session in September to work on the 2026 prices so we can approve them at the November board meeting. Shannon will send the current price lists to the board members before that meeting. Jamie and Shannon talked about having a 6-month meeting with the bank about the investment accounts, but the general consensus is that we don't need a meeting right now. Jena Angler agreed but said she would meet with us if we wanted. Mary Friend made a motion to accept the financial statements, and it passed unanimously. Shannon will fix posting on Lutz Vogel to be an in and out.

Debrief of the 30-minute meeting with Executive Committee at 6:30 PM via zoom Aug 21, 2025: A discussion was held about who the Cemetery Board reports to. The old constitution says we report to the governing

body, but when the constitution was rolled into the bylaws in 2014 there was no wording of who we report to. The new bylaws say we report to the Executive Committee. They told us that we could make a presentation to the governing body about who we should report to.

Old Business:

When Mary Friend was in the office Gwen and Lisa said Ron had talked to them about putting cemetery calls to our voicemail. The process was discussed and all agreed that this was resolved.

Next step for Block 18: The first season of wildflower growth is behind us. Block 18 *will be mowed for the fall to promote new growth in the spring. The board discussed how big an area to pin. The consensus was that we pin a smaller area to begin with. We will need GPS pinning. There will always be a funeral home involved in the green or natural burials..*

Review of what is on the October To-Do Calendar: Susan read the check list items for October.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25 am

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon O'Reilly, Secretary

Member Engagement Ministry Team

September 17, 2025

Present: Jenny Foster, Judy Coucouvanis, Cathleen Connell, Dindy Haab, Jacquie Katz, MaryJean Raab, Nan Lefton, Teresa Beagle, Rev Diane White

The meeting was opened with a Devotional and Prayer by Pastor Diane

Updates:

Jenny: Karen Goforth is resigning from the team due to family health issues.

Judy: Dindy Haab is taking on the responsibility for distribution of the Upper Room to members

Pastor Diane: shared her personal experiences and gratitude for the support received during her recovery. Team reviewed updates to contact information for some members, including Violet E.'s new address at Charter Senior Living of Linden. Diane plans to update the homebound list and reach out to members to assess their ongoing needs for support. Once medically cleared to drive she will begin visits to homebound members. She has been able to visit and to provide communion to several homebound members with the assistance of drivers. Team members will continue to reach out to their assigned homebound members through calls, visits and cards. Copies of a communion liturgy provided by Pastor Dawn are in the MET mailbox.

Dindy: Prayer Chain update: Member's need for ongoing prayers were discussed

Nan: Card ministry update; Nan sent 11 cards in the month of August

Mary Jean: provided an update on the Journey Through Grief series, noting that Gary R. received all four books George P. and Sheila P. have also completed the series.

Community Time:

The feedback received from the congregation indicates the preferred time for coffee hour is after the church service. The group discussed moving coffee hour back to the youth room and the logistics of setting up and managing the coffee service. They debated whether a designated host was needed or if anyone could handle the setup, which includes filling the Keurig, setting out pods, creamer, and tea. The team also considered using a cart to transport supplies and discussed storage solutions, including the possibility of using an upstairs storage closet. They decided to trial the new setup for a few more weeks to identify any issues before potentially assigning specific responsibilities.

Pastor Diane clarified that the health department's licensing requirements only apply to the kitchen area, not the upstairs youth room. The discussion focused on planning food arrangements for future events, with Pastor Diane suggesting individually wrapped snacks as a safe option, particularly for upstairs gatherings. Carol A. expressed interest to Cathleen in baking items for the community. The group also discussed the possibility of using the downstairs freezer for stored baked goods,

The group discussed organizing bakers for community time snacks by creating a sign-up system to manage who brings food and when. They agreed to potentially add baking responsibilities to the time and talent sheet and considered having each of the 9 group members take a Sunday rotation.

Trial Pretzel-Making Plans

The group discussed plans for a trial pretzel-making session on October 10th and 11th. Jim L., Michelle L. and Gretchen K. will be the leaders. The initial trial will include members of the MET making a small batch to allow participants to learn the process. The group discussed potential distribution options for the pretzels. They plan

to open the session on November 14th and 15th to the entire congregation. More volunteer rollers will be needed for the November event beyond the current planning group.

Time and Talent Survey Planning

The group discussed plans for a time and talent survey. They debated whether to mail the forms individually or hand them out during services, ultimately leaning towards distribution during community time over several Sundays through the end of the year. The group also considered incorporating pretzels as an incentive for completing the forms and discussed placing information about the purpose of the survey in the church newsletter. The conversation ended with a discussion about introducing a new time and talent form, with suggestions to align it with a "Coming Home Sunday" event in November; possibly the 16th or 23rd.

Ongoing and Future Agenda Items:

- Pretzel Rolling
- Coming Home Sunday
- Time and Talent survey
- Community time
- Membership Review - Any updates to report?
- Choir Appreciation Sundays
- Grief group
- Suggestion box/board
- Current events discussion small group formation
- Care Card Ministry - Follow up on idea for Sunday school students to create cards (sign their names on the artwork)

Next Meeting Dates:

October 8th, and November 19th.

Respectfully submitted,
Judy Coucouvanis

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

Minutes

Bethlehem UCC Leadership Council

September 25, 2025

Zoom meeting

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Opening prayer 6:03 PM

Attendees: Jim Rowan, Ron Dechert, P.J. Lindemann, Judy Coucouvanis, Katie Rowan, Diana Slaughter, Steve Darr, Jenny Foster, Pastor Dawn Christenson Guest: Mary Friend, Cemetery Board

Old Business

- 1) August EC minutes - sent, please email approval or corrections to Jim.
- 2) Trust – Barbara J. Cope Endowments – update – Jim and P.J. to sign documents for the church facilities endowment at BOAA ASAP.
- 3) EC Secretary position – update – no update. Jim to reach out to a couple of people.
- 4) Rental updates – gym contract, parsonages – Hewitt repairs – Gym contract for the dance group is signed, volleyball will start using on Wednesdays in November. Small parsonage – pest control issues have been handled. Foundation issue being managed by Reinhart. Hewitt – tenants vacated at the end of August. Some repairs were needed, and Bill has already completed them (medicine cabinet, scratches on door, outdoor landscape trimming/maintenance). Some items may be charged against the security deposit. Judy at Reinhart will review and advise.
- 5) Account signature authorizations – completed
- 6) Meeting with Cemetery Board 6:30 p.m. – future connections with CB – will invite a cemetery board member to attend LC meetings regularly to keep lines of communication open.
- 7) Pastoral Search (Visioning Workshop) – update - Search committee is working on the full church profile. Financial info has been provided by the EC. Profile should be complete by the end of October. Vision statement was cleaned up in the 9/21 workshop and shared with LC members on 9/23. LC will need to convene and review the profile prior to submission to the conference.
- 8) Pew cushion covers – update – Almost all are completed. They didn't order enough fabric to cover the balcony seats, but they are still in good shape, so it's not necessary to recover them at this time.
- 9) Policy for response to unauthorized use of church property – update – Ron has drafted a policy. Dawn will review, and then it will be shared with LC for review.
- 10) ERLA proposal – update – project is approved and moving forward; Diana offered to help if needed.
- 11) Football/event parking – update – Zach Bryan concert is this weekend, 9/27.

New Business

- 1) Vision Statement – review – LC reviewed and made slight modifications. P.J. will send out to all LC.

- 2) Safe church policy – Diana – Diana would like to form a committee to update our policy. LC discussed and agreed it was important to revise. A motion was made and approved to establish a committee to review church safety-related policies, including but not limited to the Safe Church policy. Diana Slaughter will lead this effort.
- 3) Acknowledgement of personnel subcommittee – Ron – Dindy Haab and Ele Kotowski have agreed to serve on the subcommittee. Key items to start with will be job descriptions and then evaluations. Also time-sensitive – we need to implement paid sick time to comply with the new Michigan law.
- 4) Coming Home Sunday – Jenny/Judy – The membership engagement team is hosting a “how-to” session for rolling pretzels on October 10th and 11th. They will be making pretzels on November 14th and 15th. They propose to hand out the pretzels during a “Coming Home” / Time and Talents Sunday on either November 16th or 23rd to encourage members to come join in fellowship and reengage/share their time and talent. LC discussed and agreed it was a good idea to move forward with.
- 5) Shelter Program – Katie – Outreach has decided to move forward with hosting the rotating shelter, March 23-30, 2026. Katie will handle organizing and communication. MJ Raab will assist with recruiting volunteers. They are hoping to partner with other congregations to recruit volunteers. Need donations for supplies/food. The first/main floor will be used. We may need to offer alternate arrangements for any groups that meet in the evening. LC discussed and agreed that we should move forward with participating as proposed by Outreach.
- 6) Organization transitions – Just a reminder that we need to fill un-elected committee positions in line with the updated by-laws to ensure we are covering all areas adequately and streamlining communication, for example finance subcommittee and facilities rental subcommittee.

Report from pastor – see notes above re. search committee and vision.

Next Leadership Council meeting: December ?? – Last Thursday in November is Christmas Day. We’ll plan for November 13th so we can hopefully review the church profile in lieu of a December meeting.

Adjourned 7:46 pm.

Outreach Ministry Team Minutes September 14 , 2025

Present: Mary Jean Raab, Eileen Koprowski, Katie Rowan, Jane Schmerberg

Budgeted Funds:

We will distribute our budgeted funds as follows: \$3000 each to Alpha House, Food Gatherers and Peace Neighborhood Center. Katie will request the checks from Gwen. Mary Jean will deliver to Alpha House, Katie to Food Gatherers and Jane to Peace. The remaining \$1474 will be combined with future fund raising amounts and distributed to SafeHouse and the Education Team's designated organization which is planned to be Jewish Family Services.

CROP Walk:

The walk is on Sunday Oct. 5 at 2 PM, registration at 1PM, beginning at First United Methodist. Walkers are asked to bring nonperishable food items which will be donated.

Food Gatherers:

We will again ask the congregation to make a special effort to donate to our food barrels during November.

Habitat:

Our volunteers Jamie & Larisa report having an enjoyable and productive day on Aug. 9. We were able to give a donation of \$1380 which surpassed last year's amount. We received a nice thank you letter from Habitat Huron Valley which Mary Jean will submit for the Visitor.

Evangelical Homes of Michigan:

Mary Jean is an ambassador and attends their meetings. Marilyn Pearson is on the board. EHM supports our members and gives us priority for rehab services. We would like to host an after church lunch event with a speaker from EHM to inform the congregation about the many resources available to us. We can begin planning for this in Jan. We may consider a donation to EMH in the future.

Rotating Shelter:

We have decided to

host the week of March 23 - 30. Katie will double check that the week is still available. Katie will contact each ministry team chair to ask for their team's support. We will need help recruiting 3 - 4 volunteers for each night, as well as a person each evening to unlock the church and welcome the guests and nightly volunteers, and a morning person to lock the church. We would like to provide snacks and perhaps sandwiches, and will ask the congregation to donate. Mary Jean obtained bus tokens the last time we hosted. We could use our Memorials and Gifts funds to cover incidental expenses. Katie has a folder of information from Roy and Sue Muir from the last time Bethlehem hosted. Katie will handle organization for this project as well as communications with the office, ministry teams and congregation. Mary Jean will help recruit volunteers.

Respectfully submitted, Katie Rowan