

Cemetery Board Meeting

Minutes

April 8, 2026

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

Also Present: Brad Bouchie, Sexton

Jamie led us in Devotions

Brad's update, when he arrives and discusses communication, specifically

- Issues pending since the last meeting – Brad has found someone to help him with the levies.
- Maintenance issues: Brad is working on cleaning up the cemetery. The water should be turned on by the beginning of May. He will do repairs on the spigots that have been bent over. He will start repairs on headstones and will get us a price for the foundations. The mulch will be spread soon at the front of the cemetery, around the columbariums, in front of the building and in the memorial garden. They put down a product like Preen to keep the weeds down. Last year we used 10-15 yards of mulch. Shannon O'Reilly made motion to approve up to \$500.00 to purchase mulch and Preen. The motion passed unanimously. Mary Jean told Brad we could pay for the mulch and supplies with the Cemetery debit card.
- New priorities, and unfinished jobs
- Upcoming burials, and past burials with unfinished paperwork – Chinese burial on Friday, also a burial on Monday.
- Review submitted invoice for work in previous month, not included in the contract – no invoice submitted
- This is the time of the year that we start thinking about trees. Mary has not had any calls so far this year, but if someone does call and wants a tree, she will refer them to Brad who will check out the grave site and make a recommendation to the board concerning what type of tree has been requested and if that is appropriate for the site. The Board will vote to approve any requests for trees.
- Brad has worker comp insurance through his payroll company (Midwest Management Group) and he will ask them to send us a copy of the certificate.
- Brad's company currently operates as a Sole Proprietorship, but he thinks he should change to an LLC.
- Brad's general liability insurance renews on 5/04/26 and Shannon will reach out to get the certificate of insurance
- Roads – The milling road in front of Block 1 has washed out again so that needs to be fixed
- Jamie asked Brad to send us a copy of the form for sales of burial rights that he uses at another cemetery to see if we can incorporate some of the information into our current form.

Approval of March board minutes: Since the minutes went out to the Board members the night before the meeting, we will approve them next month. This will give everyone time to review them.

Approval of March financials: There were some typos in the excel report that Shannon will correct. We received the distribution from AAACF in the amount of \$2,149.82 for historical preservation. Marilyn Pearson made a motion to approve the reports with corrections. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval invoice for legal work done: We received another invoice from Conlin, McKenney & Philbrick for \$280.00. Mary Friend made a motion to pay the invoice, and it passed unanimously. Mary Jean will pay this by the cemetery debit card.

Contract updates, review and vote: re: Brad: Jamie distributed a copy of the proposed contract amendment for our review. Jamie Dylenski made a motion that we approve the draft. The motion passed unanimously. Jamie will send to Brad and give him a week to review and respond so we can sign at the next meeting. Jamie will let Brad know that if he does not get back to her, we will assume that he approves.

Mary Jean Raab made a motion to approve installation of the VA Stone that has been requested. The client will be responsible for payment for the base/foundation and proper installation. The motion passed unanimously.

Future meeting agenda for the Executive Committee of the church: We want to talk to them about the Bylaws and that we report to the governing body, not Leadership Council. A date for this meeting has not yet been set.

Update on continued work on the website: Jamie said we are up to date on website changes and corrections. Brad would like the word “available” in the database so he can easily see open gravesites when he is choosing a space and selling burial rights to that space.

Pet Burials: Marilyn’s recollection is that this issue came up approximately in 2016. We don’t know if there was a vote on this or if it was just a discussion. Susan thinks she has copies of minutes from that time period, and she will see if she can find anything about this. We could let cremains be buried in with a human full burial or cremains in the ground burial. Or we could designate a space somewhere in the cemetery for pets that may not have a human buried in the cemetery.

Review what is on the May To-Do Calendar:

April:

- Add notice to May Visitor/Website regarding Mother’s Day or Memorial Day donations to the cemetery
- Remove April 1 clean up signs
- Inspect and assess road replacement and sealcoat plan for summer months
- Prepare the Annual Report for church yearly meeting held in June

May

- Contact American Legion Post 46 about the Memorial Day flags for the Veteran’s graves.
- Spring cleanup of the building
- Get bids on any necessary road repairs or replacements

We used to have a flower or donation order form, but the office said they were not going to do that. We have not done this for a few years as we have not had enough people to plant the flowers. We need to get something in the visitor about donations to the cemetery for Mother’s Day or Memorial Day. Can we list what they can donate to (i.e. trees, roads etc)? Susan will write an article.

Next month’s meeting will be at the cemetery.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 am

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon O’Reilly, Secretary

Team: Steve Darr, Randy Schneider, 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 03/17/2026 were accepted as printed.

FINANCIALS: budgeted & unbudgeted: The overall amounts are appropriate for this time of the year.

BUILDING MANAGER:

- a. Tasks under Gwen's supervision
- b. Continuing to work on tasks from Randy's walk-through of the building.

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. LC continues to work toward a grant to assist with State mandated elevator upgrades.
- b. We have a bid from one company to replace the two flat roofs and are waiting a second.
- c. The leak in the sanctuary ceiling is on hold until the flat roofs are replaced.

Be

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. After looking at the grounds, no spring cleanup day was scheduled. Bill has done a great deal more work in keeping the planting beds weeded.
- b. A member requested more bike racks at the 5th Avenue entrance. There are space constraints that make it difficult. We will investigate solutions and seek more information from the member.
- c. We requested a bid from a commercial kitchen cleaner to do a thorough clean of the salad kitchen, the main kitchen and the dish washing room. We recommended to LC that this be done.

PARSONAGES:

- a. The lease for 4th Avenue has been signed.

ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE TASK LIST:

- a. Reinhart will take care of cleaning the gutters and downspouts at both parsonages when the weather allows.
- b. John will clean the moats.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm

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

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Loukotka

Member Engagement Ministry Team Minutes

April 8, 2026,

Present: Jenny Foster, Judy Coucouvanis, Jacquie Katz, MaryJean Raab, Nan Lefton, Cathleen Connell, Teresa Beagle,

Absent: Rev Diane White, Dindy Haab, Beth Wenner

Quick recap

The Bethlehem Member Engagement Team held their regular meeting to discuss various church activities and updates. The team reviewed upcoming events including the pretzel rolling event scheduled for May 2nd, with discussions about training needs for Friday preparation. They discussed nominations for leadership positions, with Teresa agreeing to serve as secretary on the Executive Council and Ron Dechert staying on as VP. The team explored ideas for improving the church website and marketing efforts, noting the potential benefit of professional help with web design and marketing strategy. They tentatively planned a volunteer recognition event for May 17th and discussed preparations for an upcoming presentation about Evangelical Homes of Michigan on April 26th. The conversation ended with discussions about Mother's Day geraniums and scheduling future meetings to plan the rest of the year's activities.

Next steps

- Nan: Send cards as directed
- Jenny: Ask Gwen to add Beth to the Gmail group and confirm the current list of team members
- Nan: Purchase and deliver a housewarming gift (e.g., flowers or houseplant) for Pastor Diane, using member care funds as needed.
- Mary Jean: Contact Kurt about a potential referral to the Stephen Ministry group
- Jacquie: Shop for pretzel event supplies the week before May 2nd.
- Judy, Jenny, and Jacquie: Attend and help with pretzel dough mixing on Friday, May 1st, to learn specific tasks and ensure coverage.
- Judy: Ask Doris W if she would like to help with pretzel mixing on Friday.
- Judy: Update pretzel instructions and procedures.
- Judy: Put Friday pretzel mixing on the sign-up genius for future events.
- Judy/Jenny: Get the cash box out of the safe for pretzel sales and coordinate with team for Saturday and Sunday use.
- Judy and team: Save the October 16th-17th dates for the next pretzel event and plan accordingly.
- Team: Reach out to potential worship team chair/co-chair candidates to gauge interest.
- Judy and Jenny: Bring up the need for a marketing/web presence role (and possible professional web update) at the next Leadership Council meeting.
- Jenny: Email other frequent CT hosts to find a community time host for April 26th (EHM presentation Sunday) and coordinate beverages (lemonade/iced tea).
- Team: Encourage congregation members to sign up for the April 26th EHM presentation/lunch by April 20th.
- Jenny (or team): Coordinate purchase and setup of Mother's Day geraniums (or arrange for team support if unable to do alone).
- Jenny: Discuss the May 17th Volunteer Recognition Sunday plan with Pastor Dawn, Jim, and Leadership Council, and reserve community time for that date. Report back by email on the status of the May 17th Volunteer Recognition Sunday planning.
- Team: Bring calendars to next meeting to plan meeting/schedule for rest of year.

Devotional:

Jenny led a devotional reading from Philippians about not being anxious and trusting in God's peace, which surpasses all understanding.

Updates:

- Nan provided updates on the card ministry and she sent 12 cards since our last meeting.
- MaryJean gave an update on the journey through grief series.

Pretzel Rolling Event Planning

The next pretzel rolling event is scheduled for May 2nd, with Judy and Jenny confirming they would attend both Friday and Saturday and Jacquie will attend on Friday. The team discussed training needs, particularly for Friday's activities, and considered having team members take on specific tasks like measuring ingredients and kneading dough. They also noted that the next pretzel rolling event might be scheduled for October 16-17.

Nominations:

Teresa announced she would step down from MEMT in June to become secretary of the Executive Council, while Ron Dechert agreed to remain as VP. The team discussed potential candidates for the worship team chair position.

Marketing Strategy Improvement Discussion

The group discussed their recent advertising experience, with Nan expressing disappointment in the small size and high cost (\$500 plus) of the Observer ad placement. They agreed the current marketing approach needs improvement, with Teresa suggesting that the finance committee could consider a marketing person with specific skills to handle promotional activities beyond basic ads. The conversation also touched on the need for an updated website with better navigation, particularly for finding the church calendar and donations. A need for professional website update was discussed.

Upcoming Events planning

- **EHM Lunch and Presentation**

They reviewed plans for the upcoming event on April 26th at 11:30, where the EHM executive director will speak about their services, and discussed the need for beverages during the lunch.

- **Mother's Day**

Mother's Day is May 10th and Jenny/Jacquie/Judy volunteered to handle purchasing and setting up potted geraniums as gifts

- **Volunteer Recognition**

The team discussed planning a volunteer recognition event, potentially on May 17th. They agreed to have a cake and display a banner or flip chart where members could list their volunteer activities. The group noted they would need to confirm the plans with Pastor Dawn and Jim Rowan.

Ongoing and Future Agenda Items:

- Mother's Day flowers
- Nominations for open leadership positions
- Volunteer Appreciation Sunday
- Pretzel Baking:
- Coming Home Sunday
- 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: May 13, June 10 at 3 PM in the Lounge or virtually at

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85032853579?pwd=Jeq5efUbfzDSSIMsbMPpP4tEox4Cum.1>

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Coucouvanis

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