

## Cemetery Board Meeting

August 13, 2025

### Minutes

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

Also Present: Brad Bouchie, Sexton

Meeting called to order at 9:35 am

Devotions led by Jamie Dylenski

#### **Brad's update, and discussion about communication, specifically:**

- Maintenance issues: His crew has been spreading the stones around the front entrance and Brad will create his bill for this when they are done. He cut down some weeds in Block 18 that were growing up in the grassy area and cut down some of the growth around the pine tree.
- Upcoming burials?
- Review submitted invoice for work in June and July not included in the contract: No invoice to submit.
- Brad's Ultimate Services contract extension, addendum with new monthly rates: Currently the cemetery pays Brad \$400 per year on the cleanup and Brad would like to raise it to \$600. The board went over the other price increases Brad is asking for on burial commissions, and we reviewed his costs for equipment labor and rental. Brad presented his monthly contract rate increase requests. The Cemetery will meet on 8/21/25 from 5 – 7 pm to go over all requests and prepare a contract to present to Brad for signature.

**Review proposals for road repair and resurfacing:** Susan Irwin reported that after a more detailed inspection of all the roads, learning more about the sealcoating process, talking with several asphalt companies including T. Burke (who we have used in the past), checking with Brad on how other cemeteries handle their asphalt roads and getting quotes, she recommends that we hold off on doing any road work this year. Once the roads are seal coated, if you do it again it looks nice, but it doesn't really do anything. Susan talked to Grant (who works for T Burke but has done sealcoating for us before) and his price was \$16,500.00 to sealcoat everything. One person Susan talked to suggested we get the trees trimmed as it is the water (wetness) under the trees that does the damage. Should we fundraise for the roads? And if so, what type of fundraising. The board agreed by consensus to hold off until next year before we do anything with the roads.

**Approval of July 2025 Board Minutes:** Under election of officers the date range should be 2025-2026. Under Brad's report, the block number for the Vartanians should 20, not block 17. Also under Brad's report, in the last bullet point can be removed as this is the request from the Vartanian family and we have already approved it. Mary Jean Raab made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of July 2025 Financials:** Discussion about the Lutz-Vogel fund – we posted this in our financials as a donation when we received the funds, and the created an investment asset when we sent the funds to AAACF. Mary Jean says we have given these funds to AAACF, and we will only be using interest from their investment, we can never touch the principle. Shannon may need to talk to her CPA contact to see how to handle this. Do we want it to show as a donation to us? If so, I need help on how to post this. If we are just going to use it as a pass-through from the Cope Estate through us to AAACF, then I know how to post it. Postage went up in July and Gwen says it is going up again at the first of the year. When Gwen prints metered postage for us, she must print a full sheet of 20 stamps, and we have several partial sheets of old postage. Shannon asked if it would be

ok to get a roll of forever stamps. Jamie Dylenski made a motion to approve the purchase of Forever stamps, and it passed unanimously.

**Pricing/total costs of a niche in the columbariums:** Jamie gave us a handout showing sales income and deducting all costs including Brad's commission, insurance, name plates, perpetual care and we are not making any money off the niches. Jamie will reach out to Inch and Matthews to get better costs

The board talked about a plan for the 30 min meeting with Executive Committee at 7 PM via zoom on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

**General Liability Insurance reviews to add coverage of the columbariums to the church insurance policy:** Jamie has sent off all the information to the insurance agent and has also talked to John Irwin so he knows there will be an increase on the policy.

**Review the September To-Do Calendar:** Susan will call Koch & White to get furnace cleaned and there is some tree trimming to be done.

**Other Business:**

Susan would like to change the fall date to have decorations removed from graves from Nov 1<sup>st</sup> to Nov 15<sup>th</sup>.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 am

Respectfully submitted,  
Shannon O'Reilly, Secretary

## Minutes

### Bethlehem UCC Executive Committee Zoom Meeting

6:00 – 7:30 p.m.

August 21, 2025

Attendees: Jim Rowan, Ron Dechert, P.J. Lindemann, Pastor Dawn Christenson

Opening prayer – 6:05 pm

#### Old Business

- 1) July minutes – approved
- 2) Trust – Barbara J. Cope Endowments – update – P.J. and Jim met with Jena Agler of BOAA regarding establishing an endowment fund. In response to this meeting, EC made the following decisions: the name of the fund will be the Bethlehem United Church of Christ Cope Fund. Signers for the fund will be Jim Rowan and P.J. Lindemann. Conditions of the fund are principle to remain untouched, earnings to be withdrawn upon request rather than on a set schedule. P.J. to review the need for new, separate EIN for the endowment.
- 3) EC Secretary position – immediate and ongoing needs – need a signer to cover for the empty Secretary position. EC voted and approved Barb Schenk to serve as secretary pro tem on a short-term basis to fulfill the Secretary's signing responsibilities. Jim will reach out to some other possible candidates to fill the position long term.
- 4) Rental updates – gym contract, parsonages – A contract for gym use by a local dance studio is ready to be signed by the church; Barb and Jim will sign. Sexton's cottage – pest control and foundation issues have been reported. Facilities MT approved has approved funds to address the pest control issues. Costs will be deducted from the Reinhart revenue, not a direct expense. Judy McDonald from Reinhart will obtain an estimate of the cost to resolve the foundation issues and get back to us. Hewitt parsonage – Tenants are planning to vacate by the end of August; Judy McDonald from Reinhart will then walk through the property to assess what work needs to be done to prepare it as a short-term rental.
- 5) Account signature authorization – update – Ron and Jim went to BOAA to add Ron as signer. P.J. can submit forms without having to go to the bank in person. Need to provide cell, email, and updated driver's license to Louis Escudero – [lescudero@boaa.com](mailto:lescudero@boaa.com).
- 6) Compensation for increased pastoral efforts – expectations – Pastor Dawn has returned to fulltime duties and compensation since Pastor Diane has been out. We discussed the use of Pastor Dawn's time, given this change. It was determined that Pastor Dawn was able to determine the best use of her time, and that there were no substantive changes in how she was expected to allot her time. She will continue with office hours on Wednesdays.
- 7) Church financial accounts review – completed on 8/14/25 with Jim, P.J., and BOAA staff.
- 8) Meeting with Cemetery Board 6:30 p.m. - A discussion of the working relationship between the church and the Cemetery Board was initiated. The CB expressed concern that messages intended for the CB were not always being transferred from the church office. Ron and Dawn indicated that they would work to address this. There was also concern expressed regarding aging of the church and cemetery organizations, and the ongoing

challenges that each face. CB members shared ideas that they have considered regarding partnering with other community resources, and the complexities of partnering were addressed. EC reinforced their commitment to the continued viability of BUCC. It was felt that these discussions were helpful, and that another meeting between the Cemetery Board and church leadership (likely the Executive Committee) would be scheduled in the near future. In addition, there was discussion of having CB members attend Leadership Council as non-voting participants.

- 9) Pastoral Search (Visioning Workshop) – update – Dawn is working on the plan for the 9/21 workshop. We'll review results in the LC meeting on September 25. Church profile – hoping for completion by early October.
- 10) Church parking – Art Fair and football, emergency vehicle access – Football parking - need more people to sign up. Many game times are not available yet. Signup sheet isn't clear – Jim will ask Lisa to review. Access to emergency vehicles is being reviewed.
- 11) Organ repair - update – repairs have been completed, and the organ is functioning well right now.
- 12) Pew cushion covers – update – material is in church, and assembly will start next week (8/25)
- 13) Employee meeting – Ron, Dawn, and Jim – update – Ron has asked some potential candidates, and is waiting to hear back. Ron has been obtaining job descriptions and is starting to review and revise them. The Employee Handbook was recently updated, so it is not a current priority.
- 14) Policy for response to unauthorized use of church property – update – Ron has started a draft of this document and will be consulting with Gwen.

#### New Business

- 1) Future pastor compensation – (for the search committee) - current data from the Conference regarding pastoral salaries were reviewed and discussed. Benefits are negotiable. Historically we have provided healthcare & pension through the UCC, social security offset, and paid time off.
- 2) ERLA proposal – no cost to us to digitize our records. EC voted to move forward with this. In addition, the organization is looking for sponsors to move to a new facility, which EC will review at a later time.
- 3) Pastor Dawn leave request – long weekend Sept 26<sup>th</sup> - this was approved.

Report from pastor

Next meeting: September 25, 2025 6:00 p.m.

Adjourn at 7:53 pm

**FACILITIES MINISTRY TEAM – BUCC**  
**Meeting Minutes of 08/19/2025**

**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

The Minutes for 07/22/2025 meeting were accepted as printed.

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

**BUILDING MANAGER:**

- a. Washes A/C filter for the chapel and lounge and changes filters monthly for the office.
- b. Mows, weeds and waters the lawn at the church as needed
- c. Mows the Hewett parsonage lawn

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. Randy will start putting the new fabric on the sanctuary pew cushions.
- b. Jim and P.J. have started the process of setting up the Marian H. and Charles L. Cope Memorial Fund with the Bank of Ann Arbor. The initial funds and the future dividends will be held by the Bank until Bethlehem UCC requests money be transferred to be used in accordance with the directions of the Fund.
- c. Duke Roofing will call to schedule their work soon.
- d. The A/C units have been installed in the youth room and the schedule for use is being refined.
- e. The rental contract for the gym is expected to be signed by end of business today.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- a. Duke Roofing will be asked to reattach the heat tapes on the rear part of the south wall of the church.

**PARSONAGES:**

- a. Judy McDonald at Reinhart has alerted us to problems with mice and carpenter ants at the 437 4h Avenue house. She forwarded a bid of \$1,358.00 to resolve the problems; we have approved the bid.
- b. In addition, following the significant rain last week, the foundation was leaking on the south wall again. We requested they get a bid on repairs and submit it for our approval if it exceeds the \$500.00 threshold.

**ESSENTIAL MAINTENANCE TASK LIST:**

- a. Team, keep drain on flat roof clear

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 pm.

**NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, September 16th at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michelle Loukotka

## Member Engagement Ministry Team

August 13, 2025

**Present:** Jenny Foster, Judy Coucouvanis, Cathleen Connell, Dindy Haab, Jacquie Katz, MaryJean Raab, Nan Lefton, Teresa Beagle, Rev Dawn Christenson.  
**Absent:** Karen Goforth, Pastor Diane White

### Quick recap

The meeting began with updates on several congregation members' health situations and care needs, including hospitalizations and recoveries, with the group offering support through cards and prayers. The group discussed various operational matters including room access procedures, coffee service during fellowship time, and the choir's integration within the congregation. Plans were made for upcoming social events and programs, including potential fall activities. The Community Time subcommittee will continue to gather feedback through September.

### Next Steps

- Nan: Send a card to Karen Goforth.
- Dawn: Provide an update on Diane's recovery and return plans.
- MaryJean: Begin sending Journey through Grief Series to Ryan White and Andrew White
- Judy: Follow up with Michelle Loukotka about organizing a pretzel rolling event in the fall. Form a subcommittee for planning the pretzel rolling event.
- Jenny: Reach out to Diana Slaughter to find out about education department's plans for Rally Day in September. Consider ice cream social
- Jacquie: Follow up with transportation needs of Marge A
- Nan: Talk to Naki about better integrating choir members into the congregation.
- Pastor Dawn: Laminate the Keurig instructions cheat sheet.
- Pastor Dawn: Find out from Lisa and Gwen how security personnel are being scheduled.
- All members: Think about the Time and Talents form for discussion at the next meeting.
- All members: Continue to reach out to assigned Homebound members
- Community Time subcommittee: Explore the Welcome Center area as a potential location for community time.

### Meeting Summary

The meeting was opened with a Prayer by Pastor Dawn

**Updates:** Nan (card ministry) Mary Jean (Journey Through Grief) Dindy (Prayer Chain) Pastor Dawn (Homebound and Pastor Diane) Pastor Dawn mentioned that cards, notes, and calls would be appreciated for Diane, who is expected to return to work late next month. Marge A might need transportation assistance once her friend Chris returns to Hawaii. Jacquie will contact her.

### Community Time Feedback Planning

The community time subcommittee discussed continuing to meet before church through September and to gather input on the timing and location of community time. They plan to use a flip chart with questions to collect feedback from attendees, with potential plans to distribute surveys or inserts in the bulletin. The group also

discussed challenges with host recruitment and the new simplified Keurig model for serving coffee. Taller coffee cups are needed.

### **Sunday Morning Building Access Procedures**

The group discussed building access procedures for Sunday mornings, particularly regarding who is responsible for opening doors and turning on air conditioning. Pastor Dawn confirmed she would continue opening the room and turning on the AC, as she is usually the first to arrive. They learned that while security personnel handle exterior doors, interior doors are typically managed by early arriving musicians or soundboard operators like Jesse. The discussion also touched on the scheduling of security staff, with Pastor Dawn planning to follow up with Lisa and Gwen about the process.

### **Coffee Fellowship Space Planning**

The group discussed the possibility of offering coffee during fellowship time, considering various locations such as the sanctuary, welcome center, or preschool Sunday School room. They explored options for seating arrangements, including portable chairs and high-top tables, while acknowledging concerns about sacred space, cleanliness and fire safety. The subcommittee plans to investigate further and potentially move the welcome center to a more visible location upstairs.

### **Choir Integration and Appreciation Initiatives**

Nan expressed concerns about the choir's involvement and integration within the congregation, noting that while students are the choir's core, they often do not feel connected to the congregation. Implementing "Appreciation Sundays" several times a year and providing snacks and refreshments, such as coffee, to better support the choir were discussed. Pastor Dawn mentioned discussing these ideas with Naki and emphasized the need for more outreach to enhance the choir's sense of belonging and appreciation.

### **Church Social Events Planning**

The group discussed plans for church social events, including a potential pretzel rolling event in the fall, which Judy will explore with Michelle Loukotka. Cathleen and Teresa volunteered to be part of the planning. The group also considered an ice cream social in September, pending confirmation of the education department's plans for Rally Day. Jenny agreed to reach out to Diana about the education department's activities and report back to the group. The group decided to brainstorm ideas for the time and talents form, and to continue the discussion at the next meeting. Pastor Dawn has recently updated the form.

#### **Future Agenda Items:**

- Membership Review - Any updates to report?
- 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:**

September 17<sup>th</sup>, October 8<sup>th</sup>, and November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Coucouvanis

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