

September Council Meeting Minutes
Sept 21st, 2026 at 6 pm; Hybrid (in person + Zoom)

Present: Pastor Steve, Jennifer Davis, Kristie Evans, Eric Breitenstein, Amy Atkins, James Holden, Jonathan Stamey, Mike Seden, Theresa Richards, Jesse Lutabingwa & Liz Peter

Absent: Lynn Caldwell

1. Call to Order - made by Jennifer @ 6:03 PM
2. Devotion – Mike: has Stage 4 cancer; it's his 4th time having cancer. He recently started a difficult chemotherapy; it's very painful. He talked about accepting God's plan; we really have no control. Am I doing what God wants me to do or what I want to do? His will or my will? What happens to us isn't always up to us because we're not in charge. God has a plan for us all and it's up to us to accept it. Trust and lean on him, knowing that He will give us what we need.
3. Ground Rules – Reviewed by Jennifer
 - Please raise your hand to indicate that you would like to speak.
 - Please give your name and state your views on the matter under discussion, including any questions or concerns you may have.
 - In order to allow others ample opportunity to join in the conversation, please keep any subsequent comments by you on the issue/motion succinct and to the point.
 - Please remain quiet when others have the floor so everyone can hear.
 - Please be respectful of those voicing differing opinions.
4. Congregational Input:
 - Amy: likes the change to the parking lot signage (mobility issues parking)
 - Eric: a couple of reflectors broken off on Stophel Strasse "road" behind church
 - Eric: checked on the status of Karen, the new nursery worker. P. Steve - did not show up. Steve wants Karen or Matt to take over booking volunteers and workers for the nursery; let Hannah go as an employee. P. Steve - will help Matt determine who can be a nursery helper.
 - Eric: noticed the front door was locked when someone approached to enter the church
 - James: wants to re-start young adult Bible study class with the Atkinses
5. Approval of August Council Minutes and review of email voting -
No discussion. Mike moved to accept the August Council Minutes. James. Approved.
6. Strategic Visioning – Jennifer
 - A. Review Organizational Chart and Liaison Assignments
 - Updates:
 - Remove Morgan from Finance Team; replace with Mike
 - Remove James from Personnel; replace with Eric
 - Remove James from Executive Committee; replace with Jennifer

- Move James to Learning
- Add Theresa to Serving

B. Strategic Plan – Review 2027 Council Goals

- General discussion of goals
- What information should we give newcomers? What format are we looking for?

7. Policy – Jennifer. No update.

8. Monitoring and Oversight

A. Reports:

- 1) Senior Pastor Report
- 2) Campus Ministry Coordinator
- 3) Music Ministry Report
- 4) Congregational Life Minister Report
- 5) Office Manager Report
- 6) Facilities Report
- 7) Treasurer Report
 - a. ACTION ITEM: Year-End Deficit
 - Mike moved to take the 2025 - 2026 budget deficit amount (\$11,890.19) out of the operational reserve account to cover 2025 - 2026 needs. Eric seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.
 - b. Quick Review of 2026-2027 Budget - general discussion of. Mike and Steve will meet to discuss ways to trim the current budget.

B. Old Business

- 1) Capital Campaign Updates
 - a. Gifts and pledges received to date - Total collected to date is \$153,400 (matching doubles this to \$306,800).
 - b. Thank-you notes - P. Steve to activate
 - c. Projects' update
 - i. Roof Replacement - Complete
 - ii. Councill House Update - Complete
 - iii. Parking Lot Expansion – Complete
 - iv. Grace Place Update - Bid status. 2nd bid received: \$245K. Working on developing a different plan; Anna Wilder to assist.
 - v. Playground Project - Monies are close; contract provided in reports
 - P. Steve made a motion that the council approve the contract contingent upon funding. James seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion was approved and passed unanimously.
 - vi. Operational Cash Reserve

- 2) Nursery Coordinator Position - Karen is the new nursery attendant. Some interest shown within the congregation and through Karen for the position. Some progress has been made. P. Steve believes Hannah should be let go from the position.
- 3) Stained Glass Windows repair - we are on the schedule for repair work. Repair may occur when Peeler money, pre-approved for this purpose, is ready for disbursement.

C. New Business

- 1) Facility Requests -
 - a. Watauga Public Library
 - b. Diverse Unity Wellness
 - c. Foster Connection
 - d. University Village POA
 - e. Respite for All

James made a motion to approve, as a slate, the Watauga Public Library, Foster Connection, and University Village POA facility requests. Amy seconded the motion. No discussion. Motion passed and was approved unanimously.

Respite for All - If approved, the event would take over the entire building during the day; no other events can be scheduled on this day. Concerns - volume of communication received & have large ambitions for the project (i.e., might be or get too big for our facility). P. Steve suggests a trial basis. Jonathan suggested making an attendance cap. Jonathan moved to approve the request for a 3-month trial basis. James seconded the motion. No discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

Diverse Unity Wellness - not recommended by staff at this point. P. Steve would like to know more about their program. Why is he not tapping into other Methodist churches? Might be a bad precedent to set. No action taken.

- 2) New plantings installed in front of the sanctuary.
- 3) LSA earned \$6700 from the first parking lot fundraiser; \$6100 from the second parking lot fundraiser (we get repeat customers/have connections off the mountain).
- 4) Sat, Feb 13th, Valentine's Dinner to be put on by youth. They decided, unprompted, to put on a show (i.e., Dinner and a Show).

9. Meeting adjourned with prayer – Mike

Upcoming Devotion List:

Oct - Theresa

Nov - Amy

Dec - Lynn
Jan - James
Feb - Jonathan
Mar - Eric
Apr - Kristie
May - Jennifer
June - TBD
July - TBD
Aug - TBD