Hartford United Methodist Church

Board Meeting Minutes

September 28, 2026 – 6:30pm

Attending: Board Members - Lexy Klinkhammer, Dan Kistler, Abbey Nevins, Lynn Margeson, Joyce Alderson, Erin Alderson; Pastors Brian & Julie Gregg; Guests – Dave Niewald

Opening

The meeting was called to order and opened with prayer by Pastor Brian, asking for God's guidance as the board conducts the business of the church and considers its ministry within the Hartford community.

Minutes from the previous meeting were made available for review and were considered approved, with the opportunity for members to bring forward any needed corrections.

Christian Education / Wild Wednesday – Abbey N.

Wild Wednesday Update

The first weeks of Wild Wednesday have gone well overall.

- Lessons have been prepared in advance by Abby and provided to teachers.
- Attendance sheets have been placed in each classroom to better track participation.
- Overall attendance appears similar to previous years, with some new children attending and some previous participants no longer attending.
- Because there are only four sixth graders, the fifth- and sixth-grade classes were combined.
- Wild Wednesday is currently operating with **five classes**, with most classes averaging around 12 children.
- Teacher feedback will be gathered after several weeks to determine how well the prepared lesson format is working.

Bible Presentation

Bibles have arrived for the third- and fourth-grade students.

Approximately eight children are expected to receive Bibles. Families have been contacted, and the goal is to present the Bibles together during Sunday worship rather than spreading presentations over several Sundays.

Erin will reach out to the remaining family to invite their child to attend the Bible presentation.

Wild Wednesday / Church Shirts

The board discussed creating shirts for Wild Wednesday participants and potentially other church members.

Estimated cost:

- Shirt: approximately **$4**
- Transfer/materials: approximately **$3**
- Estimated finished cost: **about $7 per shirt**

Approximately **65 children** may need shirts.

The shirts could help identify the group when Wild Wednesday participates in community mission activities. Families could potentially choose to purchase the church-provided shirt or bring their own shirt for application of the design.

The idea received positive support and will continue to be developed.

Pumpkins & Pancakes

The Wild Wednesday **Pumpkins & Pancakes** event is planned for **October 28**.

There may be difficulty obtaining enough pumpkins this year. Additional pumpkin sources will be investigated if necessary.

Existing table coverings and supplies in the church will be used as much as possible.

Volunteer Background Checks / Safe Sanctuary

The board discussed the need for background checks and appropriate child-safety training for Wild Wednesday teachers, helpers, and others who regularly work with children.

Tithely currently offers access to background-check services, but the group would first like to determine the requirements and resources available through the Dakotas Conference.

Discussion included:

- Background checks for teachers and volunteers
- Safe Sanctuary policies
- Two-adult practices
- Mandatory reporting responsibilities
- Possible required training/videos
- Whether conference-provided background checks must be used

Action Item: Conference requirements will be researched by Pastor Julie before implementing a church-wide process. The goal is to make sure everyone working with children receives consistent information and training.

Wild Wednesday Missions / Grants

The group continues to explore adding more mission opportunities to Wild Wednesday.

Kids Against Hunger remains a possibility for next year.

Other possibilities include:

- Community service projects
- Developing a structured "Monthly Missions" program

The church has also learned about conference grants of up to approximately **$3,000** for qualifying ministry projects through the Conference. Since the church is already doing several activities that may meet grant requirements, available grants will be researched further.

Finance Report – Erin A.

Investments & Checking

Dakotas Foundation - Investment Balance today **$226,903.95** - The statement balance on 8/31 was $229,161.62 - decreased approximately **$3,000** from the August 31 statement to the current date, believed to be normal market fluctuation.

- First Interstate Bank - General Fund Balance **$59,106.01** as of 9/28/26.
    1. Dedicated Funds - **$17,719.53** which is included in the above total.
- FIB - Building Fund Available Balance **$10,414.47** as of 9/28/26. - we paid for the new AC Unit out of this account.
- FIB - Memorial Fund Available Balance **$2,782.56** as of 8/24/26.

Dedicated Accounts

Several dedicated accounts were reviewed.

Recent expenses include:

- New microphones and sound equipment – **under $1,000**
- Air-conditioning repair/replacement – approximately **$7,500** was paid for from the Building account.

The new microphones were paid from the **New Sound System** dedicated fund.

Laity Development / Continuing Education

The Laity Development account currently shows a negative balance because continuing education expenses have been charged there.

The board noted that continuing education funds are included as part of pastoral compensation, so the negative balance is understood and is not currently considered a concern.

Banquet Fund/Camp Fund

Both are low right now. Will consider asking for people to dedicate giving to those causes.

Miscellaneous Dedicated Fund

The board discussed approximately **$3,000** currently held in the miscellaneous dedicated account that appears to have originated from Montrose contributions toward parsonage utilities.

Because those utilities were general church expenses and the money no longer needs to remain designated in this manner, the board agreed that the accounting would be clearer if the funds were returned to the General Fund.

Decision: Move **$3,000 from the Miscellaneous Dedicated Fund to the General Fund.**

Parsonage Renovation – Dan K.

A detailed review of the parsonage renovation budget and remaining work was conducted.

Original Budget

The original renovation budget was approximately: **$35,000**

Approximately **$28,725** has been accounted for in the current project figures, with some remaining work still outstanding.

The church has also received approximately **$600 in designated donations** toward the parsonage project.

Flooring

An estimate of approximately **$4,752.59** was received for flooring.

The proposed flooring would cover:

- Three bedrooms, Living room, Dining room, Kitchen, Entryway, Garage entry & Laundry room

Because existing carpet has staining and odor concerns, the board discussed removing the remaining carpet and installing consistent flooring throughout most of the main level.

Trim & Interior Doors

Much of the existing trim has paint damage, staining, mold concerns, or has already been removed during renovation.

The board discussed replacing base trim and interior doors throughout the main level rather than trying to piece together the existing materials.

Estimated trim/interior door expense is approximately **$6,000–$6,500**, depending on materials and final selections.

Additional pricing and material options will be investigated.

Front Deck

The front deck remains part of the project. A preliminary high estimate of approximately **$6,000** was discussed while additional pricing is obtained.

Laundry Area Cabinets

Additional cabinetry and countertop options were discussed for the laundry area. Matching cabinetry and countertop could cost approximately **$2,100–$2,300**, although less expensive countertop options such as butcher block could significantly reduce the cost.

Appliances

Remaining appliance needs include:

- Microwave, Washer/dryer – a few were found on sale at Menards.

The existing refrigerator and washer/dryer may be sold or otherwise disposed of, with any proceeds helping offset replacement costs.

Other Remaining Items

Remaining or potential expenses include:

- Finishing electrical work, Garage entry doors, Landscaping/rock, Cabinet hardware, Light fixtures

The possibility of eventually modifying the Jack-and-Jill bathroom into a dedicated master bathroom was discussed, but **no decision was made and this is not currently part of the renovation plan.**

Parsonage Budget Motion

After reviewing the remaining project needs and the church's current cash position, the board agreed that completing the main level properly now would be preferred.

Motion: Increase the existing parsonage renovation budget by up to **$20,000**, bringing the maximum authorized project budget from approximately **$35,000 to $55,000**.

The intent is to remain below the maximum whenever possible while allowing enough flexibility to properly complete the renovation.

Motion approved.

Bathrooms and parking lot projects at the church will remain on hold while the parsonage project is completed.

Church Building & Security

Office / Church Keys

The number of church and office keys currently in circulation has become difficult to track.

The board agreed that the building should be rekeyed and that a **keypad lock should be investigated/installed for the church office**. This would allow access codes to be changed when necessary, without continuing to distribute additional keys.

Action Item: Contact Bob's Lock & Key regarding rekeying and a keypad for the office.

Office Manager / Communications – Erin A.

Church communications continue to improve, and positive feedback has been received regarding the increased communication.

Member Contact Information/Records – Erin & Joyce working on

A form will be developed for the pews so members can update:

- Email addresses, Phone numbers, other contact information
- Membership information did not transfer completely from Shepherd's Staff into the newer system.

The goal is to compare the old Shepherd's Staff records with the current database and create an accurate membership list by the end of the year.

Previous membership-drive records may also be useful in reconciling the list.

Birthday Ministry

A birthday list has been compiled/updated.

Beginning in the new year, Wild Wednesday children may help make birthday cards for church members as another way of connecting children with the congregation.

Annual Reports / Charge Conference - Lexy

The annual state report is due **November 1** and will be completed.

Charge Conference information will also be assembled.

Charge Conference:
November 8 at 1:30 p.m.

Additional information will be provided as conference paperwork and requirements become available.

Church Building Use / Funeral & Rental Policies -Joyce A.

The board discussed the need to update church policies and fees for:

- Funerals/Funeral meals
- Weddings
- Basement/facility rentals
- Community groups
- Private events such as showers or parties

Existing policies and rates appear to be significantly outdated.

The board wants the church to remain welcoming and available to the community while also having a clear and consistent policy regarding costs, responsibilities, and appropriate uses.

Community-oriented ministries may be treated differently from private events.

Action Item: Place church facility-use policies and updated fees on a future board agenda.

Missions – Lynn M.

Food Pantry

The recent Food Pantry shopping was completed by Darin as Lynn was sick. A receipt still needs to be submitted for reimbursement from the Food Pantry account.

Additional contact will be made with the Food Pantry to determine current needs.

Feeding South Dakota

Approximately **11 volunteers** have signed up for the upcoming Feeding South Dakota service opportunity. 15 are needed – Lynn will work on that and will hand out waivers this Sunday.

Eyeglass Collection for Lion's Eye Bank

The recent eyeglass collection was very successful.

A photo will be taken to share the results with the congregation before the glasses are delivered for donation.

Noisy Bucket

Upcoming Noisy Bucket recipients:

- **October – Heifer Project**
- **November – Teddy Bear Den**

Additional mission organizations will continue to be researched for future months.

Worship - Linda

Contemporary Worship / Sound System

Feedback on contemporary worship has been positive.

The new microphones have significantly improved sound in the sanctuary.

Additional improvements may include:

- Adjusting microphone placement
- Adjusting sound settings
- Moving the boom microphone
- Potentially purchasing another microphone for singers
- Checking the quality of the online worship audio

The board agreed that singers participating in worship should be adequately amplified.

Parsonage Cabinets & Unneeded Property – Dan K.

The board discussed what to do with the old parsonage kitchen cabinets.

Options included:

- Selling them
- Offering them to church members
- Donating them to Habitat for Humanity ReStore

Donation may be the simplest option, particularly if ReStore will pick up the materials.

The old refrigerator and washer/dryer may first be offered for sale.

The group also discussed older choir platforms currently being stored at the church. They are large, heavy, and have not been used for many years.

Possible reuse or donation options will be explored before disposal.

Pastor Julie's Report:

Community Thanksgiving Eve Service

The ministerial group has discussed whether to continue the traditional community Thanksgiving Eve service.

Attendance has declined significantly in recent years, although the board values opportunities for Hartford-area churches to work and worship together.

The board discussed the possibility of continuing the service this year, promoting it more intentionally, and then evaluating whether it remains an effective community ministry.

Other ecumenical/community activities could also be considered in the future.

Hometown Christmas

The church's participation in Hartford's Hometown Christmas was discussed.

Previous activities have included:

- Christmas caroling/sing-along
- Hosting a movie

Because of licensing concerns, hosting movies is not recommended unless appropriate licensing is secured.

The community already has numerous Hometown Christmas activities, so the church will consider where its participation can add the most value.

Craft & Fellowship Opportunities

A church craft night is being developed for November.

Irene is planning to host a handmade Christmas gnome craft, with a small participation fee benefiting missions.

The exact November date still needs to be confirmed.

Additional “Wild Wednesday or Adult Craft Night” ideas include:

- A floral-arranging class before Thanksgiving
- Children's craft activities during Wild Wednesday
- Making ornaments/decorations for the church Christmas tree
- Offering multiple craft choices during a larger fellowship event

These activities have historically been well attended and provide a good opportunity for fellowship and community outreach.

Accessibility – Automatic Doors

The possibility of installing automatic door openers was discussed.

The board recognizes that the current doors can be difficult for individuals with mobility challenges.

Automatic door systems may be expensive, potentially costing several thousand dollars.

Action Item: Obtain pricing for an automatic/push-button door system.

- Multiple funding options are available.

Board of Ordained Ministry

Julie will be involved in reviewing candidates for commissioning/ordination and conducting interviews in Mitchell – October 12th through the 14th – Julie plans to be back for Wild Wednesday but will let us know if things run long.

Dakota Youth

The board discussed Dakota Youth, a United Methodist youth conference that includes:

This year's event is scheduled for **October 9–11 in Aberdeen**. Because the event is approaching quickly, the church will **not attempt to organize a group for 2026**.

However, the board strongly supports considering participation in **2027**. Potential funding could come from the existing camp/youth fund or future fundraising.

Action Item: Put Dakota Youth on the planning calendar early for next year.

Old / Continuing Business

The following items remain on the board's continuing project list:

- Complete parsonage renovation
- Church bathroom improvements – **on hold**
- Parking lot project – **on hold**
- Rekey church / office keypad
- Automatic door pricing
- Updated church facility-use/rental policy
- Safe Sanctuary/background-check requirements
- Membership database cleanup
- Saturday gathering clarification
- Grant opportunities for children's/community missions
- Dakota Youth planning for 2027

Major Decisions Made

1. **Approved moving $3,000 from the Miscellaneous Dedicated Fund to the General Fund.**
2. **Approved increasing the parsonage renovation budget by up to $20,000, for a total authorized project budget of approximately $55,000.**
3. Bathrooms and parking lot projects will remain on hold while the parsonage is completed.
4. The church will pursue rekeying and a keypad lock for the office.
5. Facility-use/rental policies and fees will be reviewed and updated.

6. Safe Sanctuary/background-check requirements will be researched through the conference.
7. Dakota Youth will be considered for 2027 rather than organized for this year's event.

Action Items

- **Erin:** Contact remaining family regarding Bible presentation.
- Research Wild Wednesday/church shirt options and final design.
- Confirm pumpkin supply for October 28 Pumpkins & Pancakes.
- Determine conference requirements for background checks/Safe Sanctuary training.
- Investigate conference grant opportunities for Wild Wednesday/community missions.
- Transfer **$3,000** from Miscellaneous Dedicated Fund to General Fund.
- Continue parsonage purchasing/work within newly approved budget.
- Contact Bob's Lock & Key regarding rekeying and office keypad.
- Prepare member contact-information update form.
- Reconcile Shepherd's Staff and current membership records.
- Complete state annual report by November 1.
- Prepare Charge Conference information.
- Develop updated facility-use/rental policy for future board discussion.
- Check online worship sound and microphone setup.
- Determine disposition of old parsonage cabinets/appliances and choir platforms.
- Confirm November craft-night date.
- Obtain pricing for automatic church doors.
- Confirm Board of Ordained Ministry dates.
- Add Dakota Youth 2027 to future youth planning.

Next Meeting

The board discussed moving meetings slightly earlier when possible.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 27, 2026
Tentative Time: 6:00 p.m.

The 6:00 p.m. time will be confirmed after checking whether it creates a conflict for members who work later.

Closing

Lexy closed the meeting with prayer, giving thanks for the work being completed at the parsonage, the growth and energy surrounding Wild Wednesday and mission opportunities, and the positive momentum within the church and community.