

Sept 9, 2026 Council Minutes

Present: Moderator-elect Ryan Venema, Treasurer Jean Brocker, Secretary Joanne Himebauch, Brad Charles, Jamie Pennington, Karla Pennington, Jennifer Schmitz

Absent: Moderator Kay Rowntree, Rae-Ellen Preuss

Call to Order & Opening Prayer by Moderator-Elect Ryan Venema

Devotional Time - Pastor Mark. Mark - Jesus calling the disciples. *Immediately.*

Approval of August 5, 2026 minutes. Karla moved and Brad seconded to approve the minutes. Motion carried.

Treasurer's report - Jean Brocker. Jean let us know that the parsonage proceeds are in the reserve fund until the endowment gets set up. We received a request from the NACCC to help support The Congregationalist Magazine. Jamie suggested a "love" offering (special offering) to support the magazine. We are part of the association, so we should support it. Jennifer mentioned that we should be advertising locally. Karla mentioned that we need to look at the big picture of supporting the NA. Mark mentioned that it is right that we wouldn't garner new members from the NA, but we get support in other ways. Joanne suggested asking Council to give half, and then ask for a love offering. Brad and Mark suggested matching the congregation. We tabled the issue until next month.

We have a bequest of \$13,000 from Connie Mitchell's estate. The estate reached out to Janine, who talked with the family and then contacted Jean. Jean worked with LPL from Citizens Bank. They set up a beneficiary IRA to roll the money into (with deferred taxes). It can be in there indefinitely. We could put it into our endowment or our 02 Account. Jamie asked, "Was it a memorial or a gift?" The letter calls it a bequest, asking to use it in the church kitchen remodel. Brad thinks that since we are tax-exempt, it will be tax-free to us.

Finance Director's report - Jamie Pennington. Long-Range planning met, and Jamie gave us their recommendation of what priorities we have. Fixing the stain-glass window is the #1 priority. Someone tried to re-solder places in the window, but used the wrong metal. That would all have to be redone, as well as fixing it in general. Remodeling the Kitchen & Fellowship Hall was also a high priority. The LRP just looks at the needs of the congregation, but does not discuss where the money should come from. Rae-Ellen has looked into repairing the stained glass before. Her old quote from a company in Oconomowoc was \$3,000 during COVID. It will be more expensive now, especially with the anonymous repair effort. Jean suggested using the People's Church gift for the stained glass. Karla moved and Brad seconded to move forward with repairing the stain-glass window project spending as needed up to \$10,000 from Capital Improvements or the Reserve fund. The Council tasked Rae-Ellen to follow through with this project. Motion carried.

Pastor Mark has had problems getting ahold of Matt Carini to install the new Carillon. He has asked Rae-Ellen to follow through with it. Pastor Mark will pursue getting the Carillon reimbursed through our insurance company, Brotherhood.

We are in the middle of Stewardship (Giving Day) season. Each ministry team should let Jean know what our needs are. Jean and Jamie need to bring back suggestions to the Council and then to the congregation.

Joanne suggested setting the **November meeting date. We decided upon November 15.** Report booklets would need to be available to the congregation by November 1st. Council meets on October 14th. We need to get all things to Judi by Friday, October 23. Joanne reminded everyone to sign up for the potluck.

Investment of Parsonage proceeds update - Brad Charles. Brad has seen the paperwork. Kay and Jean will need to sign it. The document said that Judi Weyer would be one of the signatures. Brad agreed that that needed to get changed. It will be an electronic signature. Pastor Mark noticed some RED about the fund and paperwork: There is no rate of return, no prospectus, and Jim Filicetti was using personal email for business. Jean wants to use her real signature, instead of electronic. Jean is disappointed in how long this is taking, but Brad didn't think this is taking too long. Brad will tell Jim that we want real signatures and a prospectus and/or performance info. Brad thought that the minimum opening deposit would be \$1500. Then we can move the rest into it. Brad will check into all of this. We will get the account opened ASAP.

SOP process - Pastor Mark. Mark suggested that we table the discussion of the booklet. He did mention that he included the Constitution and that we would need to review the Master Policy annually. He talked about things to address, such as the termination of the pastor. We all received a copy so we will have time to review it before the next meeting.

Any other business? Brad mentioned that the baritone in his quartet has a different software that he uses for Worship that is better than ours for \$300 called VMix that we could download for use in the worship service (instead of Zoom). We can use it for our podcasts to support the church's growth. Brad will use Missions \$ for this. Updates do cost extra. Brad will ask the annual cost.

Three times now our custodian has left her keys in the outside door. Mark will talk with her again. Brad still needs to get a key.

Ryan mentioned that we need to get an updated quote for the tree trimming and grinding.

Jennifer mentioned that she wants to find a new / better way to get new people involved in church. She wants to put together a list of opportunities of time / talents. Pastor Mark thinks we shouldn't do a comprehensive list, but create a few ideas.... Karla suggested that she and Joanne present a skit. Mark offered to write a stone soup skit. Jennifer asked about a men's group. The one we had fell apart.

Jean mentioned that we have 7 for fish fry / Big Fish musical on Friday night.

Next Council meeting - October 14 at 6:30 PM

Closing prayer by Pastor Mark.

Adjournment - Ryan moved and Brad seconded to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Himebauch
Council secretary

September Directors' Reports 2026

Congregational Care (Jennifer Schmitz)

Fellowship Events (Joanne):

- We have a sign-up on the Communications table in the Narthex for the potluck on Giving Sunday, September 20th. Members are asked to bring an item from their cookbook recipes, if possible.
- We are looking for dates in October for a Hayride/Bonfire at the Rowntree's farm.
- Fellowship is joining Women's Agape Group to sponsor a luncheon and a musical in November. We will be attending the Mukwonago High School musical "Drowsy Chaperone."

Welcome and Hospitality (Joanne):

I put together 10 more Welcome Bags recently. I had to re-order mini books for the bags. I'm pretty well stocked otherwise. Marni Wiggins donated lots of her FCC bling left over from the Muskego Ski Show that FCC sponsored. I will be putting those things out on the table in the Narthex from time to time and maybe adding some of those things to the Welcome Bags. The mini fridge is well-stocked with cookies.

Funeral (Rae-Ellen):

There was a service for Carol Bartholomew on Sunday, August 9 at 3:00 PM. Visitation began at 1:00 PM. Carol was a member of the First Congregational Church of Mukwonago for 88 years. The LaBelle Chapter Order of the Eastern Star performed the funeral ceremony prior to the service to honor Carol, who was a 70 year member of our chapter. The family declined a meal.

Wedding: none at this time

Archivist: no new report at this time

Women's AGAPE Group (Jean Bocker):

- We are currently assembling the Shared Table cookbook for presentation on Giving Sunday, September 20th.
- We have organized a theater night at the Greenwald Foundation PAC this Friday, September 11 at 7pm.
- We have set a date to paint the chipped railings in the church on October 3rd. We are asking for help from the congregation because we don't have enough people to do it from our core group.

Visitation Ministry:

- Janine regularly visits long-time FCC member Dorothy Chapman at Linden. Jennifer visited Dorothy for her birthday in August.
- Other FCC members also go to Linden. Janine, Pastor Mark, and Joanne rotate services the first Sunday of each month at Linden. Jamie & Karla organize services on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Kay Rowntree & Joanne do a hymn sing the 5th Sunday of the month.
- Rae-Ellen has been hosting Wednesday services once per month at Brolen Meadows & Castle.

Missions & Growth (Brad Charles)

We are excited to have Jennifer Schmitz joining our team! She graciously agreed to come on board in August and she has some great ideas to help us grow our church.

This month we are switching over to donating toddler clothes and diapers for the Life Connection in Mukwonago and continuing this drive through November. They said they have plenty of donations for newborns, but virtually nothing for older children. I will transport our donations to them when we have a carload.

I made an announcement about our Life Connection focus in church on August 30th and I will put an article in the What's Happening this week. For those members who wish to continue donating back packs and small household appliances for The Hope Center, I will transport those items as well.

The Missions Team had a meeting with Janine on August 8th to discuss ways to help her with the donations for Food for Families. Joanne will be taking some of the load and we will be recruiting some more families to help out.

In an effort to help with the tornado relief effort in the Fox Valley, we donated \$250 to the Red Cross.

We will have a Missions Team meeting in the fall to determine what we want to do specifically for the holiday season.

In regard to the growth of our church, Mark and I are nailing down a date to record several editions of the "The Biker Pastor Podcast". Our plan is to create 30-40 minute discussions on the following topics: Who am I? Why am I here? Why are our loved ones taken from us? Why does God allow disasters to occur? Is there evil in the world?

Our plan is to release one podcast a month to the platforms that Gen Zers frequent and see what response we get. If we have a strong response we will create more podcasts on additional subjects. We will put the podcasts on our church website as well.

Property & Grounds (Rae-Ellen Preuss)

I contacted Tod Day for the tree work we voted on last month. His original estimate will need to be revised since Bob did some tree work on his own. I had asked him about 5 months ago...assuming he forgot, I hired Tod. There are stumps that will need to be ground out. Bob can't do that, but Tod can and will. The tree work will be done this fall.

We received a bill for \$600 for Metro Elevator. This is the yearly fee for our emergency line monitored by Metro. And we voted on this a few months ago.

I contacted Matt Carini about adding LED light fixtures in the areas where we have old units. I will pursue this as I am able since my fall.

Stained glass window in the sanctuary: this is a number one priority on the LRP list (see that agenda sent by Jamie)

I have contacted Oakbrook-Esser Stained glass studio in Oconomowoc. This was the original company contacted pre covid by another committee. They are familiar with what we have and need to have done. I sent new photos to them for assessment. They are asking for the original estimate from back then. I was only an observer on that group; so I don't believe I was given the estimate back then. But I recall around \$3,000. There is a change however.... someone (don't know who or when) attempted to do the repair themselves by soldering parts of the leaded framework. The solder appears bright silver in color against the dull finish of the lead. This is a huge problem, as all that solder will need to be removed before any repairs can be made. When the stained glass man saw the photos his comment was "oh wow". I am waiting to hear back from them. I'll keep you updated. As an aside.. since I have completed my two terms on the council and will be replaced, I'd like to continue with this stained glass project and NOT turn it over to anyone else. I have some history with this project and now some more information. Please consider my request. I do not want to be considered for extending my term as P&G director. I need some down time.