

(The September 11 minutes were approved at the Church Council meeting on October 9.)

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Church Council Minutes

September 11, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

Call to Order – Called by Jodi Cowen, Moderator, @ 6:38 p.m.

Jodi Cowen, Pastor Jim, Phil Stepanski, Gary Tackes, Jennifer Dimmer, Matt Riemer, Nancy Hinneberg, Barb Bahr, Jeanne Mantsch, Shandy Roehrig, and Rhonda Thompson.

Opening Meditation – Prayer for Peace in Families Worldwide based on *Col 3:15*. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since as members of one body you are called to peace.

Approval of Church Council Minutes - Aug 2025 - Jennifer motions to approve the August minutes and Jeanne seconds the motion. The minutes are approved.

Pastor Report - Pastor Jim mentions that he has talked with Reverend Ashley Nolte, from Pilgrim UCC church in Grafton, about their mission trip planned for 2026 to South Dakota. They are open to Lighthouse youth joining also.

Treasurer Financial Updates (Phil) - Financial Statements were not sent out because there was some question on how current the entries are. There was an old check that had not been cleared in several months. Phil put a stop payment on it for \$35. Phil distributed a "Wish List 2026 Budget" with a start to proposed numbers for 2026. Pastor Jim asks Christian Ed to be considered for a stipend budget line. Music has line items for yearly expenses even when there is no money in the budget for the items. Phil is suggesting the Property Team bring identified building needs with cost to the Treasurer to determine if there are funds to cover the cost.

-We have received a quote for \$4450 to repair one of two AC units used for the sanctuary. All agreed to table this for a month till we get next month's financial reports.

-Tables- Bell Choir has requested folding tables, which Phil notes Walmart has for \$320. Nancy motions to buy Handbell Choir the four tables using a RaiseRight gift card and Jennifer seconds the motion. The vote passes.

-Tree Trimming and removal- Property Team has an estimate for \$5000 to remove and trim trees on the west side of the building. A second estimate has been requested, but not yet received. Jodi motions to approve up to \$5000 on trimming and removing needed trees using the more economical quote. Barb seconds the motion. The vote passes.

Old Business

-Plan for October Services - It looks like October services will still be in Fellowship Hall. With attendance numbers at a minimum and a gathering session on the first Sunday of the month, two services create an overload for the schedule. Jennifer motions to have only the one 9am service for October. Nancy seconds the motion. The vote passes for one service.

-Gathering session plans - The Next Chapter Meeting dates are October 5 and yet to be determined October date.

-Christmas Tree Sales - There is a need for a coordinator to oversee sign ups for this year's tree sales, the largest fundraiser for the church.

Additional Team Updates if needed -

- Teams and families should sign up for hosting or helping with Fellowship on second and third Sundays of the month.

Jennifer needs help with communion on October 5. Jodi agrees to help.

Breakfast with Santa is confirmed for November 29.

This year's Pampered Chef sales were higher than last year, \$1,573.33. Congrats!

- There are nine students in this year's confirmation class.

New Business

- Staff review process (Nancy) - Nancy reviewed the process and timeline for staff reviews. It was discussed that the staff should be informed of the new review process with both conversations and emails. It was decided the musicians have a different role within the church, providing a service, and reviews should be done differently. An annual check in/conversation seems fitting.

- A Fundraiser Idea- It was suggested to run a pool for when the elevator is functional.

Any other new business to come before the Council? Nothing.

Closing Prayer and Adjournment 8:15 p.m.

Submitted by Rhonda Thompson - Clerk