

Council Minutes
September 10, 2024

Present were Pastor Kurt Freeman, April Heady, Jake and Emily Mayer, Paula Thoennes, Jack Dwiggin, Joan Banning, Dana Blanchard, Hollie Kessler, Carol Yarian, Nick Fetchina, Scott Gillespie, and Jo Stroud.

Scott thanked everyone for coming and then asked Pastor Kurt to open the meeting with prayer. Pastor Kurt began by asking the group where they had seen God at work. Several members responded and then he finished with prayer.

For Discipleship, Jack reported that the next study on the Life of Generosity will begin after the first of the year.

Nick Fetchina reported for the Finance committee that our income is up over last year but still under budget while most expenses are also under budget. The Trustees have had unexpected expenses for maintenance and are over budget. The budget for 2025 has increased by 2% due to increases in the following budgets: Staff Parish, tithe to conference and Trustees, all of which is for maintenance. Other areas of the church have lowered their budgets. The committee had considered the situation that only 1/3 of the families in the church had returned pledge cards last year. To address this problem, the pledge cards for this year will not ask for any identifying information.

April Heady reported for Staff Parish that they have a new member, Carol Gilbert. They have completed their budget for 2025 and are working on clergy assessment with Pastor Kurt. Hollie presented the paperwork for charge conference concerning pastoral salary, mileage and education expenses: Salary was \$76,384, a 3% increase, with the other items remaining the same at \$4000. April recommended these amounts to the Council for approval and the recommendation passed.

Carol Yarian reported for the areas she oversees. Attendance is picking up after summer break and some guests are visiting. For small groups, the new member class has 10 people attending who will join the church on October 13; the Young Women's Bible study and the Wrestling with Doubt classes will begin on October 13. For outreach: the Fall Festival is scheduled for Thursday, September 26, 4:00 to 7:30 PM at the Wildcat Creek Orchard. The congregation will be notified of the road closure so they can use Concord Road to reach the Orchard; Micah, small group, will be leading the Turkey Time ministry which will partner with 4 area schools to offer a Thanksgiving meal for 10 families at each school. The Edgelea Backpack ministry has begun collecting food and delivering backpacks to the school. Under care ministries, the Suicide Remembrance Service will be September 29th at 2 pm; the CCN ministry with IU Health has had a slow start, but there are 2 names for our Connectors to call. She will be meeting with IU Health to address concerns. The Blood Drive was successful.

Lay Leader, Jo Stroud commented that our participation in Outfest was successful, and she and Annette are planning for next year. Leftover small bags with little Jesus and information about our church were given to be used at the next gathering.

Hollie reported for the trustees that there have been several maintenance issues which have been addressed.

For Early Learning, Dana reported that they are still working on their budget for the year. They are also considering more creative ways to earn money for their programs. The EL Board is working well as is the change to 2 co-directors. The half day preschool classes are now in session.

Emily reported that goody bags have been prepared for the children returning to Sunday School. They are preparing for Trunk or Treat on October 26 and will be putting up sign-up sheets soon. For Christmas Eve, a third service at 6:30 is being considered, which would feature the children as participants in the service. A Family Ministry Board is being discussed which would bring together programming for Children and Youth.

Jake commented that the Youth have participated with other churches in a collaborative event. Meeting in small groups has been effective and he is hopeful that members of the congregation will help in this.

For worship, Jake was pleased that other volunteers were willing to fill in when regulars were absent. Although there have been issues with technology, it is going well, and problems have been addressed. Christmas Eve services are being discussed, with the addition of a third service.

Pastor Kurt invited anyone interested to go with him to the installation of the new Bishop, Tracy S. Malone. He reminded the Council of the Charge Conference, by Zoom, on November 7. Regarding lay leadership he commented that the Lay Leadership committee is having continued difficulty securing volunteers for various church positions. Kurt then presented to the Council that he is working on the paperwork for a grant for a renewal leave for 3 months, to be taken in June/July 2026 and June/July 2027. He described this as a Congregation/Pastor renewal.

Another ministry was presented to the Council. Beks Freeman has presented the possibility of a Theater Church. She has written a play which will be given at CUMC this weekend, and this has prompted funding from members of the congregation and others in support of the mission. One target for the ministry would be the theater company, many of whom have had bad or no experience with the church. It could bring opportunities for talkbacks with attendees to discuss the experience. A long-term goal could be to expand this theater to other university towns who would partner with a nearby UMC. Paula Thoennes recommended that Council adopt this as a new ministry and the recommendation passed.

Nick Fetchina suggested that since the Finance Committee could be finished by 6:45, we could be ready for Council to begin at 7:00 in November when we meet again. Our January meeting will be by Zoom.

Pastor Kurt closed the meeting with prayer.

