

University United Methodist Church, Baton Rouge, LA

Church Council Meeting Minutes

January 26, 2026 – 7PM, Zoom

Lay Leader Steve Backstrom called the meeting to order and offered the opening prayer.

Welcome and new member orientation

Steve welcomed incoming new council members and noted that he attached the church council's description from the United Methodist Book of Discipline for everyone to familiarize themselves with. We are the legislative body of this church and therefore set the tone for our particular church.

Minutes

Jeff Albright made a motion to accept the November 2025 minutes. Robert Hoke seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Finance Update

Chair Jeff Albright reviewed the Dec. 2025 financial statement and while UUMC's finances lagged for most of 2025, we had a strong end to the year with a net operating revenue profit of over \$36,700.00. A wonderful generosity campaign took place. With additional investment income of over \$155,000 we ended the year with a final net revenue of \$191,727.86.

For the 2026 budget, our net revenue is expected to be \$145,268.62. Adoption of the budget took place in a motion by Seth Irby and seconded by Ed Dodd. The vote to approve the budget was unanimous.

SPR Update

Chair Robert Hoke announced the departure of our church coordinator, Alaina Clemons, and talked about the search for the new church administrator (new job title). About 30 people have applied so the review of resumes will begin soon. The communications director has been changed to a full-time position, as this position's role will increase in importance in the future. Both positions' salaries have been increased to be in range with comparable market values. Meanwhile, until all positions are filled, there may be some drop off in how quickly things can be handled in the church office, so volunteers are being sought to help out.

Trustees Update

Chair John Myers submitted a detailed and thorough report for members to see. We have drainage and gutter projects forthcoming in the near future. The most costly items of the a/c contract and insurance will be studied by the committee very soon.

UMPA Updates

Steve reported for Lauren Pearce that in April there will be a pre-school teacher appreciation breakfast, if funds are available. The committee is looking at possible creative fund raisers as well.

2025 Congregational Survey Summary Report

Rev. Katie McKay Simpson said 87 church members participated in the survey. She and lay leader Steve were very appreciative of the comments and suggestions by participants. Much discussion of the document itself, and the summary report, took place. After agreeing that the report needs to go back to the editing committee, a motion was made by Trey Bickham, seconded by Tommy Damico, and approved, to send it back.

Other committee reports

Chair Melissa Nguyen had nothing new to report from the Social Justice Committee. Steve announced the Missions committee will hold its annual Rise Against Hunger event on March 21 in Fellowship Hall.

After Robert Hoke moved to adjourn, Joe Morton seconded the motion, and Steve adjourned the meeting. Rev. Katie offered the closing prayer.

Council members/guests present on Zoom:

Rev. Katie McKay Simpson, Rev. Mary Rachel Moore, Steve Backstrom, Elise Strain, Katie and Sean Love, John Myers, Jeff Albright, Janie Levert, Kerry Hawkins, Trey Bickham, Jessie DePriest, Ed Dodd, Melissa Nguyen, Robert Hoke, Seth Irby, Tom Wilton, Tommy Damico, Joe Morton.
