



**Annual Congregational Meeting
Agenda
January 25, 2026**

Call to Order – Kathy Robinson, moderator

Opening Prayer – Rev. Amy Gopp, senior minister

Minutes of Previous Meetings – Kathy Robinson, moderator

Minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting January 26, 2025

Special Congregation Meeting October 5, 2025

Presentation of Proposed 2026 Budget – John Schinker, vice moderator
& Ralph Kletzien, finance ministry

Presentation of Officers and Lay Leaders for 2026 – Megan Snyder, nominating ministry
Election of Officers and Lay Leaders

Gratitude

Closing Prayer – Pastor Amy

Kent United Church of Christ

**Annual Congregational Meeting
Minutes
January 26, 2025**

Moderator Al Barber called the meeting to order, introducing himself for those who didn't know him as moderator. Pastor Amy opened with a prayer.

Gayle Wall asked for people to sign up to be greeters.

Al moved approval of last year's annual meeting minutes. Barb Hanniford seconded; motion carried.

There was a question on the financial reports concerning the 2024 final deficit. Al clarified, that the 2024 budget projected a deficit of \$16,000, but at the year-end, the deficit for 2024 was recorded at \$6,600. However, it was discovered after the year-end statements were prepared that a maintenance expense of \$3,465 that should have been charged to long-term maintenance special fund, was charged to the 2024 operating budget instead. Thus the adjusted actual year-end deficit would be \$3,143.

We received \$135,000.00 from the City of Kent for the part of our property that we sold to the city for the planned roundabout. \$65,000.00 will be used to replace our sign. Al thanked Kathy Robinson and Ralph Kletzien for their work on the projected budget.

Points to keep in mind: in 2024 we had an agreement to hire an associate minister. All ministries and committees submitted their budgets.

The financial ministry recommends a 3% Cost of Living Allowance for staff people: Pastor Amy, Corey Fowler, Don Diebler, Leah Davis.

The Music Committee asked for an increase, which will come from endowment funds.

Income: \$516,000.00

Expenses: \$514,000.00

Surplus: \$3,000.00

Ralph Kletzien said that there are three endowment funds for the support of the music program. The finance ministry moved approval of the 2025 budget, Frank Hairston seconded. Motion carried.

Creation Justice Covenant: Don Bubenzer read the proposed covenant:

United Church Christ of Kent

December 16, 2024

The United Church of Christ of Kent, Ohio understands creation as a gift of God to be cherished rather than as a resource to be consumed. We confess that we have participated in the desecration of God's creation for our own desires, purposes, and greed which has resulted in the current climate crisis. The exploitation of our planet home has also led to tragic human suffering of those placed on the margins of society due to their race,

class, and inequity. We acknowledge that we have been entrenched in a dualistic concept of the world and how we understand it; we have not seen ourselves as part of the Earth but separate from it. We lament the spiritual crisis of having forgotten the sacred nature of creation and our own role as stewards of God's gift of creation.

Guided by our profound faith, we also believe that God is still speaking, and that the Holy Spirit moves among us in new ways to relate with the sacred, that is, all of life. We promise to value life, and to experience all of creation as part of a sacred whole. We seek to see God's love and Christ's presence in all of life—and to ensure that creation justice is upheld in our theology, worship, practices, congregational life, and our outreach to the wider community and world. Our calling is one of urgency and great resolve.

Therefore, we seek to be in covenant with our Creator God to live responsibly as part of creation entrusted with its survival rather than as lords over it. We vow to care for creation and work for justice for those oppressed by our abuse of it. We offer our promise to the God of All-That-Is, to Jesus the Christ who shows us the way to live the promise, and unites us in these critical efforts.

Debbie Schinker and Kelly Gifford brought up questions regarding the wording "those on the margins of society." Following discussion there was an amendment to the motion: "of those placed on the margins of society due to their race, class, and inequity." Lynn Gregor proposed this wording change. Heather Lohman seconded. Motion carried.

Megan Snyder presented the names of the people who have consented to serve on the various ministries and committees. She noted that Kristin Garner has agreed to serve on the education ministry. Additionally, John Hetrick noted that Paul Sellman has agreed to serve on the property committee. She moved on behalf of the nominating ministry that these people be elected. Frank Hairston seconded. Motion carried.

Frank Hairston talked about the annual Portage County NAACP Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast. He said that there were 130 people at the church, and he received many favorable comments about the occasion.

Bill Hoover thanked Kathy Robinson and Ralph Kletzien for their service on the finance ministry, mentioning that the work of the finance ministry included input from all ministry

and committee chairs. Also, that the budget is a working document that none of the numbers are set in stone.

Members leaving committee or ministry positions: Sue Otterson (officer), Becky Dunlap (education), Glenn Hanniford (worship & arts) were recognized for their service.

Pastor Amy thanked Lori Babbey and the green team taskforce for their hard work on compiling their sustainability report. She also thanked Al Barber (officer), Kathy Robinson (officer), Bill Hoover (treasurer) and Muriel Breyley (clerk) for their service.

Meeting adjourned.

**Kent United Church of Christ
Special Congregational Meeting
Minutes of October 5, 2025**

The Meeting was called to order at 11:20 AM in the sanctuary by Kathy Robinson, moderator.

Rev. Emily began with an opening prayer.

Presentation of the Proposed Governance Structure

John Schinker, vice moderator, took charge of this part of the congregational meeting. We had previously met on September 28 for an informational session to present the new governance structure in depth. Since that was a lengthy meeting with much discussion, questions, and opinions, John noted that today's special congregational meeting would be confined to voting on the proposed motion:

Approve the implementation of a trial of the proposed governance structure as described in the "Proposed Governance Structure Overview" document, from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026, including:

- 1. The temporary suspension of the constitution and those by-laws provisions that contradict this new structure,*
- 2. The implementation of the new model for 2026,*
- 3. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the model, along with recommendations for any needed adjustments, and*
- 4. The appointment of a team to draft a new constitution and by-laws
For consideration by the congregation no later than October 31, 2026.*

Paper ballots were distributed with people voting either Yes or No. After collection and tally, the vote was overwhelmingly in favor; only 2 dissents.

After Kathy thanked the congregation for coming together and thoughtfully considering the issue, Pastor Amy led us in a closing prayer. Meeting adjourned at 11:55AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Murie Breyley, clerk