CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST NEENAH/ MENASHA

Ministry Council Agenda
August 7, 2025

Present: Signa Meyers, Sue Knuth, Mary Janess, Chris Parsons, Pastor Rob, Denise Stewart, Terri Flesburg, Connie Regazzi

Missing: Chuck Luebke, Jeff Nichols, Sherri Jischke

Quorum Count (six council members, i.e., more than one-half of council): Quorum confirmed.

Minutes taken by: Chris Parsons

Welcomed Guests: Kevin Shumann

Gathering Devotion: Pastor Rob

Approval of June 5, 2025 Agenda and Minutes: Approved

Consent Agenda Items:

Item	Owner	Date of last Minutes received
Ministry of Spiritual Life Highlights • June 15 – ice cream social • July 20 – outdoor service and picnic • For the ad hoc committee for church social activities, one volunteer has come forward. The first activity could be next year's 175th anniversary celebration. • September 14 – next meeting Escalations or decisions • none	Terri	June 8, 2025
Ministry of Service Highlights • Several people have come forward for the 175th anniversary committee. • Next meeting in September Other matters • Ministry is looking for additional members Escalations or decisions • none	Mary	March 30, 2025

Ministry of Faith Development Highlights • June hometown mission trip involved four adults and two groups of kids (13 kids in total), from middle elementary and upper elementary. Sites visited were not accustomed to younger kids volunteering and may not have been prepared for kids to complete a task and want more to do. • Schedules for Sunday School and Youth Group are complete. • August 5 – First meeting of fundraising committee Other matters • Working on a no-nut policy • Updated safe-conduct roster (individuals with completed background checks) • Detailed calendars are included in CE report. Escalations or decisions • none	Becky/Denise	CE Director's Report received for August. No meeting since the last Council meeting.
Ministry of Stewardship (Stewardship, Finance, Building and Grounds, Insurance) Highlights • Finance – Still in transition to outside accounting service. All bills have been paid on time, and books are current. The church is honoring Dave this Sunday for 40 years of service. Checks for Boy Scout scholarships will be written in next week or two. • Building and Grounds – Air conditioners need repair/replacement. Bike racks are to be placed in front and back. Lake Edge is moving into Fellowship Hall, and touch ups may be needed to the areas they are moving from. Sump pump is working well. For the Martin Security services, Lake Edge already paid their portion; Martin Security now wants additional funds to begin the work. • Insurance – no updates Escalations or decisions • none	Pastor Rob	July 22, 2025
Pastor's Report Highlights • Pastor Rob is using Note Bird software to track pastoral care (11 home visits, 4 hospital visits, 7 visits at church, all in June and July). • We seem to be growing. There is energy in the pews, the classrooms, and the youth group. We even have a new fundraising committee starting this month. • Pastor Rob continues to expect a focus on youth and families and pastoral care. Other matters • The council discussed the possibility of restarting the care team/visiting team (possibly under Ministry of Service).	Pastor Rob	June/July

Escalations or decisions • none		

Discussion Agenda:

Old Business

- Appreciative Inquiry – Pastor Rob
    - We are looking for more members for the planning team to work with our facilitator, Bonnie Andrews. Thus far we have Becky Nichols, John La Prairie, and Marilyn Kostrzak.
    - First meeting with facilitator is Sun Sept 28 after worship. This meeting will be no more than 2 hours and will be a congregational meeting to choose one thing to focus on: what do we do well as a church.
    - Full schedule of meetings: (1) Sun Sept 28, 11:15 AM (2hr max), (2) Sat Nov 15, 3-8PM, (3) Sat Jan 31, 12-5PM, (4) Sat Mar 7, 12-4PM, (5) Sat Apr 25, 1-4PM. All meetings will be added to the church calendar by the end of August.
    - We need everyone's support for this visioning process to work. The longest session is expected to be January 31 and involves the various ministries discussing how to apply ideas from the congregation.
    - The church has been invoiced for $1250, with the remaining $1250 to be invoiced on January 1.

- Habitat for Humanity build team update – Mary
    - A possible fundraising idea is a donor dinner (with a possible speaker already contacted) to collect funds to be used for a matching grant. Another fundraising idea is building benches.

- "Fun" ad-hoc committee update (Connie) and 175th anniversary update (Mary)
    - For the 175th anniversary celebration, a 175th birthday party is a possibility. We could invite the neighborhood, have a bounce house, etc.

- Hearing Loop Follow up – All
    - Equipment seems to be working mechanically. Sue will contact Katie.

- Materials for new members – Pastor Rob
    - Packets of materials that new members receive include Who We Are/ What We Believe UCC trifold, CUCCNM trifold, pledge card, CUCCNM introductory booklet, previous year's giving letter, time and talent survey, membership information form, and 5-questions form.
    - Pastor Rob notes many of these documents did not exist when he started.
    - Pastor Rob provided an outline for the pathway to membership as it stands.
    - In the future, there could be a website portal for information and forms as well, with access via QR code.

- Chicken picnic was a great success. It gave people time to talk with one another. The out-of-pocket spend was $188, and several people graciously donated food, etc. If we consider this an annual event, it could be scheduled on the same day as the last day of Sunday School and include a dunk tank, bounce house, etc.

New Business

- Goal Setting – Sue and Signa
    - Setting goals will allow the council to focus and not being pulled to do everything.
    - Council members shared three goals each, and goals were grouped into the following categories (in no particular order):

1. Finance
2. Multi-generational
3. Supporting appreciative inquiry
4. Children
5. Building and grounds
6. Lake Edge
7. Welcoming
8. Communication
9. Community awareness/membership
10. Member engagement

- Council members voted for the top three. The top three (with examples of each) are as follows (in no particular order):
    1. Member engagement
        a. Provide opportunities for youth to get involved with the wider church
        b. Provide opportunities to build the community outside of services
        c. Facilitate knowing who to contact
        d. Create more adult spiritual practice opportunities
        e. Create a culture of deeper connection with members through activities and education
        f. Strengthen foundations from which to "live it"
        g. Continue being "welcoming" for all (attendees, new members, members, etc.)
        h. Increase member engagement
        i. Include (encourage) new members in more "stuff"
    2. Community awareness and membership
        a. Streamline processes for new members
        b. Open the congregation for people to find
        c. Encourage socialization outside of worship
        d. Increase community engagement by 50%
        e. Bring in 40 new members
        f. See more families and children joining
    3. Children
        a. Re-establish the nursery for young families
        b. Get all kids in at least one service once per month. For example, the first Sunday of the month would not have Sunday School but would have a kid-centric service with many kids in supportive roles.
        c. Concentrate the children's time on just kids

    At the next meeting, council will further define the top three goals based on SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound) criteria.

- Communication Brainstorm – Signa
    - Discussion questions:
        1. How can we as a council do a better job communicating council activities to the wider church?
        2. What are we doing now? What could we be doing more of? Less of? What would the church want to know? e.g., council decisions
    - Shared ideas:
        1. "Gleanings from the Council" as a newsletter article (not the minutes, but highlights)
        2. "Council Corner" items in the bulletin or as sticky notes attached to the bulletin
        3. Council Corner/Fireside chat as monthly listening sessions after service
        4. Signs in bathroom
        5. Yard signs and signs in front of church doors to communicate about the church and council
        6. A periodic council moment during the weekly announcements, such as "Council's Greatest Hits" once per month

Council decided to hold listening sessions in September, October, November, and December. Council will brainstorm questions that council may ask those who drop in, but the expectation will be that those who drop in can ask anything they wish. The hope is that the listening sessions will better enable the council to assist in connecting faith to what people do and in answering the questions why does this matter and how does this tie into the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- Calendar review
    - August 17 – Pet Blessing (Paige preaching)
    - September 7 – Start of Sunday School; Bible Sunday; pancake breakfast
    - September 28 – First Appreciative Inquiry (AI) session

- Lake Edge requested to use the south end of Fellowship Hall for a designated meal space. The north end of Fellowship Hall is currently their "gym" and is also used for a meal space by kids that go offsite after an early lunch. Council members had several follow up questions, including table usage, cleaning, review of stipend cost, number of kids, reservation of the area for church use on Tuesdays for Scout meetings and Wednesdays in Lent (and possible others), etc. Lake Edge subsequently answered the additional questions, and the council decided by email to grant the request on a trial basis through the end of the year.

- There is a need for childcare for AI events. Mary offered to make some contacts.

Lord's Prayer

Next meeting: September 4, 2025

Next Devotion: Connie