

Church Council Meeting-Minutes

15 February 2026 / NEUMC



Attendees:

Weston Cheatham Gaye Christmus James Cook Stephen Crowell Jane DeCristofaro Antoinette Gaborton-Moss	Larry Griner Charlie Henry Mary Anne Lockard Michael Munn Chris Wargel Jennifer Wargel	Others Tom DeCristofaro
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Agenda

Opening Prayer and/or Devotion	Jennifer Wargel
Review and Approve Minutes	Mary Anne Lockard No report available
Reports	
Ministries	
Nurture Ministry	<p>Debbo Lackore</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will meet with Pastor Antoinette next week.
Outreach and Witness Ministries	<p>Gaye Christmus, Jane DeCristofaro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met last week. Greg Haffner will build new doors for the Blessing Box. Received a large donation of food from the Boy Scouts. Goal for the year is to connect with people receiving services (Blessing Box, Angel Tree, and back pack program) Blessing Box displayed an invitation to attend the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper on February 17. Blessing Box and Angel Tree participants will receive invitations to attend all Easter activities. Community Spaghetti dinner will be held on April 17. Plans are to hold the event outside on the picnic tables.
Worship Team	<p>Stephen Crowell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No report
Lay Leaders	<p>Larry Griner, Jane Scott, Stephen Crowell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in the planning for Lent, pancake supper, and Ash Wednesday Service.

Youth Group	<p>Weston Cheatham</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revolution was cancelled and has been rescheduled for Palm Sunday. • Planning for the Good Friday service.
United Methodist Men	<p>Herb Hilmer</p> <p>No report</p>
United Women in Faith	<p>Melissa Sansolo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The women will lead the Martin Luther King, Jr. service on February 15.
Administrative Committees	
Finance Committee	<p>James Cook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have not met this month. • The balance of the mortgage is \$7000 or \$8000 and should be paid off in the Easter-June time frame.
SPRC	<p>Karen Evans for Kristen Miro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The committee attended a two hour training session led by Reverend Elrod. • February 26 will be their first meeting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustees 	<p>Mike Munn</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken lock in the Education Building has been repaired (\$250) • The storage area under the Education Building needs to be cleaned out and insulation replaced. • Forest Horn has surveyed the outside property for areas that need attention. The check list will be presented to the congregation in hopes that some of these items can be completed by members. Professionals may need to be hired to complete the remaining items. • An electrician will be contacted to give an estimate for several electrical problems discussed earlier; buzzing in the electrical room, sanctuary lights, adding plugs for donated televisions in sanctuary, and light switches needing replacement. • Plans to replace the sanctuary microphones would cost about \$5000. Our present budget is not sufficient for these needs, therefore only the Pastor's microphone system and a microphone for the podium will be purchased at this time for \$2000. A donation was received to pay the extra \$300 not covered in the budget for the cost of these items. A motion was passed to use the \$300 donation to pay for these items. • It was noted that we do have a designated gifts policy for the church. The financial committee does make the final decision as to where the donated funds are used. In case of conflict, the donors will be consulted before a final decision is made. • The trustee items in the next budget will be more detailed using past expenses to create. The goal is to be accountable and transparent in the Trustee expenses. • Chris introduced possible plans to sell our present cameras and buy new ones. At this point we are not able to successfully livestream at the time of the service. Possible solutions will be discussed with our IT specialist.

<p>Report of the Pastor</p>	<p>Pastor Antoinette Gaborton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 birthday cards sent • Several pastoral care calls. Please be sure to contact those who miss church service for more than two weeks (pew buddies), or any who touch your heart. The whole church needs to reach out with care. Please remember Gil Johnson, the Sloop and Markham families. • New Members class will be held March 15-29. New members will be received on Easter Sunday. • Special thanks to James who ran the numbers for the church growth study. We are showing growth and want to continue this progress. • Attached: Ministry Vitality and Community Visibility <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussed ministry strengths, 2026 focus, and strategy for accomplishing these goals. 2. Heather Cook will be the social media volunteer, responsible for gathering and posting content. 3. Discussed outreach to visitors, neighbors, and youth encouraging more involvement. 4. Visitors should receive visitor's packet. Goals: After first visit, a personal note and a visit from Pastor Antoinette. After the third visit, contact with the nurture committee. • Goal: Faithful presence, showing up consistently, warmly, and intentionally where people are. • Weston made a suggestion we ask churches in the area to help with donations for the Blessing Box. Representatives from our church could visit other churches to explain the program.
<p>Other Business</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meeting March 15
<p>Closing Prayer</p>	<p>James Cook</p>

Submitted by: Mary Anne Lockard, Recording Secretary

Ministry Vitality & Community Visibility

Our church is experiencing steady and encouraging growth in worship. We want to continue building on this trend by making visible what God is already doing among us and extending that movement into our wider community.

Our Ministry Strengths

- A genuinely friendly and welcoming congregation
- Sound, thoughtful preaching
- A strong sense of belonging
- Growing worship participation

2026 Focus

1. Continued and consistent Sunday worship growth
2. Stronger engagement with first and third-time visitors
3. Greater visibility and connection in the community
4. Further integrate youth in worship and church ministries (as available)

Strategy

1. Approach digital communication as an extension of hospitality
 - a. Just as we open our physical doors each Sunday, we open digital doors throughout the week. This invites neighbors to see, hear, and experience who we are and how God is at work here
2. Focus on personalized, timely, and intentional touchpoints that lead them from: visitor → participant → engaged member
3. Build genuine relationships with those served through the Blessing Box, Backpack Program, and Angel Tree, allowing these ministries to become bridges to deeper connection and belonging
 - a. Collaborate with Northeast Columbia churches
4. Encourage intentional and meaningful pathways for youth to participate, lead, and belong in every aspect of church life. **Key:** Ownership of the church's mission.

What We'll Do

1. Digital presence
 - Consistent posts on Facebook and Instagram with welcoming language
 - Share sermon invitations, real-life moments in church life, and timely reminders
 - Continue presenting livestream worship as an easy, comfortable first step for those returning to church (Facebook, YouTube)

4 Years NEUMC Weekly Attendance and Visitors / 12 Week Moving Average

