



Jan 2025 Newsletter

- Come join us for Worship on Sunday mornings at 9 AM and virtually at uccmedford.org/media
510 E. Broadway Ave, Medford, WI 54451 715-748-3391 (church office)
Church website: www.uccmedford.org. Online worship ([Facebook live](#)) cuccofmedford@gmail.com
“Like” us on Facebook: Community United Church of Christ, Medford, Wisconsin

CUCC Church Council Meeting Minutes from Dec. 12, 2024

December 12, 2024 Council Minutes

Meeting called to order at 6:15 pm

Members present: Dylan H, Gloria C, Mark J, Jerry P, Mark D and Scott K

Prayer of Guidance was given by Dylan H

Consent Agenda

November Meeting Minutes were emailed. No Comments or concerns, no changes

Motion to approve minutes by Gloria C, seconded by Mark J; motion carried.

October and November Treasurer's reports were handed out at the meeting.

After discussion about specific items, Motion to approve by Jerry P, seconded by Gloria C; motion carried

Group reports

Buildings and Grounds: A new light was installed in the Parsonage kitchen. The upstairs Patio door in the Parsonage was winterized. The Church Front Entry area seems warmer due to new weatherstrip on entry doors. A new phone with Voicemail was purchased for the Church office

Five Practices: Council reviewed the Church Survey with recommendations from Five Practices.

Five Practices will not meet in December but are hosting the Mardi Gras Dinner in 2025

Christian Ed: Jam for December was cancelled. Christmas Eve Service Program ready. Confirmation continues every other week unless school scheduled off

Candlelight Guild: Group hosted a potluck meal before decorating the Church. The Food Drive for Backpack Program continues. The Holiday Fair meal brought in \$225, the Candle Guild matched that amount then raised the total to \$500. The Candlelight Guild will purchase \$500 worth of food and it will be given to the Backpack Program along with the donated food from the food drive. Thanks to everyone for the support

Pastor's Report: Pastor was busy with the Christmas Program, Advent Services, Confirmation and other regular duties.

New Business:

Quicken Issues were discussed, we need to simplify the entry options to create better reports.

Budget handbook is being filled out. It will be emailed to Council at the end of year for final review at the January Council meeting.

Reminder to all, reports for Annual Report are to show beginning balance on Jan 1 2024, total income, total expenses and ending balance on Dec 31, 2024

CUCC CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES continued — 12-12-2024

Council members are still needed to fill 4 positions

Membership Committee updated the member list; 19 moved to inactive and 2_new members added

Audits for General Fund are done through September

Old Business - Sanitation of church continues

Facility Use agreement table in July

Safe Church update: any drivers who will be transporting children will need to supply their driver's license and insurance information to the Church office before the trip takes place. This includes all scheduled trips as a group, not parents transporting children to and from church.

There was a closed Session at 7:00 pm

Returned to open Session at 7:10 pm

Motion to approve Gift Cards totaling \$500 for employees with more than 2 months of service was made by Gloria C, Seconded by Mark J, motion carried

Next Council meeting will be Thursday, Jan 9, 2025 at 6:15 pm

Council recited the Lord's Prayer

Motion to adjourn by Mark J, seconded by Mark D, motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm

Season's Greetings to all,

This time of year brings a time of thanks, followed by the season of Hope, Joy, Peace and Love celebrating the birth of Christ. We find ourselves with the hustle and bustle of preparing for family and friends, shopping for those special foods to prepare those delicious dishes and shopping for those special people we care about.

As we head into the New Year, take time to look back and reflect on what you accomplished this year. We all have projects and goals we set and work toward. I pray you had the great year you planned for.

January brings us the Annual Meeting, where we meet to review the Church's goals and plans for the New Year. Your Church Council, groups, committees and office staff are all gathering information to create the goals, projects, plans and reports that will make up the next year's budget. We will discuss concerns on Sunday, Jan 26 following the 9 am Worship Service. We hope to see a good turnout of our members. We do need to fill 4 Council positions as 3 members terms end and we need to replace a Council member who resigned. These Council members are our voice, making decisions on our behalf as a Church; for the greater good of our Church and its members. Please consider filling one of these Council positions for the three year term or the remaining year of the partial term.

On behalf of the Church: As Council President: I and the Church Council would like to once again thank all of you for your continued support of this Church as we gather together for services of worship, for fellowship; and the planning of the Church that happens in Group and Committee meetings. Just like David, we may be small but we are mighty when we work together.

I thank you for the trust you have placed in myself, our Council members, Group and Committee members and all the other members who have served and helped this Church this last year. May our Church continue to be a light in our community and may each of you have a Happy and Blessed New Year.

Scott Knoff
Council President 2024



CANDLE LIGHT GUILD NEWS:

We joined together on November 26th to decorate the sanctuary and followed with a light supper. Thank you to everyone who joined us, the sanctuary was beautiful. A special thank you to Jerry GP for putting the tree up and Lori G for putting her special touch on the altar decorations.

Thank you for all the generous support in the Giving Tree program. Susie N delivered a truckload of food and gift cards to help support those school children in the backpack program. Thank you, Meriam S for helping her load up the truck!

We sent out cards to friends and octogenarian members and handed out gift bags at the Children's Christmas Eve program.

The next meeting of the Candlelight Guild will be held on Tuesday, January 7th at 5:30. Please come and join us in keeping old traditions and starting new ones. We would love to have you join us!

For the CG, Dawn



Thankyou Dawn for the porch pot

Be sure to stop in and look at the Sunday school activity board. They have been busy learning & doing many crafts with Melissa K.



Thankyou to everyone who brought Holiday poinsettias to help the church look more festive for the Season.



Thankyou for the wreath Lori



Decorating the Church for the Holiday Season



Thank you John and Gail Paulson for the beautiful Christmas wreath out front and for putting it up.





CUCC Candle Light Guild Donates to the local School Backpack Program

Susie Nicks delivers donations to Backpack program director, Nikki Gripentrog



JAM:

After looking at scheduling conflicts the month of Dec., we did not have JAM sessions. I trust the JAMMERS, took the time to “make room for Jesus”. And as a reminder to JAMMERS and all of us, Santa comes once a year, and Jesus is with us all year through. Take time to focus on the one little twinkle light or brightest star in the sky and let it be a reminder of what Christmas is all about.

Our meetings for January, are the 15th and 29th. We will have our usual short devotion and talk about epiphany and the meaning of it and also we will discuss the roles we have as a church family.

As a New Year is upon us, let’s keep our journey with Jesus, and He will be our Guide, shining down on us, to make it a great year for all of us. Let it be Christmas everyday and share the love and peace all through the year.

Submitted by Lori

Thank you

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RECENT DONATION TO THE MEALS IN A BACKPACK PROGRAM AND FOR DECORATING A CHRISTMAS FOR US! THIS IS A UNIQUE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SOAR PROGRAM, THAT SERVES 18-21 YEAR OLD YOUNG ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, THAT USE THEIR CLASSTIME TO FILL BACKPACKS WITH FOOD TO BE SENT HOME WITH CHILDREN WHO ARE IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL FOOD FOR THE WEEKEND.

WE ARE CURRENTLY SERVING OVER 50 FAMILIES THIS YEAR WITH OVER 140 AREA CHILDREN. WE DELIVER BACKPACKS TO MEDFORD AREA ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL, STETSONVILLE ELEMENTARY AND HOLY ROSARY.

THANKS AGAIN FOR SUPPORTING US AND OUR COMMUNITY.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON EITHER PROGRAM CONTACT

• NIKKI GRIPENTROG
715-748-5951
GRIPENI@MEDFORD.K12.WI.US •

New Beginnings in the New Year

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Beloved Congregation,

Happy New Year! As we turn the page to a new calendar, we are reminded of the beautiful promise of new beginnings. Each January, we are offered the opportunity to reflect on the year behind us, give thanks for God's faithfulness, and look forward to what lies ahead.

Scripture tells us in Lamentations 3:22-23, *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."* These words remind us that with God, every day—and every year—offers a fresh start. Whether you're setting goals, seeking healing, or simply desiring to grow closer to Christ, know that God's grace is always at work, making all things new.

As a church, this is a time for us to reimagine how we can live out our faith in the year ahead. How might we deepen our worship, strengthen our relationships with one another, and reach out to our community with the love of Christ? I invite you to pray with me as we seek God's guidance in all we do.

Let's also remember that new beginnings often come with uncertainty. We may feel overwhelmed by the challenges we face or unsure of the path forward. Yet, we can trust in God's promises. Just as the Israelites were led by God through the wilderness into the Promised Land, we too are guided by God's unwavering presence.

This January, let's commit to walking boldly into this new season with faith, hope, and love. Together, we can embrace the opportunities ahead to grow in grace and serve as Christ's hands and feet in the world.

May this year be a blessing to you and to all who cross your path. Let us journey forward in the assurance that God's mercies truly are new every morning.

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Tamara

Summary of Survey and Actions Planned:

The 5 Practices team recently conducted a survey of our congregation to obtain feedback on our direction and engagement. Below are the action items the 5 Practices team and Council will take (some are already in motion) based on the feedback we received. Thank you to all who responded! Please let us know if you have any questions. Thanks again!

- * 76.5% preferred various pastors or stated it didn't matter: No change to current practices
- * Increasing membership actions:
 - Reach out to inactive members and those who had children baptized by don't attend through email/mail/phone
 - Set up "thanks for popping in" for those who visit us
 - Potluck Sunday with "invite a friend" for members; include fun activities
- * Make the church more inviting:
 - Have clubs take responsibility to have greeters for the Sundays
 - Do a walk-through of the church to see what needs updating to make it more inviting
- * Accessibility identified a couple of items that could be done now:
 - Modify/add bathroom(s) to have at least one that is wheelchair accessible; getting an estimate on this
 - Look into cost of braille/other technology to make our services accessible to vision impaired

Summary of Survey and Actions Planned (continued):

- * The question on online services resulted in most saying they use it as a backup: No changes at this time to providing online service options
- * Service time of 9:00 a.m. was acceptable to all respondents: No action at this time
- * Feeling welcomed in the church resulted in need for a greeter with a phrase of “If you need something, let me know” for visitors
- * Music enjoyment had 8 of 13 say they enjoyed our music
 - Limit to 3 songs per service is recommended and will be conveyed to visiting pastors
 - Streaming of YouTube/other online music was recommended; this gets complicated because of copyright laws and how we go live; recommendation is to have some music recorded by our musicians
- * The question on if anything was missing from our services produced the following action items:
 - Occasionally include Apostles’ Creed and/or UCC Statement of Faith if it fits the service; will be relayed to visiting pastors
 - Create prayer request cards to put out; those are the purple cards already out
 - Continue to invite visiting pastors to stay for coffee; cannot be required
 - Try to always have readers for services
- * The question on what to have in church produced the following action items:
 - Reading Club is eliminated with no interest
 - Keep Bible Study as is (40% interest)
 - Continue JAM and Confirmation as is (60% interest)
 - Plan casual get togethers—5 Practices begins working on in January (70% interest); focus is to include the community also
- * Round Table question resulting in 6 of 13 saying yes; will plan this on 3rd Sunday of month after service; will start in February
- * Covenantal opportunities question:
 - Develop WISE commitment (look for vote in January annual church meeting)
 - Look into Accessible to All (with what we are doing, we may meet the requirements)
 - Continue Open and Affirming
 - Wait on others due to our limited capacity to follow up on them
- * Other comments that resulted in these action items:
 - Will adjust office hours on signs to be minimum time staffed so there is no confusion on when there are people in the office
 - Will add a note that says “Please call the church office at And we will get back to you” for those who show up outside of office hours
 - Sharing the process for requests for life events and put cards out—this is done already
 - Pastor hours/duties: 10-12 hours/week; primary responsibilities of 2 Sunday services per month plus Christian holidays of Easter and Christmas, confirmation, home visits, Christian Ed. leadership

CUCC FINANCES:

As of Dec. 19th , 2024

Income \$ 86,806

Expenses \$ 109,457

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January 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<p><i>1</i> New Year's Day</p> <p>Mid week Devotion 5:30 pm</p>	<p><i>2</i></p>	<p><i>3</i></p>	<p><i>4</i></p>
<p><i>5</i> Worship with Communion 9 am Pastor Tamara Dassow Cox Bible Study (after service)</p>	<p><i>6</i> Epiphany</p>	<p><i>7</i> Candle Light Guild mtg 530 pm</p>	<p><i>8</i> Confirmation class 3:30 pm</p>	<p><i>9</i> Council meeting 6:15 pm</p>	<p><i>10</i></p>	<p><i>11</i></p>
<p><i>12</i> Worship 9 am Pastor Christopher Ewan</p>	<p><i>13</i></p>	<p><i>14</i></p>	<p><i>15</i> JAM 3:30 pm</p>	<p><i>16</i> 5 Practices 6 pm</p>	<p><i>17</i></p>	<p><i>18</i></p>
<p><i>19</i> Worship 9 am Pastor Tamara Dassow Cox</p>	<p><i>20</i></p>	<p><i>21</i></p>	<p><i>22</i> Confirmation class 3:30 pm</p>	<p><i>23</i></p>	<p><i>24</i></p>	<p><i>25</i></p>
<p><i>26</i> Worship 9 am Pastor Mary Wright</p>	<p><i>27</i></p>	<p><i>28</i></p>	<p><i>29</i> JAM 3:30 pm</p>	<p><i>30</i></p>	<p><i>31</i></p>	