

2025.04.01 Committee of the Whole (LC) All Hands Meeting (April)

- Minutes from previous meetings. [Ministry Meeting Minutes Archive](#)
- [Join Zoom Meeting](#), Meeting ID: 825 8167 0394, Passcode: 487224, by phone: 309.205.3325 US
- **In attendance:** Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade, Ray Santiago, Terri Bracy, Sarah Medrano-Palmer, Christy Miller, Paul Roberts, Erin Sennott, Paul Sennott, Ben Jacques, Becky Jacques, Jackie Kerst, Branwen Cook, Jojo Bridgeman, Charlene Carle, Liz Douglass, Susan D'Arcy Fuller, Annemarie Ross Shu, Aaron Olapade

Agenda

1. **Recruit Meeting Clerk -**
2. **Opening Prayer & Check-In (7:00 - 7:20)**
 - a. A Pastoral Message/Prayer from "The Prophecy of Simeon" (Luke 2:34-35) from Joyce Rupp "Your Sorrow Is My Sorrow"; *Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.*

Responses:

- **Liz:** Feeling disappointed, frustrated, kind of mad
- **Erin:** Still incredibly angry, and petty
- **Christy:** Impatience and anticipation; wanting to start thinking about the future and stop thinking about what has happened
- **Charlene:** Very surprised and confused, don't understand how this has not worked out, but I believe there is a way forward
- **Ray:** Surprised and disappointed, but I know that I'll be alright, but I'm worried about Rev. Wendy
- **Branwen:** Echo what everyone has said, have questions about what has happened; worried for our pastor as a pastor myself, and my heart reaches out to Rev. Wendy
- **Annamaire:** Disappointed, but not surprised; worried most about Rev. Wendy and how this affects her and the future of Sanctuary. Has the UCC conference reached out and offered guidance? Asked Tom what this means going forward, but was answered with that there is no definitive answer yet.
- **Jojo:** Feel in some ways I have no right to feel the way that I do, but feel very much 'kicked in the head'. Feel betrayed and can't bear to walk into that building as of now. Very first day I believed I was a member of both churches, but now I have to choose
- **Becky:** What others are saying is resonating with me; I hadn't really thought about not-merging. I believe that we have lots of things in common, we have been in this work

for so long, our values felt aligned. In some way it feels like personal rejection, which I am unsure if it truly is. I am most sorry for Rev. Wendy

- **Jackie:** I'm mostly shocked that Rev. Wendy is not appreciated for what she has offered and all the work that has gone into this work. I asked for more information and have not gotten what I was looking for. If they cannot appreciate and value what is there, there's nothing we can do but move forward. You can't make someone love you. There's freedom in this.
- **Ben:** Echoing what has been said, it in some ways hasn't fully sunken fully in. Is there really no way forward with a partnership; I just don't understand how it has gotten to this point. I just don't have enough information yet.
- **Sarah:** Similar to Jojo, newer to this discussion, frustrated and stuck about how this has happened. Very jarring and uncomfortable
- **Susan:** Really enjoyed the joint ministry and felt good about everything; don't understand how it has gotten to this point, this quickly. How could our communication be so off base? This is the 2nd failed merger in this church's history. I don't go to church for work and merger negotiations.
- **Paul S:** Curiosity about their thinking; on the other hand in some ways it doesn't really matter. Personally want to keep moving forward, but I don't know how to do that.
- **Terri:** I was disappointed, but not surprised. Pretty quickly turned to anger, because I believe that there was a lack of transparency and honesty. Had we known, we would have reassessed sooner. I am most concerned about Rev. Wendy, but we are also not her Pastor, we have to move Sanctuary forward because of what is happening in the world. I'm no longer disappointed, ready to move forward.
- **Paul R:** Share sentiments with most of everyone who has spoken. Not very surprised. We never had any opportunity to speak with them about their non-negotiables and because of this, how could we renegotiate properly with no opportunity. I believed that after the initial email with the non-negotiables, we still had avenues to pursue but that now is gone. I am also worried both personally and professionally for Rev. Wendy; one could say that it is not a personal rejection for us and our group, but it is definitely a lack of interest.
- **Rev Wendy:** gratitude for your care, and amplify Terri's comment, you are not responsible for my care; I want to assure you that I will be ok no matter what, that you are in charge of what happens, that I know we will be ok too... and everything is on the table and everything is faithful (dissolution with legacy decisions, just doing sanctuary as we are leaning into arts and mission and small circle church, building new partnerships, and everything in between)

3. No Merger with Hillside (7:30 - 7:45)

- a. Hillside's decision via email to the Merger team on 3/23 *"...our Council also recognized that Sanctuary's preferred outcome was more akin to a marriage model than to the*

adoption model that had been the starting point of our merger discussions.... incompatibilities in our vision for organizational structure and pastoral leadership. ... We know that [without a shared understanding of the merger model/with incompatibilities] many mergers are unsuccessful, and can even affect the long-term sustainability of the churches involved... For these reasons, we think it best for Hillside, and we hope it's best for Sanctuary, that we not pursue a merger of our congregations... ..we apologize for the harm that we caused. We hope you know that this is not a reflection on any of the members of Sanctuary!"

- b. Hillside further communicated on 3/25 - that Wendy needs to organize her departure from Hillside

- c. Check-in: What do you need right now?

Re. Wendy: Apology for her part in this moment - that more will be revealed and learned

Erin: We are a team, it's not just Rev. Wendy

Jojo: As someone who has received a lot of additional pastoral support this past few months, I ask what we become from this point

Ray: Rev. Wendy has nothing to make amends for, as far as I'm concerned it's their loss.

4. What is next for Sanctuary ([2025.03.27 wmo email](#)) (7:45 - 8:00)

- a. If the question for Sanctuary is this: "What is the next chapter for Sanctuary to be faithful to God's call on Sanctuary?" What do you need in order to proceed in discernment for Sanctuary?
- b. We will not answer this question tonight but we want to name Sanctuary's Purpose and a range of possibilities (not limited to these)
- c. [Reviewed 2023 options](#) from our deep dive into discernment; with much to be discovered

5. Immediate decisions are needed tonight (reference [Tom's 3/31 Message](#)) (8:00 - 8:15)

- a. WMO invests only in Sanctuary: Propose immediate release from Hillside Ministry/Worship to pursue Sanctuary's future (whatever that is); **Vote to release Wendy** from worship leadership immediately so that she can invest in Sanctuary's future and potential other partnerships
- b. am2pm program (June 26 - July 2) - do we make it work with Tom/Hillside? or find a new partner? - to be determined, but this is our mission, we can cover the cost of staffing the program; Kashawna is already committed. WMO will pray about this for another week.
- c. Current Financial Investment (musicians, messy church)? **Vote to continue to cover ½ of musicians, messy church, and Danny through Easter Sunday**

6. Next Decisions

- a. Ending Ritual/Leave Taking - spiritual release of the partnership; Maybe do something not at Hillside but there are a lot of people (Not the leaders) who only know the joint mission who are both going to truly miss Rev. Wendy's presence and be really surprised

by this, because they thought we were already merged. Given the outcome and the non-called nature of this partnership maybe just write a letter??

b. Divest from Hillside

- i. Entangled Ministry and continued use of space (see email above)?
- ii. Sanctuary Property (see list below)
- iii. Staff - Charmaine work location
- iv. Printer Contract (Tom is not using this)
- v. WMO personal items
- vi. New computer being used by Danny

c. Schedule Next Conversation -

- i. Monday, April 14, just to be together and check back in;
- ii. Tuesday, All Hands - May 6 next decision-making

7. Longer Term - See item 6 above

8. Business Actions (Tabled)

a. Clerk's Report

- i. Approve February Meeting Minutes - [2024.02.04 All Hands Meeting \(Feb\)](#);
 - Motion by @ to approve meeting minutes, seconded by @
 - In attendance members vote (*TBD: in favor, no nays, no abstentions*)
- ii. March 2025 All Hands Meeting Cancelled due to merger meetings

b. Treasurer's Report

- i. [2025.04.01 Budget Versus Actuals](#) (draft) provided for review
- ii. Do we need to adjust "draw"?
- iii. Closing of 2024 Books and Audit - Pending/Update?

For Reference:

- [2023 Discernment Options w/Today's Lens](#)
- [2024/2025 Sanctuary Property \(moved to Hillside - see column C/D\)](#)
- [2025.04.01 Message to Hillside re: decisions](#)