

2025.09.16 Committee of the Whole (LC) All Hands Meeting (September)

- Minutes from previous meetings. [Ministry Meeting Minutes Archive](#)
- [Join Zoom Meeting.](#) Meeting ID: 825 8167 0394, Passcode: 487224, by phone: 309.205.3325 US
- Aaron Olapade to serve as meeting clerk
- **In attendance:** Rev. Wendy Miller Olapade, Susan D'Arcy Fuller, Terri Bracy, Ginny Bethiaum, Fraelean, Jackie, Christy Miller, Aaron Olapade

Agenda & Minutes

1. **Opening Prayer & Circle Check-in** - Reading from Everyday Psalms, James Taylor, Psalm 19:7-4 "Interdependence". Reflections: Interdependence no exceptions, the voice of wind through the trees, can't do it alone, asking for support is natural, and doing things together should be the standard, mystery. Connection is the practice. Community and Spirit are the vessel. Courage and compassion are the fruit.
2. **Updates:**
 - a. **\$ 340,000 in estate proceeds received** - Trustees will propose a disposition at the next meeting.
 - b. **Sanctuary Move to Shiloh** - Aaron will negotiate with Hillside
 - i. Copier and some small things have been moved
 - ii. Mover is poised to be available as we make a plan (quote is 4 - 6 hours for 3 staff and truck; \$912 - \$1368 includes a tip).
 - iii. Need a facilitator to negotiate with Hillside the move of furnishings ASAP, I was slow to provide the list to Jojo and she is away for a few weeks and unable to complete the project due to my delay.
 - iv. Here's the [spreadsheet of things to be moved](#)
 - c. **Sanctuary Legacy, Partnerships, & Possible Merger**
 - i. Met with SNEUCC [Legacy Corporation Staff](#) - learned that we were looking at outdated materials; Updated [Church Legacy & Closure Resources 2025 Ed.](#)
Suggests the following:
 - So much lament from failure merger - important to ask what are the lessons? No MOU - what else?
 - \$ can fool us AND it buys time -the sweet spot is to keep steady pressure and make space for discernment
 - ? about continuing or ending has to be grounded in capacity - do you have the people power to build into partnerships
 - A Legacy Process asks what faithful stewardship of your resources look like; and what is the legacy of:

- a. The congregation/people of the church - where do they land for their spiritual walk
 - b. The Core Values and Core Mission of Sanctuary - where and how can that be stewarded into the future
 - c. The Gifts and Graces of the Staff
- What is the most realistic way to discern those legacy three conversations
- Dissolution and the AG in Mass
 - a. Affirmed the duration of legal processes to be at least a year.
 - b. >500K can create endowments and restricted distributions through United Church Funds
 - c. Legacy Gifts must go to similarly situation institutions, often within the same denomination; if not - costs a lot of lawyer time
 - d. Get Attorney Liz Reinhart involved
- ii. Minister and President Darrell Goodwin is interested to learn more about the possible merger that would create a historically Black ONA UCC Church in Mass; will meet him in the next two weeks for initial conversation
- iii. Possible Merger with Myrtle Baptist Church - Conversation with Historically Black ABC Congregation that is ONA and wants to expand their regional ministry further, become more multicultural, retain Sanctuary's mission and ministries, retain the gifts and graces of Rev. Wendy to broaden their staff and programming capacity, affiliate with UCC for the support that provides, build out teaching parish capacity, and use Medford presence as a place from which to grow their reach. They have invited us to talk more, define our non-negotiables, meet with their senior pastor to hear his vision, and begin some shared leadership conversation to see what unfolds.
- iv. No response from UUMedford
- v. BU-STH Contextual Education invites us to consider endowing the UCC ConEd Formation Program (which would allow UCC leaders to support UCC Members in Discernment in preparation at the School of Theology in Boston (300 - 500 K)
- vi. Strong message from Medford partners that they hope we will continue to be - Arts Collaborative Medford, OWL families, Grace Episcopal (am2pm), Shiloh, Food Mission, Safe Medford/MMI

Questions:

Fraelean- Is the ideological gap too wide for a merger with Shiloh?

Fraelean - Is there a sense why the membership has decreased and Shiloh is struggling in the way they are?

Terri - If we did want to pursue support for the historically black church idea, what does the discernment timeline look like? Rev. Wendy reviewed some of the possibilities, but it would not be a brief process.

3. **Define Agenda for 2025 Annual Meeting (delayed from June) and Select Date;** based on what you know so far what do you propose we do for the Annual Meeting? Discussion was limited, but opinions run the gamut from dissolve to lean in to partnerships; and the hour is late. Christy moves that we put a motion to dissolve the church on the agenda at a congregational meeting so that we can develop a path based on the outcome of that proposal. Either we vote to dissolve and move into legacy process or we vote not to dissolve and pursue partnerships and ministry. There is a lot of ministry happening at Sanctuary. Fraeleen seconds this motion. Rev. Wendy suggests that we can call a special congregational meeting with one agenda item - on October 7 (regular all hands meeting) to dissolve the church. Note that the decision to dissolve the church requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority. Group acknowledges that there are 6 members who have expressed the opinion that they do not have interest/capacity to invest again.

Vote to proceed with this proposal - All in favor, no abstentions.

Following the vote to accept the resignation of (3) members (see below item [4.a.ii](#)) and the vote to proceed with a special congregational meeting, Sue D'Arcy requests that we not remove membership of the people who believe we should dissolve the church until after this vote; and asks that we notify them of the meeting. Rev. Wendy assures that they will be notified of the meeting and that she is meeting with each member in the coming weeks. We acknowledge that these members have communicated that they think we should dissolve, but that their request to withdrawal membership is at their request. Rev. Wendy notes that it is not appropriate for us to discuss what is in their hearts about why they have chosen this.

Proposal by Rev. Wendy to withdraw the previous action of the body to withdraw membership of (3) members until the members can be reached to invite them to the meeting of Oct 7. Vote - 4 in favor, 3 opposed, 1 abstention.

4. Recurring Business

a. Clerk's Report

- i. Approve the [2025.08.05 All Hands Meeting Minutes](#); Motion by @@@ to approve meeting minutes, seconded by @@@ (**Tabled**)
- ii. Action Regards Membership
 - Vote to affirm (3) requests to withdraw membership from Sanctuary: Ben Jacques, Becky Jacques, Charlene Carle
Terri Moves to approve the requested withdrawal of membership of 3 Sanctuary Members, Fraeleen seconds – 7 in approval, 1 negative, 0 abstentions
 - Additional discovery is needed regarding membership before the Annual meeting

- Schedule a Breakfast Church to invite a leavetaking liturgy for those departing

b. Treasurer's Report (Tabled)

- Motion from Treasurer to correct error (<\$10.00) as a one-time adjustment.
- [2024.07.01 - 2025.06.30 DRAFT Budget vs Actual](#);
- [2025.09.16 Budget vs Actuals YTD](#)
- Closing of Books and Audit - Treasurer is working with the accountant to complete 2024 and will pursue 2025 as well

c. Ministry Updates: Rev. Wendy requests that folk please review this portion of the minutes - as there is much ministry happening.

- Rev. Wendy Calendar Notes
 - Travel to PA - October 6 - 12 (Family and CRIC Board Retreat)
 - Vacation - October 30 - Nov 2 (out of town)
- Worship
 - Sunday Circle - 10 people participating regularly, usually 6 in attendance; current testimony about value of the time (spiritual depth, gratitude for growth and connection)
 - Rev. Wendy preaching @ Shiloh Baptist (October 5 w/Communion & October 19);
 - Plan for Breakfast Church (once per month)?
 - Plan for Weekday Circle of Care? *le: Longing for renewal, for companions on the road, for a reminder that you are not alone—this space is for you.*
- Formation
 - Book Study - Recovery: The Sacred Art (TBD)
 - Living Soulfully Group; Elders @ Riverside Towers (5-10 elders per month)
 - Art & Soul Circles (15-25 monthly)
 - Boundaries & Beyond Gallery Installation
 - Fragility and Strength: Fri, 9/26 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)
 - Systems that Cry Out: Fri, 10/24 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)
 - ACM Studio Artists Show, Fri 12/12 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)
 - Reel Conversations (Faith & Film)
 - The Piano Lesson: 09/26 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)
 - Wicked 11/07 (6:30 - 8:30 pm)
 - Xmas Film TBD 12/05
- Pop-Up Pantry - (5- 7) Weekly Volunteers & 30-40 people per week being fed through Nov 21
 - Continuing to distribute emergency food cards as needed
 - Wondering about a partnership with Shiloh to maintain the pantry through the winter and spring months

- v. Civic and Justice Leadership
 - Food Security Task Force - every other month
 - [Safe Medford](#) ongoing leadership, website, and planning for justice interventions @ 20-25 monthly,
 - [Mystic Mashup Indivisible](#) Support & planning for Resistance Fair - maintain connection to nonviolent protest events and Immigrant support
 - [LUCEMass](#) ICEWatch Support through printing of flyers
 - (2) citywide justice events with 80 (Civic Engagement in Dangerous Times) and 300 people (Good Trouble Event)
- vi. Denominational/Institutional Leadership
 - Member of MBA Committee on Ministerial Standing - Coach for Members in Discernment
 - Chair of SNEUCC Property Committee
 - Participant in BUSTH Contextual Education Support Team