United Church Council
August 24, 2025

Present (Officers & Delegates): Rev. Jerry Bertelson, Cody Church, Sarah Woltzen, Matt Anderson, Eric Tieszen, Joey Latsha, Morgan Gerken, Dick Dawson, Bo DeKramer, Ivan Ortman, Katie Ortman, Carol Woltzen, Josh Popkes

Absent, if committee not represented (Officers & Delegates): Karyn Montgomery, Doreen Fry

Call Meeting to Order (time): 7:03 pm by Cody Church, Council Chairperson

Opening Devotion & Prayer: Carol Woltzen, UWS

Discuss/Amend/Vote on Agenda
Motion: Josh Popkes
Second: Dick Dawson
Approve: yes

Discuss/Vote on Previous Meeting Minutes, June 29, 2025
Motion: Carol Woltzen
Second: Josh Popkes
Approve: yes

Discuss/Vote on Special Meeting Minutes, August 3, 2025
Motion: Bo DeKramer
Second: Matt Anderson
Approve: as corrected with the addition of the meeting ending at 12:20 pm.

Visitor(s) Sharing:
(visitors are invited to share for up to three-minutes)

Pastor Report *(see below)*

Chairperson Report *(see below)*

Financial Report
(Committee & Treasurer)

Committee Reports
(see reports below- if any action items are on committee reports, they will be moved down to "Action Items" below)

Vote on accepting Pastor, Committees, Financial, & Officer Reports
Motion: Josh Popkes
Second: Eric Tieszen
Approve: yes

Previous Discussion Items Needing Action:

- Building Update Discussion

The Congregational meeting for voting on the building project will be on Sunday, September 28, 2025, in the sanctuary after the worship service. The voting threshold will be a simple majority vote. Two committees will be formed after the vote: Building Committee and Daycare Committee. The Daycare needs more exploration.

Motion:

Josh Popkes moved to present to the congregation, at the meeting scheduled for September 28, 2025, a proposal to approve the building project as outlined in the "Shine Addition." This includes remodeling to create a music space and offices, as well as expanding the parking lot. The project will be completed in two phases, at a cost of $750,000 for each phase. The proposal also includes ongoing fundraising efforts to support the project. Progress on construction will be contingent upon available cash on hand; no loans will be secured.

Dick Dawson seconded the motion. Council VOTED and approved the motion.

Discussion Items

- Directory Update: We will be creating a new church directory that includes photos and contact information for congregation members and friends. A sign-up sheet will be available for those who wish to have their photo taken. Participation is encouraged to help us strengthen connections within our church family.
- Hosting LaGrange, GA Youth Group – May 25-30, 2026: To make their stay memorable, approximately six host families are sought to open their homes and hearts.
- Kickoff Sunday on Sunday, September 7, 2025.
- Small Groups: A new Young Adult Group will be launching this fall—perfect for those seeking connection, conversation, and community. Additional small groups may be added based on interest. Let us know if you have ideas or would like to lead one.
- Sign installation: Installation of the sign will proceed once the exact placement is determined and we receive confirmation of the required setback distance per regulations.

New Action Items

- Policy Committee –

Motion

Josh Popkes made a motion to establish a Policy Committee, the committee will include the following members: Pastor Jerry, Carol Woltzen, George Kuhler, and Josh Popkes.
Matt Anderson seconded the motion. Council VOTED and approved the motion.

Motion

Joey Latsha made a motion to present this motion to the Congregation. The United Church Council is seeking approval from the congregation for the building project as proposed with the first phase to not exceed $750,000. This includes continuing fundraising for the proposed project. The building progress is contingent to cash on hand.
Josh Popkes seconded the motion. Council VOTED and approved the motion.

Church council comments / announcements / upcoming events
(Any council members are invited to share comments or announcements related to United Church of Canistota or our community. No action taken on comments.)
September 14, 2025- Information about the proposed building project will be presented to the congregation.
September 28, 2025-Congregational meeting for voting on the proposed building project

Adjournment (time): 9:53 pm
Motion: Carol Woltzen
Second: Ivan Ortman
Approve: yes

Next meeting date:

- ✓ Next meeting is Sunday, September 28, 2025 at 7:00 pm.
- ✓ Next meeting's opening devotion and prayer: Trustees

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Reports Listed Below

Pastor Report

August 2025 Pastor's Report
Rev. Jerry Bertelson

Over the past few weeks of recovery, I have been deeply touched by the many prayers, cards, meals, and words of encouragement from our church. Your care has been a living reminder that we truly are the Body of Christ, carrying one another's burdens when they arise. Thank you for holding me up during this season.

Slowing down has been both humbling and instructive. I've learned that recliners can be surprisingly good teachers: they remind me that rest isn't always laziness but often a gift from God. I've also learned that when I stop rushing, I notice things like the small kindnesses, the patience of loved ones, even the joy of a slower pace. As Scripture says, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). Thank you for giving me the space to experience that.

Ministry Highlights:

- Spiritual Care
  - Conducted two communion chapel services and two Bible studies at Good Samaritan Society in Canistota in July and August.
  - Conducted one memorial service at Good Samaritan Society in Canistota on July 24.
  - Made a number of visits in July and a couple in August.
  - Offered pastoral care through phone calls, texts, and spiritual direction.
  - One benevolent fund request.
  - Conducted one funeral in August.

        - July 18 – Mary Cooper
        - A special thank you to the United Women's Society for providing treats for fellowship time at both funerals.
    - Participated in a community Worship Service on July 13 at 10:00 am at American Legion Hall.
    - Met with confirmation students and parents on August 24th after worship.
- Writing, Teaching & Community Engagement
    - Submitted three pastoral columns to *The Special* newspaper.
    - Did not meet with my spiritual director, Sister Jeanne, and my ministry coach, Richard Blackburn in July or August.
    - Continued serving on community boards and committees.
    - Began classes in EMT-B training to volunteer with the Canistota Fire & Rescue Department.
    - Attended the Global Leadership Summit (online) held at Willow Creek Church on August 7-8.

Travel:

- I will be gone the weekend of October 18-19. Cody Church is filling in for me that Sunday (Oct. 19th).

Upcoming Events:

- Kickoff Sunday on September 7th.
- Wednesday evening activities kickoff on September 10th.
- Congregational meeting on September 14th. Congregational vote on building project on September 28th.

Other items:

- A special thank you to Joey Latsha and Cody Church for leading worship while I was gone for two Sundays (August 3 and 10)
- And a special thank you to the church for all the prayers, calls, texts, cards, and meals shared during my recovery from surgery on July 18th.

With gratitude,
Pastor Jerry

Chairperson Report
Chairperson Report for August

During announcements on August 17, I spoke regarding the modified building project and requested any ideas, comments or questions so they could be taken to the council on August 24. Also placed some notecards out if anyone wanted to jot a note anonymously. During this time, I thanked the congregation for their support the last 2 years. I also thanked the Fundraising Committee for their time and energy the last 2 years and all they did. Thank you to the council and specifically the Finance Committee and Doreen Fry for their support and extra efforts the last 2 years. Looking forward to what God will do with this project in the future!

Christian Ed, Shine and Youth Groups all start soon in September. Be in prayer for the start of our Christian education "calendar". Pray for the students to have fun in community and to learn and grow in faith. Pray for the leaders and teachers to depend on the Holy Spirit to guide their preparation and words. Give them energy to match the student's energy. Also pray for community built within and between the leaders and students. And thank God for each and every student that enters United Church that they would see Christ through this church and their interaction with all that give of their time and energy to pour into them.

Trustees

Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in forced labor - Proverbs 12:24

The trustees report for the period of July and August 2025 Meeting: The trustees committee held a meeting July 24 Attended by: Chairperson: Joshua Popkes, Delegate: Matt Anderson, Members: Luke Hutchenson, Rodger Ketchum Absent: Steve Richarz, Jim Olsen

Discussion Topics: 1. Bell Tower and Entry Sidewalk Concrete (Tabled until next meeting after we understand direction of building project) 2. Stained Glass window at front of sanctuary (Working on getting a quote to remove windows, build an aluminum frame and reinstall) 3. Ceiling Tile replacement (Happening week of 8/25/25) 4. Thermostat change out (Unanimous vote in committee to replace all thermostats with a uniform thermostat) 5. Wi-Fi Strength (Unanimous vote in committee to contact Sight n' Sound to come give us a quote for wi-fi repeaters) 6. Mowing/Weeding Schedule (Josh will talk with Chad and make sure he still wants to continue mowing or if we need to look in another direction) 7. Snow Removal (Josh to talk with current snow removal congregation and see if they still want to do it or if we need to look in another direction) 8. Parsonage repairs (Spoke with Jim Olsen and he planned to do it mid-august, need to follow up) 9. Discussed getting a quote for removing the old sign 10. We also discussed the parking lot, received a bid for $8,700.00 to do lot repairs, and decided to pass until further discussion on building project. Services: Waiting on bids, nothing to report for this period Negotiations: I spoke with Jimmy from JOC about replacing the storm door on the parsonage, as well as taking the sag out of the deck and a time frame (needs follow-up) Building Project: New building design is distributed with this report for council vote Trustees have work put on hold until further discussion Cemetery: Haven't been updated on any changes or needs Farmland: Haven't been updated on any changes or needs Parsonage: Haven't been updated on any changes or needs other than mentioned before

Insurance: Read through current insurance documentation, and it looks like we will need a reevaluation of church property. From what I can make of the insurance policy, our current insurance coverage is for $3,994,786.00 with an insurance payout of $3,595,307.40 if the church were to incur a total loss. I'm not an insurance agent, nor a property evaluator but I believe this number to not be sufficient to rebuild in case of a total loss. As a side note, our new building coverage under our current policy is $250,000, so we would either need a carrier during the construction of the building or hire a General Contractor to carry builders 'risk during construction.

Yours in Christ, Joshua Popkes Chairman UCC Trustees

Stewardship & Finance

Finance met Tuesday July 15th.
Members present were: Eric T, Brad S, Cathee B, Phil H, Doreen F and Dianne D.
Reviewed the quarterly reports, we are behind on giving by 33k.
Reviewed the building fund, working on gathering the funds raised from Chase the Ace and the Gala , we will have a solid total, end of August, approximate total will be around $470k.
Brad and Eric gave reports from council for committee.
Doreen's position will be advertised thru church bulletin and website, it was open for application til August 15. We are happy to report that we have a new financial secretary, Jacey Richardson has excepted the position. She will start September 14 th. and work with Doreen for a number of months. Our budget was planned for dual FS for 6 months; this will allow year end and annual church meeting reports to be included in this time frame.
Finance will meet again once council has made decisions on building future and review 3rd quarter.
Submitted by
Dianne D

Christian Education

Worship & Membership

The kids bags for worship service have been gone through and assorted so all bags have the same items. Bags have all been washed and are ready for use.
Submitted by Dick Dawson

Pastoral Relations

PPR report: PPR committee met on July 9th. Members present: Katie Ortman, Morgan Gerken, Deb Kuhler, Mark Jerman, Carol Woltzen, Cody Church-ex officio, Pastor Jerry. Absent: Chad Keller

Katie gave a summary and a printed handout of a webinar she attended entitled "Staff-Parish Committee Overview" presented by the Dakotas/Minnesota Area. Very good refresher on the roles and responsibilities of our committee and our role in fostering the pastor's and staff resiliency and well being.

Pastor Jerry gave an update on his upcoming surgeries and pulpit supply during his recovery. Discussion by the committee and decision to grant these 2 additional Sundays for recovery time.

As a follow-up from our last meeting, Pastor Jerry presented a communication strategy plan. The plan focuses on clarity, stewardship, generational reach, and ease of access--for members, leaders, and visitors.

The committee reviewed progress on goals for 2025. Good progress was noted on integrating the Elder's role in pastoral care. Implementing the communication strategy plan will continue.

Outside maintenance was brought forward as a concern. Pastor Jerry and Cody will talk to trustees and Michael regarding regular maintenance.

The committee will explore the denominations sick leave policies and make recommendations for this addition to Pastor Jerry's 2026 benefits package.

Carol Woltzen

World Outreach

United Women's Society (UWS)

UWS report: Planning for these upcoming events: Golden Age Sunday-- date TBD, Fall annual Turkey Supper--Oct. 15th, Daylight Savings fall back Sunday-- Nov. 2.

Carol Woltzen

Member-At-Large

Elders Team
We decorated the float for the parade. We have been supporting Pastor Jerry in the background. We are looking forward to Fall starting up!
Submitted by Amy Tieszen

Commissioner to the Presbytery of South Dakota

Lay Member to Annual Conference (UMC)

Fundraising Committee
The Fundraising Committee met on Friday, August 15th. Several items from Chase the Ace, the Fundraising Gala and monetary transactions were wrapped up. The building ideas from the council were also discussed. Several members of the committee will done serving on the committee after fulfilling their 2-year commitment. Several were still undecided if they want to continue. How and who will continue will probably come after the congregational vote in September. A huge "thank-you" to Melissa Weber, Tess Olsen, Tami Remacle, Cody Church, Pastor Jerry and Sarah Woltzen for serving on this committee.
Submitted by Sarah Woltzen