United Church Council
February 22, 2026

Present (Officers & Delegates): Jerry Bertelson, Cody Church, Sarah Woltzen, Nicole Perry, KC DeVos, Brad Schroeder, Bo DeKramer, Joey Latsha, Josh Popkes Sr, Jacey Richardson, Morgan Gerken and Karyn Montgomery

Absent, if committee not represented (Officers & Delegates): Amy Tieszen, Carol Woltzen and Katie Ortman

Was Quorum present: yes

Call Meeting to Order (time): 7:00 pm by Council Chairperson Cody Church

Opening Devotion & Prayer: Bo DeKramer

Discuss/Amend/Vote on Agenda
- Motion: KC DeVos
- Second: Josh Popkes Sr.
- Approve: yes

Discuss/Vote on Previous Meeting Minutes
- Motion: Josh Popkes Sr.
- Second: KC DeVos
- Approve: yes

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 Sr.
- Second: KC DeVos
- Approve: yes

Previous Discussion Items Needing Action:
- Policy Committee Recommendations

Josh Popkes Sr made a motion to adopt the policies as they are written. Joey Latsha seconded. Council voted and the motion was approved.

Discussion Items

- Finance Committee member will be asked to step down for a year to fulfill bylaw requirements.
- Building Committee update: they need to meet then will have some information to put out to the congregation.
- Fundraising Committee discussion / Gala Event: met a few times and are working on getting everything set up for April.
- Acknowledgement of 2025 Statistics for Dakotas Conference & Presbytery of South Dakota: done

New Action Items

- Appoint Deb Kuhler as second delegate from United Church to the Dakotas Conference Annual Conference meeting

Bo DeKramer made a motion to appoint Deb Kuhler as a second delegate to the annual conference. Morgan Gerken seconded. Council voted and the motion was approved.

Deaths, Births, Baptisms, Confirmations, Weddings

- Birth: Waylen Hayes DeKramer born to Bo and Courtney DeKramer on February 3, 2026.
- Death: Nathan Engbarth, age 48, February 18, 2026. Funeral held at United Church on February 27th, 2026 at 10:30 am.

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.)

Continued Prayers & Closing Prayer: Cody Church

- Building Project, Engbarth family (death), Jacobsen family (cancer – Cathy Weber), Dawn Nebelsick (surgery), Brian Hanson (cancer)
- Additional joys or concerns

Adjournment (time): 8:03 pm

Motion: Josh Popkes Sr.
Second: KC DeVos
Approve: yes

Next meeting date:

- ✓ Next meeting is Sunday, March 22nd.
- ✓ Next meeting's opening devotion and prayer: Worship and Membership

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Reports Listed Below

Pastor Report

February 2026 Pastor's Report
Rev. Jerry Bertelson

Ash Wednesday began for us the Lenten journey. It is a journey in which we are invited into a quieter and more intentional journey toward Easter. Lent is about our attention. In the Gospels, Jesus enters the wilderness for forty days, and that pattern has shaped the church ever since. Fasting, or adding a new spiritual practice, is a way of creating space. It is space to notice our dependence on God, space to confront the habits that dull our hearts, and space to listen more carefully for God's voice. When we give something up, whether it is a comfort, a distraction, or a routine indulgence, we are reminded that we do not live by bread alone. When we take something up, such as daily prayer, Scripture reading, acts of generosity, or intentional silence, we are training our hearts toward deeper trust and love. Lent slows us down long enough to ask what is forming us and who we are becoming. My prayer for our congregation this season is that, through small and steady practices, we would draw closer to Christ and discover that in letting go, we are gently led into a deeper discipleship.

Ministry Highlights:

- Held two communion services at Good Samaritan Canistota in February (3 & 15).
- Made four in-person visits in February.
- Offered pastoral care through phone calls, texts, and spiritual direction.
- Zero benevolent fund requests.
- Officiated funeral service for Nathan Engbarth on Friday, February 27.
- Met with confirmation students twice in February.
- Attended the ResGen Men's Summit in Sioux Falls on February 21.
- Submitted two pastoral columns to *The Special* newspaper.
- Met with ministry coach, Richard Blackburn once in February, and counselor twice in February.
- Maintained an active pastoral presence in the wider community through service on local boards, committees, and emergency rescue services.
- Started a new Lenten sermon series called *Unplugged: Lent in a Noisy World* on February 22.
- Continued focus in early 2026 will include confirmation ministry, pastoral care, community engagement, updating communication strategies, and planning for upcoming seasonal worship and programs. Additionally, would like to plan a Council retreat.
- Date TBD – Robert Beringer, Ed.S., will be giving a presentation to anyone interested on the topic of *"Beyond the Behaviors: Understanding ADHD and Building Supportive Systems"*
- A special thank you to Joey and Brittany Latsha for their leadership in facilitating the young adult small group ministry.
- And a very big thank you to Doreen Fry for her years of dedicated service to our church as both financial secretary and treasurer! We are grateful for you and your committed service to Christ and His church. Thank you!

Upcoming Note:

- The youth will be starting a pizza fundraiser in March (date TBD).
- A video discussion on the series *The Chosen* will take place at the church on March 1, 15, and 29.
- I will be gone on vacation March 10-15, 2026. Pulpit Supply – Cody Church.

With gratitude,
Pastor Jerry

Chairperson Report

Trustees

Stewardship & Finance

Christian Education

Worship & Membership

Pastoral Relations

World Outreach

United Women's Society (UWS)
UWS Feb. Report
Daylight savings time starts on March 8th. UWS is asking permission to serve "Spring Ahead" donuts after the service as a fund raiser for the back pack food program at school.

Submitted by Carol Woltzen

Member-At-Large

Elders Team

Commissioner to the Presbytery of South Dakota

Lay Member to Annual Conference (UMC)

Fundraising Committee