United Church Council
January 25, 2026

Present (Officers & Delegates): Jerry Bertelson, Cody Church, Sarah Woltzen, Nicole Perry, Bo DeKramer, Katie Ortman, KC DeVos, Josh Popkes SR., Eric & Amy Tieszen, Brad & Susie Schroeder, Doreen Fry, Morgan Gerken and Karyn Montgomery

Absent, if committee not represented (Officers & Delegates): Carol Woltzen

Call Meeting to Order (time): 11:58 by Chairperson, Cody Church

Quorum was present: yes

Opening Devotion & Prayer: done as part of the Annual Meeting

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

Discuss/Vote on Previous Meeting Minutes (Nov. 23, 2025)
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: Brad Schroeder
Second: Nicole Perry
Approve: yes

Previous Discussion Items Needing Action:

- Policy Committee Recommendations

Josh Popkes Sr. made a motion to table the discussion of Policy Recommendations until the Feb. Meeting. Amy seconded. The council VOTED and the motion was approved.

Discussion Items

- Building Committee update
- Fundraising Committee discussion / Gala Event will be on April 25, 2026.

New Action Items

- Appointment to Auditing Committee (2-year term)

Amy made a motion to add Steve Richarz and Jeff Scott to the audit Committee, along with Dianne Dawson. KC DeVos seconded the motion. The Council VOTED and it was approved.

Deaths, Births, Baptisms, Confirmations, Weddings

- Baptism: (Infant): Baby's Name: Sienna Ray Zutter, Parents: Dylan Seubert & Tia Zutter, Sienna's birthday: December 2, 2025, baptism date: January 8, 2026

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.)

Closing Prayer: Cody Church

Adjournment (time): 12:24 pm

Motion: Amy Tieszen
Second: Josh Popkes Sr.
Approve: yes

Next meeting date:

- ✓ Next meeting is Sunday, February 22nd
- ✓ Next meeting's opening devotion and prayer: World Outreach

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Reports Listed Below

Pastor Report

January 2026 Pastor's Report
Rev. Jerry Bertelson

As we begin a new year, January offers a natural moment for reflection and recommitment. Scripture reminds us, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). We do not begin this year knowing every outcome or challenge ahead, but we do begin with a clear foundation. God's guidance is given step by step, often through steady faithfulness rather than dramatic change. As a congregation, this season calls us to review where we have been, clarify our priorities, and renew our commitment to worship, service, and care for one another. We move into the months ahead trusting not in our own plans alone, but in God's enduring presence and direction.

Ministry Highlights:

- Conducted communion services at Good Samaritan Society in Canistota in both December and January. Also, lead to Bible studies – one each month.
- Made seven in-person visits in December and January.
- Offered pastoral care through phone calls, texts, and spiritual direction.
- One benevolent fund request. It was denied for lack of follow-up from requestee.
- Facilitated a baptism during worship on December 14th and a private baptismal service on January 8th, 2026.
- Met with confirmation students twice in December and once in January.
- Submitted two pastoral columns to *The Special* newspaper.
- Met with ministry coach, Richard Blackburn, and Spiritual Director, once each in December. None in January.
- Maintained an active pastoral presence in the wider community through service on local boards, committees, and emergency services.
- Continued focus in early 2026 will include confirmation ministry, pastoral care, community engagement, and planning for upcoming seasonal worship and programs. Additionally, would like to plan a Council retreat.
- Thank you to Eric Tieszen for installing the new church sign. Thank you to Josh Popkes and family for the progress made at updating the entryway overhang. Thank you to Starlyn Church & the bell choirs for the program at the nursing home on December 17th.
- 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"*

Upcoming Note:

- I will be gone on vacation March 10-15, 2026. Pulpit Supply – TBD.

With gratitude,
Pastor Jerry

Chairperson Report

- Chairperson: Cody Church
- Vice chairperson: Sarah Woltzen
- Secretary: Karyn Montgomery
- Financial Secretary/Treasurer: Jacey Richardson

Trustees
Chairperson: Josh Popkes Sr.
Delegate: KC DeVos
Alternate: Steve Richarz

Stewardship & Finance
Chairperson: Eric Tieszen
Delegate: Brad Schroeder
Alternate: Eric Tieszen
Finance met on Sunday January 10th.
Members present: Doreen Fry, Eric T, Brad S, Cathee B, and Dianne D.

Reviewed final figures for 2025:
Giving: $234,464 excluding farm rent
Expenditures: $229,164
Our expenses were less than budgeted!

Decision & voted on to give all staff a 3% increase in salary.

Committee reminded that a chairman, delegate & alternate will be needed for council. Volunteer for counting on Sundays is needed too.

We, (committee) wish to thank Doreen F for her continued work and service to our church for the last 6-7 years as financial secretary! She has done a great job! Doreen helped us thru new software & we all know how much work that is! We will miss you, but know you are close by if assistance or questions arise.
Thank you, Doreen!

The finance committee is thankful for our members and friends continual financial support to the church, helping reach our goals and missions. Thank you!

Submitted by,
Dianne D

Christian Education
Chairperson: Susie Schroeder/Tami Bertelson
Delegate: Joey Latsha
Alternate:

Worship & Membership
Chairperson: Nicole Perry
Delegate: Nicole Perry
Alternate: Kathy Hofer
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Pastoral Relations
Chairperson: Carol Woltzen
Delegate: Morgan Gerken
Alternate: Mark Jerman

World Outreach
Chairperson: Bo DeKramer

Delegate: Bo DeKramer
Alternate: Michael White

United Women's Society (UWS)
Delegate: Carol Woltzen
Alternate:

Member-At-Large
Delegate: Josh Popkes Sr.
Alternate: Denise Kurth

Elders Team
Chairperson: Amy Tieszen
Delegate: Amy Tieszen
Alternate: Dorene Richarz

Commissioner to the Presbytery of South Dakota
Carol Woltzen

Lay Member to Annual Conference (UMC)
Katie Ortman