

**Minutes: Michigan Conference UCC
BOD Meeting - Hybrid: Crowne Plaza, Lansing, MI
Friday, January 16, 2026
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm**

[BOD Google Drive](#)

Welcome & Opening Devotion/Prayer/Meditation

- *Meeting called to order with a devotion and opening prayer by Stephen Johnson at 6:00pm*

Attendance (Excused and Absent)

- Board: Rev. Betsy Aho, Rev. Dr. Diane Baker, Josh Beischer, Abbie Goerg, Stephen Johnson, Antoinette McGarvin, Rev. Shane Montoya, Pete Mueller, Rev. Jeffrey Rhodes, Rev. Aaron Rieder, Rev. Michael Young
- Staff: Rev. Cheryl Burke, Rev. Lillian Daniel, Karen Metcalf, Dr. Lawrence Richardson, Jenn Ringgold, Lisa Soulliere, Andrew Warner
- Excused: Ashley Lewis, Rev. Darryl Kistler, Rev. Larry Hoxey

The agenda was adopted.

Annual Meeting Minutes **and** November 15, 2025, meeting minutes approved with no changes.

Overview of Tomorrow's BOD/Staff Retreat on Mission, Vision & Values

- Retreat Objective: To better understand the role of the Board of Directors and its impact on UCC Churches in Michigan

Treasurer's Financial Report

- Rev. Shane Montoya, Treasurer - *no new report since our last meeting; advised the resume for Neil Hawkins, prospective committee member in the google drive.*
 - Rev. Andrew Warner, Director of Finance and Development - *beginning the audit process soon.*

Business Items

- **BOD Sub-Committee Updates and Decision Making**
 - Abbie Goerg, Chair - Nominating Committee - *welcome new members; no meeting in 2026; no new report.*
 - Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Rhodes, Chair - Personnel Committee & Bylaws - *new committee is Jeff, Stephen, and Antoinette. Next review for Lillian will be in June 2026. Bylaws need to be reviewed; a subcommittee will be needed. A copy of bylaws are in the google drive.*
 - Rev. Shane Montoya, Treasurer, Chair - Budget, Finance, and Investment Committee - *Budget, Finance, and Investment (BFI) recommends and moves that*

*Neil Hawkins be appointed to the Michigan Conference Foundation Board.
Approved.*

- o Rev. Dr. Diane Baker, Moderator, Chair - Annual Meeting Planning Team Committee - *Lisa provided updates in Diane's absence. No location identified; still exploring options.*
- o Rev. Betsy Aho, Chair - Strategic Planning Committee - *Committee members are Betsy, Lawrence, Aaron, and Josh. Focus this year is on education.*

BOD Liaison Updates

- o Covenant: Rev. Betsy Aho - *refer to report in the google drive.*
- o Detroit Metro Association: Rev. Larry Hoxey (absent) - *Spring meeting is scheduled for April 25, Hope UCC; Lawrence is the keynote; refer to report in google drive.*
- o Grand West Association: Peter Mueller - *2nd Congregational has requested to leave the conference; letter received with no specifics. Asked for a blurb to be added to the newsletter about the Retreat House (Douglas).*
- o Southwest Association: Josh Beischer - *Met about Church & Ministry being unified.*
- o United Northern Association: Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Rhodes - *refer to the report in the google drive.*

Staff Updates

- o Conference Minister: Rev. Dr. Lillian Daniel - *refer to the report in the google drive. Shared that a church must formally notify the association they are leaving the UCC, then the association notifies the conference. Asked us to support the safe harbour church in Grand Rapids, Joy Like A River. Reading The Black Utopians, invited the author to the Leadership Lunch on February 4, 12pm; proposing it as a conference wide book read.*
- o Associate Conference Minister of Clergy Care & Formation: Rev. Cheryl Burke - *refer to the report in the google drive. Working on unified Church & Ministry (association initiative)*
- o Associate Conference Minister of Church Vitality and Transitions: Rev. Lawrence Richardson - *refer to report in google drive. Looking to strengthen relationships with Lay people in 2026.*
- o Jenn Ringgold, Transitioning Director of Communications and Program Associate for Faith Formation - *refer to report in google drive. \$45,000 went out for the Mitten Project.*
- o Rev. Andrew Warner, Director of Finance and Development - *will be adding a resource about the Michigan Foundation to the google drive soon.*
- o Karen Metcalf, Communications Associate - *reminder she is the point person for MUCC communications.*

Looking Ahead

- o Three in-person meetings (Edgewood), 3 online meetings
- o In Person Board Meetings for 2026 (no hybrid option)- January 17, May 16, September 19 (overnight accommodations optional)
- o Zoom Board Meetings for 2026 - March 21, July 18, November 21
- o All meetings will be scheduled 10am-1pm
- o **Next Board Meeting - Saturday, March 21, 2026: BOD (Zoom) Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 7:08 pm with a closing prayer by Rev. Michael Young.

Respectfully submitted by Antoinette McGarvin