

FELC Church Council Minutes
May 18, 2026

Council members present at FELC.

Betsy Appleton, Charlie Boas, Erin McCracken, Leigh Northcutt-Benson, Lillian Martinez Rodriguez, Mari Ward

Council members present via Zoom.

Paul Barlow:

Council members absent.

Elijah Aguirre, Larry Collmann, Michele Hockett-Cooper (& Margaret Bruesch)

Staff present.

Pastor Katie Rode, Cantor Bryan Rust

Call to Order.

Leigh Northcutt-Benson called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

Devotions.

Pastor Katie offered an opening prayer in place of the usual devotion.

Margaret Bruesch's resignation was announced and accepted.

Consent Agenda.

The consent agenda is a way to approve reports without taking up valuable meeting time.

- *Reports with action items that require further discussion are removed from the consent agenda.*
- *Reports that remain on the consent agenda are approved as a block.*

This meeting's consent agenda includes the following documents, which may be found in the meeting package:

- Previous meeting minutes for approval
- Administrative Committee report
 - Action Item: Cantor's Office
- Columbarium Committee
 - Action Item: Increasing Subscription Fee
- Pastor's Report
 - Action Item: Houses of Hope Curriculum Approval
 - Action Item: Designating Aug. 2nd for marking 90th anniversary

- Stewardship Committee Report
 - Action Item: Establish a Mobile Donation Option
- Worship Ministry Team
- Pipe Organ Task Force
 - Action Item: Letter of Intent for Organ Repair
- Micah Six Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Cantor's Report

The following were removed from the consent agenda for further discussion:

- Curriculum Approval
- Letter of Intent for Organ Repair

Motion to approve consent agenda made by Charlie Boas, seconded by Anne Wiebe, affirmed by council vote. Discussion of removed items deferred to New Business.

Old Business:

May 17th Lunch and Learn Debrief

- Some members felt the pause was "forced upon them" rather than chosen
- Concerns raised about lack of congregational vote on the pause decision
- Positive impact of Sunday's sermon by Leigh Northcutt-Benson in opening minds before the meeting
- Expressions of discomfort and resistance
- White privilege evident in "how does this affect me" framing of concerns
- Many questions submitted in advance were not asked, possibly due to Friday email clarifications or reluctance to speak publicly

New Business

Pause Curriculum

Reflection Booklet Format and distribution:

- Full-size booklet (not bulletin-size) with room for writing
- Deployed weekly via MailPoet starting May 28th
- Will be mailed to seven homebound members; Pastor Katie will visit one per week during pause
- Week 1 includes Isaiah verse, Ignatian Examen explanation, and daily reflection questions
- Nine weeks total: eight during pause plus gentle re-entry week

Accessibility considerations:

- Screen reader compatibility being investigated but will not be implemented due to given time constraints.
- Individual accommodations (Google Doc, large print) available upon request

Post Pause Plans

- **Post-pause curriculum:** August 9th and 23rd will feature Rebecca Guenrich facilitating Houses of Hope modules on "dreaming differently, listening differently, showing up differently Sharing Differently"
- **Feedback process:** Pastor Donna Wright will facilitate strengths/stretches/opportunities/threats collection over four Sundays (August 9, 16, 23, 30)
- **August 2nd anniversary celebration:** Community potluck with recipe-sharing theme, no formal agenda beyond fellowship
- Pastor Katie will be away for three Sundays of August community discernment (9th, 16th, 23rd) for a combination of continuing education, comp time, and vacation. Absence is intentional to allow community work without pastoral presence potentially inhibiting honest feedback, and empowering the Congregation Council in their role as leaders and owners of the Sabbath plan
- Bryan will be present in August to affirm facilitators and hold space for tension
- Erin moved, Betsy seconded, council voted to approve plans.

Organ Repair and Letter of Intent

Fundraising progress:

- Some donors waiting to see if organ refurbishment aligns with post-pause missional focus before giving
- Donors increasing operating fund pledges alongside organ fund contributions

Council rationale for tabling:

- Cannot make decision without hearing full congregation's voice through reflection process
- Risk of undermining pause if proceeding with major project decision now
- Letter of intent would commit to paying for three proposals, effectively signaling "go ahead"
- Leigh moved and Betsy seconded; Council approved tabling until after pause:

New Council Secretary.

Erin moved and Leigh seconded motion to appoint Mari Ward as secretary for the remainder of the year; Council approved. Margaret's resignation and Mari Ward's appointment will be announced in newsletter.

Action Items

- **Paul:** Email organ task force tomorrow stating decision was tabled; CC Council email group
- **Betsy:** Draft post-pause communication by end of day Wednesday

- **Council:** Review and finalize Betsy's draft by end of day Monday for publication in May 31st newsletter
- Communicate to Administrative Committee that consent agenda items were approved
- **Anne:** Notify Columbarium Committee of subscription fee increase approval
- **Pastor Katie:** Communicate curriculum approval and August 2nd date confirmation to relevant parties
- **Staff:** Discuss privacy/photo request tomorrow and respond to member with Leigh copied
- **Bryan:** Forward organ task force email addresses to Paul
- **All:** Add privacy/consent policy discussion to July agenda

Pending Confirmation

- Tabled until after pause: Council approval of secretary preparing and Executive Committee approving meeting highlights within 8 days of meeting.
- Tabled until after pause: Council approval of process for sharing council approved minutes with congregation

Next Council Meeting

July meeting (no June meeting due to pause)

Closing Prayer by Council.

9: 30 PM Council adjourned.