

Chelsea First United Methodist Church

Leadership Board Minutes

September 8, 2026

Attendees: Todd Hubbard, Mike Vanderspool, Kasie Cousino, Rick Fitzgerald, Heather Hay (Zoom), Nolan Peterson, Andrea Alford, Curt Collins, David Shaw, Joy Barrett, Jeff Melvin

Guests: Jody Croskey

Opening prayer by David Shaw

David then led the **Spiritual Formation** topic on how to be a purple church. He grounded it in scripture, mentioning all the verses that reference Jesus teaching to love one another. Paul's directions to congregations followed this theme as to the direction to love one another. David then shared that this was not easy, but looking at it as a messy way, and then he shared times when he had disagreed but still had conversations.

Todd Hubbard then led **the Leadership Development** topic on CFUMC history. Chelsea First United Methodist Church traces its roots to the early settlement of Chelsea in the 1820s and was formally organized in 1853 as Methodist Episcopal Church of Chelsea, initially served by traveling clergy from Ann Arbor. The congregation built its first church on Park Street in 1859, but after that structure was destroyed by fire in 1899, members quickly constructed the current stone sanctuary, dedicating it debt-free with the support of Rev. Dr. Benoni Ingley Ives. Over the decades, the church grew steadily, prompting expansions that included educational wings [1963 and 1996], gathering spaces [Grams Hall, 1996], accessibility improvements, and organ enhancements. Under the leadership of dedicated members and pastors, including Rev. Joy Barrett beginning in 2004, the church continued to invest in its facilities and ministries, notably eliminating its mortgage through the successful "Burn the Mortgage" campaign in 2006 and restoring its historic sanctuary through the Restore-Renew-Reach Out campaign in 2015. Most recently, in 2023, Chelsea First reaffirmed its progressive identity by choosing to remain with the United Methodist Church during the denomination's national split.

Goals Update

[2026] Hospitality Team: Focusing on the action items from the three focus groups conducted; ways to get acquainted with the new pastor; starting Sunday 9/13, variety of people are volunteering as “noticers.” Other things under discussion include the Connection Center, who to be the lead and who to work during social hour.

[2026] Lifelong Faith Formation: Asynchronous learning platform is moving from theory to reality and is under design by Susan Adams-Rita and Tammy Melvin.

Mike reviewed the 2027 Objectives and Key Results in preparation for the September 19th sharing session. We spent time refining and discussing the agreed-upon objectives from the August 4th Strategic Retreat in the August 11 meeting. The group agreed upon the wording and intent of Objective 1 and Objective 2. For Objective 3 (Faith Formation), there was discussion around how narrow or broad we want to go. Nolan volunteered to be an owner. Next step discussion amongst Nolan and Susan as well as Leadership Board.

Engagement Report: New Question started Friday, September 4th and introduced at services on September 6th. Bringing up tangential concerns: do we offer more or people are recognizing they could reach out? Todd is also going to reach out to Tammy to ensure it is in the weekly Pathfinder.

New People Report by Joy: We’ve had several out-of-town visitors for the summer. One thing of note, possible action items with those guests who’ve only come once specifically from The Pines or CRC. Should we do more follow-up?

Consent Packet acceptance was unanimous: the July Consolidated Report and the August minutes.

Review of the proposal from Social Justice Action Team in collaboration with the Safety and Emergency Procedures Task Force (SEPTF), the Facility and Property Team (FPT), and the Director of Lifelong Faith Formation. This proposal recommends establishing processes by which exterior and specific interior doors are locked and clearly marked as private areas. Under this proposal, people will no longer have free and open access to all areas of the church at all times. Instead, we will be strategic and intentional about marking areas as private with locked doors. The team working on this will finesse the tension between our calls to both be open and hospitable and to protect people within our walls. Concerns included:

- Cost, what would that be now vs. in the future? Where in the range of cost and technology?
- How to balance that tension with safety?
- How to balance immigration concerns?
- How do we accommodate those who want to come to pray?

ACTION REQUESTED from the LEADERSHIP BOARD:

To provide approval to move forward with locked-door procedures by entrusting the J-Team to work out logistics to ensure a smooth transition in time for implementation (or starting with Phase 1, if a phased approach is appropriate) by October 4th.

The proposal passed with eight aye's and one abstention. The leadership board also made a request for the Social Justice Action Team to share the specific procedures with the leadership board in advance, for informational purposes.

Nuts and Bolts

- Members were encouraged to attend the church conference via Zoom on the afternoon of 10/11. Mike will share the profile of the church documents approximately two weeks before for review.
- Dr. Rev Totty (our district superintendent) held a discussion with our Pastoral Transition Team. The team had compiled must-haves and like-to-haves. Overall it was a very positive. Next step is to determine compensation by November so that district can start conversations in January. Our previous district superintendent Reverend Rourke is now in her new role and is still in the appointive cabinet.

Closed Session

- One applicant for the finance manager position; it is a member of the congregation.
- Rodney Gasaway has accepted a new position, half-time. This would be his dream job working with veterans as a chaplain and having them get services. While he loves our church and the people, he has previously expressed concerns that our needs don't match his strengths. His last day will be October 5th, the CROP walk.

The group summarized communication themes for Rick Fitzgerald. We decided that there will be a separate update from the Pastoral Transition Team.

Todd Hubbard then closed with a prayer.