

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH of LITTLE ROCK

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MINUTES

January 20, 2026

The new Leadership Council of the Church met for its first regular meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at the Church, pursuant to call of the senior pastor, Rev. David C. Freeman. [Note: for simplicity, after their initial mention in the roll call, last names will then be used throughout this document.]

The Church Charge Conference held on December 4, 2025, approved the establishment of the Leadership Council and Ms. Kelly Jackson as its Chairperson. Ms. Jackson called this meeting to order in the Unity classroom and presented the Agenda. (Ex. A).

Roll call: Of the nine initial Council members, present were members Ms. Kelly Jackson, Ms. Elaine Bultena, Mr. Colin Gorman, Mr. Laine Harbor, Mr. Stark Ligon, Mr. Harvey Wiley, Mr. Jim Wohlleb, and Ms. Jessica Keith (virtually). Ms. Juanita Woodard joined the meeting later virtually.

Others present: staff including Senior Pastor David C. Freeman (ex-officio), Sonya Taylor-Larkowski, James Stanley, Harold Wesley, Rev. Brittany Richardson Watson, Rev. Haley Jones Wells, Lesley Andrews, and church members Rush Harding and Linda Harding. Rev. Heather Rose later joined in person.

Quorum: A quorum to conduct business was present.

Secretary: Ligon volunteered to be Acting Secretary for the initial meeting and was so appointed.

Announcements:

- a. Leadership Council Training – Sunday, January 25, 3:00-5:00 p.m. **Later changed to Monday, February 9 at same time due to expected poor weather.**
- b. Leadership Council meeting – Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 5:00 p.m. at the same room.

Old Business: None

New Business:

1. Election of a Council Secretary. After discussion, Harbor moved to elect church member ~~Debbie Boyd to serve as permanent Secretary without vote. Second by Wohlleb.~~ Unanimous vote to approve. Boyd elected to serve as Leadership Council Secretary.
2. Terms of Council members. After volunteering by some members, the following slate of initial member classes and terms was presented.
 - a. Class of 2026 (one-year term) Keith, Woodard, and Wiley.
 - b. Class of 2027 (two-year term) Jackson, Harbor, and Ligon
 - c. Class of 2028 (three-year term) Bultena, Gorman, and Wohlleb.

Motion to approve by Wohlleb. Second by Bultena. Unanimous vote to approve.

3. Financial report - Church Financial Secretary Taylor-Larkowski distributed the 2025 financial reports (Ex. B) [with all numbers in the Minutes rounded to the nearest hundred dollars by Council permission for simplicity.] Her more detailed 2025 financial report was included in an email to Church membership by Rev. Freeman on January 15, 2025. (Ex. C) An email to the Church membership from Rev. Freeman on January 22, 2026, announced the names and terms of Council members. (Ex. D)
 - a. The Church ended calendar 2025 with an unaudited surplus of \$12,429.20 in income over expenses. No salaries of clergy or other staff were reduced during 2025 to bring the budget into balance, although expenditures in some other budget categories were reduced to achieve this year-end balance.
 - b. Total 2025 income for the ongoing 2024 "Sacred Spaces "Capital Campaign was ~~\$632,757. A total of \$1,519,000 for the Campaign has been received as of 12-31-25.~~
 - c. The Church's line-of-credit with Centennial Bank was \$431,000 and was reduced to \$394,000 at year end 2025.
 - d. The Church "reserve account" balance was \$567,828 at year end 2025 and is held in several financial institutions. This account includes all Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) funds received (\$200,000) and ERTC (employment tax credit) funds (\$367,828), on interest.
 - e. No Church staff salary increases have been given since 2023.
4. Budget. After discussion led by Taylor-Larkowski, a motion to accept the proposed 2026 Budget (Recommendation A from the former Budget Committee, here attached Ex. B) was made by Gorman and seconded by Jackson. A motion to amend the main motion was made by Bultena and seconded by Harber, to include up to \$136,000 available for use if needed as 2026 income from the "reserve" account. The amended motion was approved by a unanimous vote and Recommendation A is approved.
5. Senior Pastors Report – Rev. David Freeman.
 - a. Stewardship/Giving. All leaders and members of the Church can play a role in sustaining and building our Church and making it a large part of the life of all members by supporting its programs, serving as volunteers in areas of personal interest, inviting guests, integrating new members into an active church life, and being on the lookout for opportunities to present new opportunities to the Church.

- b. Rental income opportunities. The Church is exploring compatible users or tenants for use of Church facilities on a periodic or full-time basis. A local basketball school for youngsters is currently renting our gym several days a week.
6. Building & Grounds Report – Harold Wesley. “Wesley” (by his choice) updated progress on the sanctuary restoration. The 8th Street windows have been installed. The Riggs Chapel work was completed last week. Work to repair termite damage on the Center Street Rose Window will require about 4-8 months to complete. The courtyard work is fully funded. Paint and weatherstripping projects will start soon.

[Note: Council Member Woodard joined the meeting virtually at this point.]

7. Children-Youth Programs – Rev. Watson. Future youth events are:
- a. Late February - Veritas gathering in Fort Smith for 6-12 graders
 - b. Early June - Church Day Camp for 3-5 graders
 - c. Early June - Ozark Mission Project for 6-12 graders
 - d. Late July - Arkansas Conference Youth Assembly at Hendrix College for 6-12 graders
8. Hospitality and Belonging Report – Rev. Heather Rose physically joined meeting but has no report today.
9. Community Engagement and Service Report – Rev. Wells reported that:
- a. On Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Monday, more than 70 church members and guests worked at four sites – white-glove cleaning our Community Café area, trash pickup in on city streets in the downtown area, organizing a “clothing pantry” at our partner city school (Washington Carver Elementary), and cleaning Canvas Community Church.
 - b. A church website “volunteer” portal has been developed to assist members in notice, coordination, and activity recording. It will soon be expanded to allow use by high schoolers.
 - c. Our Little Wash Van is now staffed by church volunteers three afternoons per week at the church and has expanded to serving the public at the downtown CAIS library site, presently serving 50-60 users on a first-come-first served basis. One wash & dry load takes about one hour. The van has two systems onboard.
 - d. Our Church is part of a new public advocacy action through training and participation.
 - e. A new church service group, Men of Faith and Action (“MOFA”), co-headed by Jim Shenep and Shawn McMurray, has been established to use individual and groups

skills to serve church members who need assistance with personal and homes activities.

- f. "Service Days" activities will be organized, such as for Arkansas Habitat (in May) and the Arkansas Food Bank.
- g. As of January 20, 2026, 210+ service hours have already been reported and logged by church members and groups.

10. Music and Worship Arts Report – James Stanley. He reports that the Chancel and Ensemble choirs and the Bell Ringers are all growing in membership. The First Word Service Band has recently gained four new volunteer members. The sanctuary organ has had its bellows "re-leathered," a process that should occur every 12-15 years to keep the organ in sound condition. He hopes the music program can start offering music outreach seminars in the community.

11. Questions from Council members. Harvey asked about how the new church accounting system was working. Taylor-Larkowski answered that it is known as "APLOS" and so far her experience with it has been good.


12. Senior Pastor Report - Rev. Freeman discussed the Church's "Metric Goals" for individual members and the Church collectively.

- a. Small groups – create three short-term groups and one new Sunday School class, probably for younger adults.
- b. Increase overall Church Sunday average worship attendance (AWA) by 10%.
- c. Each family giving unit increasing its annual tithe giving by \$1,000.
- d. Each member bringing at least one guest to a worship service.
- e. Each member participating in one additional service project or missional effort.
- f. The Church membership collectively give 10,000 hours of service to Church efforts.
- g. Assess Church goals for use in faithful service to God in 2-4-6 years.
- h. Our "homework" – Who are we when we are at our "Best" as faithful Christians? What does God desire for our work and how can we best be a part of this?

A copy of the 2026 Personal Goals Tracker is attached as Ex. F.

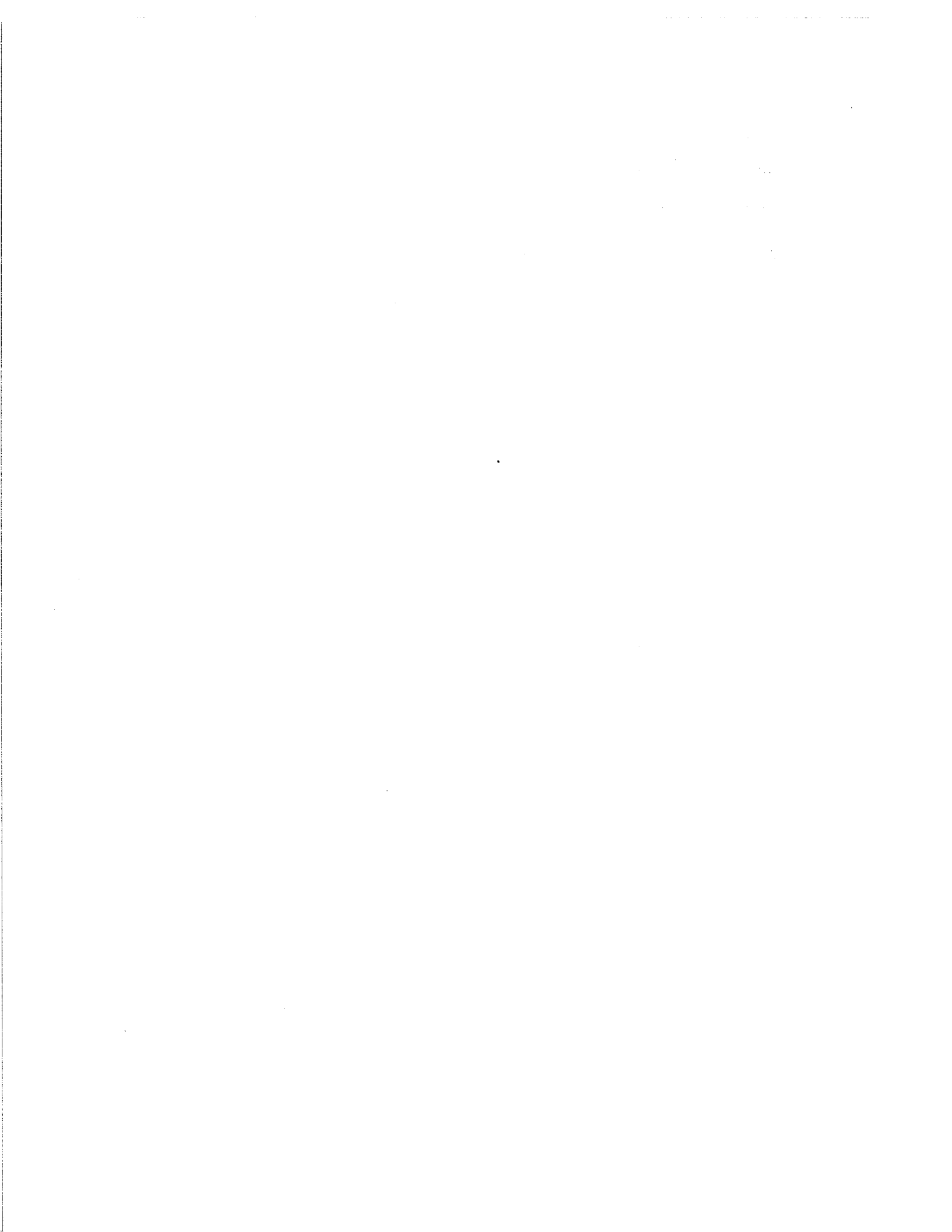
13. SPRC Report - Rev. Freeman (executive/closed session. All in attendance exit but the nine Council members, the Senior Pastor, and Taylor-Larkowski, who has traditionally attended SPRC meetings as the Church's human resources staff member.) If any matters were discussed, they are required by Church rule to be confidential.

Prayer and Adjournment – 6: 40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stark Ligon
Acting Secretary

Attachments:

- A - Agenda
- B - Financial documents (3 sheets)
- C - 1-15-26 Church eNewsletter
- D - 1-22-26 Church eNewsletter
- E - (withheld at this time)
- F - 2026 Personal Goals Tracker



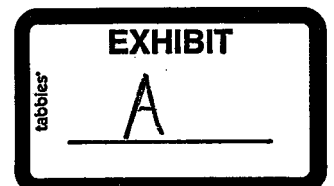
FUMCLR
Leadership Council
1/20/26 Meeting Agenda

Mission: Being good neighbors to make Little Rock a place where all God's children THRIVE.

Prayer and Song	Rev. David C. Freeman and James Stanley
Selection of Meeting Secretary	Kelly Jackson
Approval of Past Board of Stewards Minutes	Kelly Jackson
Setting of Council Member Classes	Kelly Jackson
Finance and Stewardship Report	Sonja Taylor-Larkowski
-2026 Budget	
-Stewardship Practices and Initiatives	Rev. David C. Freeman
Buildings and Grounds Report	Harold Wesley
-Art Installation Proposal	Rush Harding
Children and Youth Ministry Report	Rev. Brittany Richardson Watson
Hospitality and Belonging Report	Rev. Heather Rose
Community Engagement and Service Report	Rev. Haley Jones Wells
Music and Worship Arts Report	James Stanley
Senior Pastor Report	Rev. David C. Freeman
-2026 Metric Goals	
-Vision Process homework	
SPRC Report	Rev. David C. Freeman
Prayer and Adjournment	

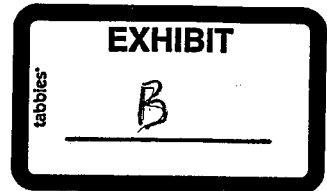
Announcements:

Leadership Council Training- Sunday, January 25, 3:00-5:00
Next Leadership Council Meeting-Tuesday, February 17, 5:00



First United Methodist Church-Little Rock
Operating Income Statement
for the period of 01/01/2025 to 12/31/2025

Account Number	Account Name	Actual	YTD		Difference	Current Month		Difference
			YTD Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual	
Income								
4000	Contributions Income	\$1,500,552.01	\$1,513,104.35	\$261,102.19	\$-12,552.34	\$126,092.13	\$135,010.06	
4300	Other Income	\$471,168.71	\$428,745.44	\$35,553.31	\$42,423.27	\$31,978.86	\$3,574.45	
4500	Endowment Income	\$10,520.95	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,520.95	\$0.00	\$0.00	
	Total Income	\$1,982,241.67	\$1,941,849.79	\$296,655.50	\$40,391.88	\$158,070.99	\$138,584.51	
Expense								
6000	Salaries	\$964,026.11	\$992,548.86	\$100,457.78	\$-28,522.75	\$87,716.90	\$12,740.88	
6100	Staff Benefits	\$370,242.18	\$433,617.31	\$15,804.38	\$-63,375.13	\$36,134.73	\$-20,330.35	
6200	Administrative Support	\$104,767.86	\$107,929.00	\$11,398.95	\$-3,161.14	\$8,994.12	\$2,404.83	
6300	Property & Maintenance	\$203,191.50	\$195,843.00	\$23,124.65	\$7,348.50	\$16,320.25	\$6,804.40	
6304	Utilities	\$108,601.11	\$125,111.40	\$15,347.81	\$-16,510.29	\$10,425.95	\$4,921.86	
6317	Miscellaneous	\$49.99	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$49.99	\$0.00	\$0.00	
5000	District Shared Giving	\$167,413.26	\$167,261.44	\$25,930.15	\$151.82	\$13,938.49	\$11,991.66	
5100	Music & Fine Arts	\$10,592.30	\$12,500.00	\$1,143.78	\$-1,907.70	\$1,041.63	\$102.15	
5200	Communication/Advertising	\$21,181.55	\$27,650.00	\$1,222.90	\$-6,468.45	\$2,304.24	\$-1,081.34	
5300	Children's Ministries	\$4,360.93	\$5,150.00	\$79.81	\$-789.07	\$429.24	\$-349.43	
5400	Adult Ministries	\$2,075.61	\$3,125.00	\$0.00	\$-1,049.39	\$260.38	\$-260.38	
5500	Youth Ministries	\$3,145.18	\$4,000.00	\$607.12	\$-854.82	\$333.37	\$273.75	
5600	Missions	\$4,429.57	\$5,500.00	\$21.36	\$-1,070.43	\$458.37	\$-437.01	
5700	Church Life Functions	\$5,735.32	\$9,400.00	\$1,227.64	\$-3,664.68	\$783.26	\$444.38	
	Total Expense	\$1,969,812.47	\$2,089,636.01	\$196,366.33	\$-119,823.54	\$179,140.93	\$17,225.40	
	Total	\$12,429.20	\$-147,786.22	\$100,289.17	\$160,215.42	\$-21,069.94	\$121,359.11	



First United Methodist Church-Little Rock
Year over Year Income Statement Comparison
for the period of 01/01/2024 to 12/31/2025

Account Number	Account Name	Date Range 1 01/01/2025 - 12/31/2025	Date Range 2 01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024	Date Range 2 \$
Income				
4000	Contributions Income	\$1,500,552.01	\$1,548,638.63	\$-48,086.62
4300	Other Income	\$471,168.71	\$382,017.02	\$89,151.69
4537	Endowment Funds- Operating	\$10,520.95	\$0.00	\$10,520.95
Total Income		\$1,982,241.67	\$1,930,655.65	\$51,586.02
Expense				
6000	Salaries	\$964,026.11	\$946,494.65	\$17,531.46
6100	Staff Benefits	\$370,242.18	\$377,669.41	\$-7,427.23
6200	Administrative Support	\$104,767.86	\$108,435.52	\$-3,667.66
6300	Property & Maintenance	\$203,191.50	\$164,161.55	\$39,029.95
6304	Utilities	\$108,601.11	\$112,492.59	\$-3,891.48
6317	Miscellaneous	\$49.99	\$400.00	\$-350.01
5000	District Shared Giving	\$167,413.26	\$157,410.49	\$10,002.77
5100	Music & Fine Arts	\$10,592.30	\$11,379.25	\$-786.95
5200	Communication/Advertising	\$21,181.55	\$21,609.34	\$-427.79
5300	Children's Ministries	\$4,360.93	\$3,044.84	\$1,316.09
5400	Adult Ministries	\$2,075.61	\$2,047.21	\$28.40
5500	Youth Ministries	\$3,145.18	\$2,927.91	\$217.27
5600	Missions	\$4,429.57	\$3,037.23	\$1,392.34
5700	Church Life Functions	\$5,735.32	\$4,815.79	\$919.53
Total Expense		\$1,969,812.47	\$1,915,925.78	\$53,886.69
Net Income (Loss)		\$12,429.20	\$14,729.87	\$-2,300.67

1/20/26



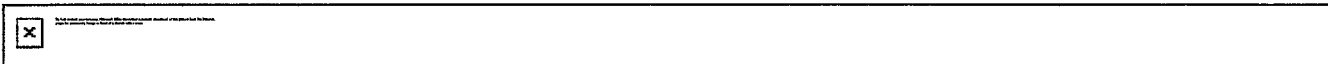
First United Methodist Church-Little Rock
Balance Sheet
as of 12/31/2025

Account Number	Account Name	Amount
Assets		
1000	Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$1,160,841.61
1010	Other Current Assets	\$15,374.72
1100	Accounts Receivable	\$36,691.78
1500	Property & Equipment	\$7,853,898.27
1600	Temporarily Restricted Assets	\$525,219.29
1700	Restricted Funds	\$9,836,702.50
1800	Cash, BDP, MMF	\$147,311.42
Total Assets		\$19,576,039.59
Liabilities		
2000	Accounts Payable	\$162,898.56
2100	Payroll & Related Liabilities	\$57,928.47
2200	Deposits & Deferred Revenue	\$240,571.28
2503	LOC-Centennial	\$430,907.25
Total Liabilities		\$892,305.56
Equity		
3000	Unrestricted Net Assets	\$5,616,924.74
3101	Designated Gifts	\$225.66
3500	Endowment Principal Funds	\$5,532,238.25
3501	Designated Gifts	\$654,787.35
3502	Memorials & Honorariums Fund Balance	\$342,170.16
3504	Endowment Spending Accounts	\$474,956.49
3505	Capital Improvement Fund	\$1,518,993.38
3507	Endowment Principal Fund-W/O Restrictions - Fund Balance	\$4,446,061.00
3508	Endowment Spending Funds-W/O Donor Restrictions - Fund Balance	\$97,377.00
Total Equity		\$18,683,734.03
Total Liabilities + Total Equity		\$19,576,039.59

From: FUMCLR <news@fumclr.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 15, 2026 4:00 PM
To: starkligon@gmail.com
Subject: eNewsletter - January 15

*SL home gas bill
12/18/25 - 1/12/26 454.11
\$16.22/day*

[View this email in your browser](#)

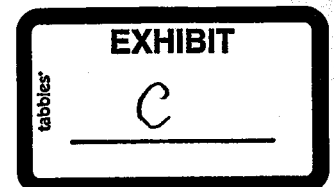


eNewsletter | January 15, 2026

Dear Friends,

Your faithfulness of generosity has been on full display recently. With your financial gifts, along with our staff's conservative use of resources, we were able to finish last year \$12,266.95 to the good. This is significant and exciting for our church. Not only were we able to finish the year without dipping into our reserves, but we are beginning this year with a few extra resources for our ministry. That's over \$12,000 more we'll have for teaching children and youth, offering care and hospitality, serving our neighbors, and offering awe-inspiring music and worship. Thank you for your gifts. I know when you make a gift, it is to God, and so we see this achievement as an expression of your love and devotion to Christ.

But that only tells part of the story of your generosity. On top of your giving to our ministry budget, in December, you all also gave \$4,650 to the CDC for Scholarships, \$2,332.00 to the Methodist Family Health Foundation on Christmas Eve, \$7,463.77 at the Christmas Mission Market.



In all of 2025, you gave \$16,789.56 to our "Communion Fund" and \$3,167.00 to "Ones for the Many," which funds many of our outreach ministries like our Community Cafe, Wash Van, and our school partnership. You also gave an incredible \$632,757 to our Sacred Spaces Capital Campaign. Twenty-eight new households gave to the church for the first time in 2025, and 72 households increased their 2026 pledges, with 10 making pledges for the very first time.

There is so much to be thankful for and celebrate as we continue to express love and devotion to Christ through our financial generosity. May God continue to bless you and our church as we stay faithful to the call to be good neighbors to make Little Rock a place where all God's children THRIVE.

Gratefully,
David

Worship this Sunday, January 18

Sermon: Divine Disturbances

Scripture: Genesis 11: 1-9

Preacher: Rev. Heather Rose

Music at First Word: "Your Grace Is Enough," "Mercy Now," and "Thrive"

Hymns at First Tradition: "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," "Children of the Heavenly

Father," and "Christ for the World We Sing."

News & Events

Sunday First Arts is back in January!

From: FUMCLR <news@fumclr.org>
Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 4:15 PM
To: starkligon@gmail.com
Subject: eNewsletter - January 22

[View this email in your browser](#)

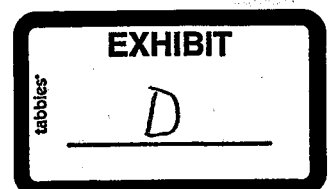


eNewsletter | January 22, 2026

2026 Leadership Council

For a big portion of 2025, we were in the discernment and decision-making process of changing our church leadership structure to the Simplified Accountable Structure. This is the option in the United Methodist system of consolidating all the administrative committees into one council that handles all matters of church governance. After much research, design, information sharing, and fine tuning, the Charge Conference voted to make this change at the December 4th meeting. The Charge Conference also elected the members who will be serving on this Leadership Council. Therefore, the new structure and leadership went into effect January 1.

This Sunday, we'll take some time in the 11:00 service to pray for and commission our new Leadership Council. While they are tasked with administrating the church, their work is primarily a spiritual endeavor. They will guide us in staying faithful to God's call and mission. Therefore, we must



be in prayer for this not just at the beginning of their work, but constantly throughout their tenure.

Here is the 2026 Leadership Council:

Class of 2026

Jessica Keith

Harvey Wiley

Juanita Woodard

Class of 2027

Kelly Jackson (Chair)

Laine Harber

Stark Ligon

Class of 2028

Elaine Bultena

Colin Gorman

Jim Wohlleb

Special Note: I want to thank Ginny McMurray for her leadership of our Board of Stewards over the past year and a half. Her steady and faithful leadership has been a real gift to FUMCLR. Please express your gratitude to her when you can.

Gratefully,

David

W I N T E R W E A T H E R U P D A T E

With winter weather in the forecast, we wanted to share how we'll handle decisions for this weekend. A decision on whether to hold Sunday services in-person or online will be made on Friday morning. Once a decision is made, we will send an email and post an update on our social media channels, so please keep an eye out for those updates. As a reminder, church office hours follow the **Little Rock School District**. If

Personal Goals Tracker

This Goals Tracker is a simple tool to help our church family stay focused on growing in our faith. By setting goals for each of our membership vows of Prayer, Presence, Gifts, Service, and Witness, we can be more intentional about how we live out our faith each week and reflect on how God is working in and through us.

PRAYERS

Goal: Participate in one extra Bible study, prayer group, or small group in 2026.
Watch the newsletter for new opportunities we'll be launching in 2026.

 Write name of Bible study, prayer group, or small group

PRESENCE

Goal: Increase your worship attendance by 10% or one additional Sunday a month.

JANUARY				FEBRUARY				MARCH					APRIL				MAY					JUNE			
4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28

JULY				AUGUST				SEPTEMBER				OCTOBER				NOVEMBER				DECEMBER					
5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27

 Write your personal goal for # of Sundays in 2026

GIFTS

Goal: Give an extra \$1000 over your 2025 tithe.

Look at one area of spending you could scale back just slightly—one less dinner out, one less impulse buy. Those small savings can add up and create space to grow in generosity.

Successfully increased my tithe in 2026.

SERVICE

Goal: Participate in 1 additional service project or missional effort.

Stay connected and get involved—read the newsletter to discover upcoming service opportunities where you make a difference.

 New service project or missional effort. We are tracking all service hours within the church, but please share all your service hours outside the church on the Journey Card each week so we can keep track for communal goals.

WITNESS

Goal: Bring at least 1 guest to worship in 2026.

You never know how one simple invitation can make a lasting difference

 Names and date your guests attended. Share with church so we can add to our communal goals.

