

First United Methodist Church Little Rock

Leadership Council Meeting

March 17, 2026

Present: Kelly Jackson, Harvey Wiley, Stark Ligon, Laine Harber, Elaine Bultena, Jim Wohlleb, Jessica Keith, Juanita Woodard, Debbie Boyd, David Freeman, Brittany Richardson Watson, James Stanley, Haley Jones Wells, Harold Wesley, Heather Rose, Sonja Taylor-Larkowski, Lesley Andrews

Chair Kelly Jackson called the meeting to order. She asked James Stanley to begin the meeting with an echo song. Everyone participated in singing the song.

Kelly reminded council members of the purpose of posting meeting minutes on the church website: to provide transparency for the congregation by posting a timely and accurate account of each leadership council meeting. Kelly went on to explain, in the future, Debbie Boyd will send minutes to the nine members. If any member sees an error in content, send Debbie suggested corrections. Debbie will send corrected minutes to Lesley Andrews for posting on the church website. If church members have questions about the meeting minutes they can call any of the nine council members. At the following meeting, the previous month's minutes will be approved. Jessica Keith made a motion to approve this new procedure and Stark Ligon offered a second to the motion. All members voted yes. Laine Harber moved to approve the February 17 meeting minutes, Elaine Bultena made a second and all approved.

Director of Finance and Administration, Sonja Taylor-Larkowski, began the finance and stewardship report by saying that the year to date numbers for 2026 are up \$30,000 from the same period in 2025. She had feared we would have a deficit at the end of February but, even though expenses were greater, we're still doing better than the same period last year.

Sonja offered information on the church's designated gifts account: by the end of February \$5,786 was received and \$5,108.10 was expended.

Sonja referred to the last meeting's discussion of the proposed EV charging stations. She handed out a sheet with the quotation for work associated with installing the stations and the repaving of the parking lot, alley and adjacent parking lot. (attached)

She advised the members the perpetual endowment spending account from which the above expenses would be paid has a balance of \$283,143.

After a brief discussion, Elaine moved that the church move forward with the EV charging stations installation and associated paving. Juanita offered a second and the vote was 7 yes, 1 abstain and 1 absent.

Harold Wesley, director of buildings, grounds and security, reported on recent operational inspections at the CDC and the church. These include sprinkler inspections at the CDC and the annual elevator inspection at the church. The repairs in the crawl space will be started after Holy week and will last approximately three weeks.

Wesley has lost personnel and is adjusting work assignments accordingly.

Brittany Richardson Watson in her report on youth and kids listed recent activities. Coming up is senior Sunday and confirmation Sunday for seven children.

Heather Rose listed as her tasks coordinating care that is already happening among different groups in the church. She will be tracking visitors and keeping up with new members. She plans a hospitality training after Easter for people who want to work with new members.

Haley Jones Wells held a faith and advocacy workshop recently. The social work intern who has been working with Haley will complete her assignment May 6. Haley hopes to have interns from UALR in the future. "Fast to Feast" has received \$10,000 in donations so far. The laundry van was temporarily unavailable while it was being serviced. Haley has received requests from CALS and the Argenta Library for the use of the laundry van several days each month.

James Stanley reported that each group within the music ministry has gained members. He explained that Shannon Webb is forming an advisory board for First Arts. She is asking parents who have experience with differently abled children to join. James explained there are neurodivergent kids in First Arts.

Kelly Jackson suggested the council members think about church members who could serve on a search committee for the new youth and kids director. David said we're moving forward on the search for the new roles and Palm Sunday is his deadline for posting the job notice.

Sonja explained that the church's health insurance will renew in May and the prices will increase. She offered a suggestion: To keep employees' contributions for their insurance from going up, the church would absorb the increase. Kelly asked for a motion: an

allowance up to \$10,000 to pay the difference in the costs between 2025 and 2026. Jessica made the motion and Stark seconded the motion. All members voted yes.

David prayed and Kelly adjourned the meeting.

Debbie Boyd

Secretary