

First United Methodist Church Little Rock

Leadership Council Meeting

April 21, 2026

Present: Laine Harber, Jim Wohlleb, Harvey Wiley, Kelly Jackson, Stark Ligon, Colin Gorman, Juanita Woodard, Jessica Keith (Zoom), Sonja Taylor-Larkowski, Harold Wesley, David Freeman, guest Clarence Trice

Chair Kelly Jackson opened the meeting by asking David Freeman to pray. Kelly asked for approval of March meeting minutes. Harvey Wiley made a motion and Laine seconded the motion. All approved the minutes.

Kelly introduced the guest, Clarence Trice. Mr. Trice is the Senior Vice-President and CFO of the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas. He stated the mission of the Methodist Foundation for Arkansas: to establish and manage charitable funds to strengthen and expand Methodist ministries across Arkansas. He explained the workings of the foundation illustrated with a handout he gave each council member.

**Harold Wesley, director of buildings, grounds and security,** reported that the elevator at the back of the sanctuary has water in the bottom of the shaft. Apparently a sprinkler pipe broke and flooded the shaft. They repaired the pipe but they must wait to remove the water. They must hire a company that can remove the water according to environmental standards because there is now oil mixed with it. Wesley is requesting quotations for this. After completing the work, they will install a sump pump to prevent future incidents.

There has been one employee change: One person has been added to the church staff and Wesley is interviewing for a position at the CDC.

Wesley said the electrical work on the charging stations has begun.

The project in the crawl space was completed in three days. This was the last of the projects from the 2024 capital campaign.

**Sonja Taylor-Larkowski, Director of Finance and Administration,** gave the following report:

Income YTD (March 31)	\$529,546
Expenses YTD	\$463,927
Net Income YTD	\$65,619

Contribution income alone through March 31 was \$395,364 which is \$64,670 more than we budgeted for the period. Expenses were \$32,619 below what we budgeted for the same period.

The bank line of credit, which has been the source of funding for capital campaign projects, has a balance of \$293,466. We haven't received all capital campaign pledges.

Colin Gorman made a motion to accept the March 31 financial statement; Jim Wohlleb made a second and all approved.

David Freeman explained that in the past there was a liaison between the church and the CDC who would report to the Board of Stewards. In 2015 the church and the CDC separated as legal entities. The CDC board functions independently of the church. Fifty percent of the board must be members of our church. With the new administrative organization, reports will be made quarterly by **a member of the CDC board to the Leadership Council.**

**Amelia Botteicher** reported that Executive Director Hannah Cheek has resigned. During the interim after her departure, an informal personnel audit showed lapses in payment of worker compensation insurance. This has been rectified. The CDC is at full capacity of 270 children (infant to preK.) There is also an after-school program

The CDC has hired a new executive director, Rebecca Dwyer-Coop, who will start next Monday.

David Freeman reported on the search for a Director of Ministries for Kids and Youth. He updated a job description and posted it on the conference website and surrounding states' churches' websites. David organized a search committee of five church members. It will review resumes and do initial interviews with candidates. The next step is for viable candidates to teach a Sunday School class. The search committee will make a recommendation for the position and the Leadership Council will make the decision.

Brittany Richardson Watson's last Sunday will be June 14. Kelly Jackson offered to oversee planning a celebration for Brittany's last day.

David updated the members on Rev. Natasha Murray's idea of a shared ministry position with Quapaw Quarter UMC and First Church. Quapaw Quarter doesn't want to do it. Rev. Murray would still like the downtown churches to figure out ways to work together.

Kelly said she would like each Leadership Council member to have a "staff partner." She will make a list of staff members and each LC member can choose a staff member.

David wants to pursue the question "how are we being intentional trying to reach a new generation for the church?"

Kelly adjourned the meeting with a prayer by David.

Debbie Boyd

Secretary

