

Shepherding the Flock – August 19, 2025 Session Meeting

Pastor Will opened the meeting with a scripture reading and reflection based on Galatians 2:15-16. There are two ways to look at this:

1. We are not justified by the law, but by the faith **in** Jesus Christ.
2. We are not justified by the law, but by the faith **of** Jesus Christ.

The faith of Christ gives us everything we need to be justified, there is nothing, no works we can do, to add to our justification. We rest on the faith of Jesus Christ. Pastor Ben also pointed out Romans 1:17, the faithfulness of Jesus makes us righteous.

Report of the Clerk

We are planning strategy and fellowship session with the elders, which will be hosted at the Baker farm on October 11. Would like to arrive at a one-year plan, considering what would we like to accomplish, what our focus is for the next year, and how would we like to be known in the community, keeping our values in mind.

Deacons Report – Pastor Ben

The deacons welcomed Jamie Roberts and Judy Fitzgerald and look forward to having Brian Wolhaupter presented to the congregation for a vote this coming Sunday. The next major outreach event will be the annual sending of care packages to our members, their family members, and friends of the congregation who are away from home, which will be coming up in October. The deacons have decided to move the sending of care packages from December to October.

Pastor's Moment – Pastor Will

- Communion was served on August 3.
- Reviewed PEW research from 2016, which covered how adults choose a new house of worship:
 - Like the message/quality of the preaching
 - Appreciate the tone set by church leaders
 - Feel welcomed by clergy and leaders, including lay leaders.
 - Appreciate the style of worship, including music.

Smaller impact included children's ministry and having friends and family as part of the congregation.

We should continue to identify people we don't recognize and reach out to them.

People appreciate if they are noticed, if members remember their names and if they're invited back. We should consider new people "guests" and not "visitors."

Elders were encouraged to invite one person to FPC before the next meeting.

- Continuing to work on messages for fall, one-on-one meetings with elders, and interviews with potential candidates for open positions.
- Need to ordain Ryan Horst and Brian Wolhaupter. The session voted to allow the pastor to determine a Sunday to ordain these two leaders and any others that might need to be ordained.
- Will be leading a weekly Bible study on First Kings and the life of Elijah starting on Tuesday, September 9 at 7:30 AM at MNM's coffeehouse.

Nominating Committee Report

Still working to fill the open elder position for missions and is looking for one additional member from the congregation for the 2026 nominating committee. Pastor Will suggested that we may wait until next year to fill the mission elder position. Would need one of the existing elders to cover some of the responsibilities, including where to donate, getting members involved in missions, honoring our 10% tithe commitment to missions, etc.

Consent Agenda

- Approve minutes from July 15, 2025, session meeting, with revisions.
- Acknowledge completion of annual DFI filing.
- Approve a letter of transfer for Ezra Schmeelk to the First Presbyterian Church of Oregon, Wisconsin.
- Remove Tom and Jayne Romano, Lon and Mary Foree, Brian Keller, and John Gorton, Julie Edwards and Allie Gorton from membership at FPC.
- Approve Kindermusik contract.

Finance Report

The finance team has sent mid-year reports and statements. They held an endowment meeting and matched the Pillar and Pathway funds received to date. They brought in a consultant to review member data for the ACS conversion, and to start looking at accounting. They are looking for new members for the finance committee to help with the ACS implementation, will replace Tony Tomaselli on the endowment committee and start the annual audit for 2024. They're carefully managing cash flow as balances are getting a little low, and expenses will be increasing in the fall. They produced a more visual financial report sample that the elders reviewed in the meeting.

General fund balance is \$20,491.97. Income versus expense for the general fund only, is - \$53,219.67. Percent of pledges given versus pledged for the month of July was 60%, and 90% year to date.

Noted that the annual filing for the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions was completed and confirmed on July 17, 2025.

Worship and Music

The team discussed the house manager position and how the ushers could assist with this role. They have decided that the assigned point usher will also fill the house manager role. They noted several safety concerns and how FPC needs to have better oversight for those. They're currently working on fall service logistics and recruiting volunteers. Continuing to research how we might use pre-recorded contemporary Christian music in the sanctuary before the start of the second service.

Music Study Committee

The committee continues to work on identifying roles needed for music and worship, to cover the role that Sam Robinson is currently playing, and possibly, other music roles. Sam will be retiring in May of 2026. Session will receive a report from this committee in September or October.

Personnel

Interviews were conducted recently for the student ministry and children and family ministry directors. We've decided not to hire anyone from that round of interviews.

Personnel is supporting the work of the music study team with personnel data. They are also preparing for the congregational meeting scheduled for August 24 to move Pastor Will and dependents to the Congregation Pastor's Plan, effective January 1, 2026.

Children and Family Ministry

There is an internal candidate (member) interested in a part-time, interim position for children and family ministry. That person will be interviewed on August 21. Session discussed the pros and cons of hiring a church member. Peter Bergmann presented the job description for the interim children and family minister director position. Appropriate boundaries have been set to define the interim role, and session will be consulted again before potentially hiring a member into a full-time permanent role. Session approved the interim children and family ministry director role.

For this school year, we have lost more Sunday school teachers than we gained. Looking for additional volunteers. Finalizing the calendar for the school year, and plans for the Fall Kick-off. For 2026, will move VBS to the first week of August.

Building and Grounds

B&G is moving forward with completing parking lot crack filling and seal coating, scheduled for August 27 and 28. Have contracted for repairing two sections of the roof where potential leaks are occurring. Re-caulked around some windows to address the issue. Replacing rotting and damaged fencing around the dumpsters – thanks to a member who volunteered to cover the cost of the new fence. Working with a lighting contractor to review options for addressing nonfunctioning exterior lighting. Will continue to work with finance to plan out additional projects included in the approved project list as money from the P&P campaign becomes available. Reaching out to find additional volunteers to assist with interior and exterior projects around the church – using data from the Discovery tool survey to identify those who might be interested in volunteering with building and grounds.

Stewardship

Monitoring progress of the Pillars and Pathways campaign. Preparing for the fall stewardship campaign. Will promote more online giving, to even out cash flow throughout the year.

Student Ministry

Continuing the search for the student ministry director and exploring the possibility of a paid interim director position. Connecting with Wednesday night leaders to determine interest and plan for the fall.

Adult Nurture and Spiritual Growth

Preparing for the fall kickoff, including the ministry fair, which will include all the offerings for adult Sunday school, women's and men's small groups, and several new Bible studies. "Theology on Tap" is being rebranded to a new concept of "Connect and Reflect." This group will meet bi-monthly for adult fellowship and connection, along with time for open discussion around current faith based-topics.

May invite other Waunakee churches to the Tuesday morning Bible study at MNM's. Also evaluating several other new adult small group opportunities. A new group for mothers will be starting in September. This will be open to the community and is open to those who are navigating the joys and challenges of motherhood in all its forms. It will be held on Wednesday evenings and facilitated by Kristin Hall Sliwicki and Becca Gottwald.

Missions

The session agreed to underwrite half of the cost of adult members traveling to Guatemala for mission trips with Outreach for World Hope, up to a total of \$4500. The cost is approximately \$900 per person.

Fellowship

Provided the excellent detailed plan used for planning and running the fall kick-off. For 2026, they may use local newspapers, the Chamber of Commerce and Facebook to advertise the fall kick-off.