

## Notes from our August 10, 2025 Church Council Mtg.

Present: Ted M./today's moderator, Annie C., Ann G., Richard P., Randy G., Virginia W., Wendy P., and guests Sherrill H. (Apartheid Free) and Patricia D. (painting church)

Ted opened the meeting with a prayer; the notes from our June 8th CC meeting were approved.

### New Business

Sherrill is here to help figure out a motion to present at our Aug. 24th informational meeting on our church becoming an **Apartheid Free Community**. This Apartheid Free movement was initiated by the American Friends Service Committee, and numerous UCC churches have already signed on (and it was brought up 2 yr. ago at the national UCC Synod). Various materials presented on the subject. Much discussion. The general consensus was to give a clear, simple explanation of what is being asked with minimal handouts, with the simple, clear handout from Apartheid Free being our choice. (We Affirm, We Oppose, We Declare, We pledge..)

Ted presented the following motion, which was then approved by the CC:

#### **Apartheid-Free Motion (for discussion August 24 and vote September 7)**

It is moved that the First Congregational Church of Ashfield, UCC adopt the following pledge in support of the Apartheid-Free network:

We affirm our commitment to freedom, justice, and equality for the Palestinian people and all people;

We oppose all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination, and oppression; and

We declare ourselves and apartheid-free community, and to that end,

We pledge to join others in working to end all support to Israel's apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation.

(Further background information is available at this website: <https://apartheid-free.org>)

It is requested that Rev. David moderate the Aug. 24th information session. Nancy Marshall, our moderator, will be back and able to moderate our Sept. 7th Special Congregational Mtg.

Information re Apartheid Free to be included in Weekly Update issues prior to 8/24 and 9/7.

Thank you, Sherrill, for your work on this issue.

Of note, Patricia D. has worked for AFSC in the past.

In response to Lori Wyman's email to the UCC re the Apartheid Free movement, see note below, which includes UCC churches that have already signed the pledge.

Hi Lori, Here are all the UCC connected signatories. The ones in bold are congregations. Are you connected to the UCC Palestine Israel Network? Let me know if you want me to connect you - they are working within the UCC to empower congregations to sign the pledge (and live it out!)

Allison

Central Pacific Conference UCC Palestine Israel Network, OR
United Church of Christ
United Church of Christ Palestine Israel Network
<b>Shalom United Church of Christ, CT</b>
<b>Ainsworth United Church of Christ, OR</b>
<b>Meriden Congregational Church, NH</b>
Central Pacific Conference of the United Church of Christ, OR
<b>The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme, CT</b>
<b>Church of the Good Shepherd, MI</b>
<b>Claremont United Church of Christ, CA</b>
<b>Kimball Avenue United Church of Christ, IL</b>
<b>First United Church of Christ Northfield, MN</b>
<b>Church of the Covenant, MA</b>

In light of our congregation supporting the rights of others, Randy notes that we have not yet posted a **Land Acknowledgement plaque**. Words of the proposed plaque read. Members of the CC approve of this proposed land acknowledgement. Randy to bring up at this week's M&SJ meeting.

**One unanswered question:** What does signing on to this pledge mean for our congregation? "We pledge to join others in working to end all support to Israel's apartheid regime, settler colonialism, and military occupation." Sherrill and M&SJ to follow up.

**Dates for meetings:**

Church Council to meet Oct. 5 (1 wk before FF)

Annual Mtg to be held Jan. 25, 2026

**Old Business / Reports**

**Trustees:**

Discussed the need to repaint Friendship Hall / the hallway, in particular covering up the red. Randy notes that the color should be something that can (visually) handle the scratches made by the comings and goings of the food pantry carts saying "Nothing lighter than the color of wainscoting in the Green Room." Annie suggests removing the bulletin board in Friendship Hall by the kitchen, painting that wall, and, if needed, mount that bulletin board in a more accessible place.

Need for painting the outside of the church discussed, especially the belfry. Alan S. has offered to paint the area around the side entrance of the church. Per Richard, Jeff B., our custodian, has access to good quality, less expensive paint.

Old Friendship Hall Curtains to be removed and discarded. No need for new curtains in that room. (Patricia to follow up.)

**Treasurer/Office Manager:** Just updated software; changed from Quick Books to Quicken. Virginia notes that one needs to update software frequently!

**Deacons:** Childcare to be offered starting 9/14; will be held in downstairs Sunday School room. Storage space for Food Pantry discussed. (Randy says that the Food Pantry is looking into renovating the shed. The temperature will be controlled within a specific temp range to allow for the storage of canned items. May need to build an additional small shed to hold church lawnmower, etc.)

**M&SJ:** In addition to talking about the Land Acknowledgement in this week's M&SJ meeting, they will also discuss putting up the new sign to go on the front of the church. Randy to connect with Chris Haddad about removing the faded Immigrants Welcome sign and put up the new sign welcoming all - front right of the church.

**Stewardship:** No info. Ted to send initial 2026 budget to Rev. Bert, Rev. Ann H., and Rev. David (current members of the Stewardship Committee) with the hopes of getting things going.

**ACT:** picnic Thurs. Aug. 14, rain or shine! Ahmadi family in attendance.

**Fall Festival:** meetings continue

**Pastoral Review Committee:** to meet shortly

**Piano Committee:** John Y., Virginia W., Liz VanG., Margery H., Gerard McG...

Have been looking at pianos. Possibility of renting one (\$300 month) or buying one (\$12,000 once repaired.) Liz VanG to be in charge of fundraising. Piano will be a bit longer than current one, but workable per Margery...

**Closing prayer** by Ann G.

**Next CC meeting Oct. 5; Next Cong. Mtg. Sept. 14**

Wendy Prée, note taker

