

Minutes
North United Methodist Church, Inc.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
August 27, 2025, 5:30 pm
(In Person Meeting)

Members

Kathy Gifford, Chair
Perry Kea, Vice Chair
Karen Horizny, Secretary
Mark Grove, Treasurer
Eric Lekberg (LL/MC)
Eric Oehler (Trustees)

Ex Officio

Shawn Denney (Finance)
Jeff Warbinton (SPRC)
Jacqueline Blackwell (At large)
Garland Graves (At large)
Lyn Berkebile (AC Delegate)

Darren Cushman Wood

1. Members Present: Kathy Gifford, Perry Kea, Graves, Darren Cushman Wood, Lyn Berkebile, Eric Oehler, Jacqueline Blackwell
 - Virtual attendee: Shawn Denney
2. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of June, 2025, Board meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.
3. Land Development and Campaign Updates: The motion which was presented at the last board meeting was unanimously approved (see Attachment). Darren has made presentations to BTNA and MKNA regarding the project. Darren also provided an update on the development project, including communications with the Department of Metropolitan Development about new market tax credits, meetings with neighborhood associations, and plans for a feasibility study with IFF in September.
4. Update on “Faith Works” Campaign (Non-Pledging Fundraising Campaign)
 - Focus: fundraising campaign targeting non-pledging members and constituents for a one-time contribution to support our program ministries in our annual budget.
 - Distribution: 1 print mailing mid-June: 393 postal mailings (8 returned due to wrong address). 2 emailings mid-July and mid-August: 232 emails per month (67 could not be imported from Constant Contact because the master file showed that they had unsubscribed to church emails).
 - Result: \$115 raised from 2 givers
 - There was a discussion about the results and what this experiment tells us about membership and engagement.
5. Other Business Updates
 - Finance Committee (Shawn Denney): The finance committee reviewed the 2025 budget performance, noting that while overall expenses were at 59% of the annual budget, postage and envelopes were over budget, and electric bills exceeded \$4,000.
 - Trustees (Eric Oehler): Trustees discussed upcoming 2026 projects, particularly building maintenance and AES rate increases, and learned that rental income was unexpectedly

high in July due to scheduled payments from non-member organizations. HVAC units had been ordered with installation planned for September-October, with the hope of paying for them through the endowment fund in early October.

6. Senior Pastor Updates:

- Stewardship Committee
 1. This year's theme is "Giving, God's Way"
 2. Stewardship Sunday: October 26
 3. The committee has asked ministry teams to give updates on their ministries as the spotlights on stewardship during the campaign. These spotlights will begin late September.
 4. Marie Powell (stewardship chair) informed the committee that in the coming months she and Toby will be moving to Colorado. Darren has informed the Leadership Development Committee to begin searching for a new chairperson.
- Charge Conference will be Sunday, October 19, 4pm at Epworth UMC (Indianapolis)
- Sunday 8:30am worship in the chapel will conclude August 31. After Worship without Walls (September 7), the 8:30am service will return to the sanctuary September 14.
- Staff Update: Administrative Assistant Jennifer Tavitas is on parental leave following the birth of her daughter Lana Fe, who is in NICU at Riley Hospital following a heart catheterization, which was done in preparation for heart surgery. Prayers requested for Lana Fe and her parents.

ATTACHMENT

RECITALS

1. For many years, North Church has pursued a mixed-use development on the land that the church owns on Illinois Street between 38th and 39th Streets, which would have included a grocery store and affordable housing units.
2. Attempts to procure financing for such a development, through low income housing tax credits and other programs, have not been successful.
3. For many reasons (including the current state of the economy, the inability to obtain financing, the challenges faced by Indy Fresh Market at 38th and Arlington, the inability to acquire the former Ace Hardware building, and the likely development of a grocery store in the new IU Health District), the development of a grocery store at 38th and Illinois Streets is no longer reasonably viable.
4. Affordable housing continues to be an immediate need in our community. Financing from various sources is more likely to be available for an affordable housing project than for the prior project that included the grocery store.
5. A development primarily focused on affordable housing would most appropriately be located on the church properties at 39th and Illinois Streets, adjacent to Tarkington Park, in the form of a multiple story mixed-use structure with first floor office/commercial space and additional floors of affordable housing. In addition, expanded parking areas would be located at the corner of 38th and Illinois (facilitated by the removal of the former Sierra Flowers building).
6. Following presentations at two church-wide forums (one in person, one virtual) and discussions at the Board and at Ministries Council, there appears to be consensus within the congregation to refocus the land development strategy as described above.

RESOLUTION

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of North United Methodist Church hereby authorizes the Land Development Task Force and Pastor Darren Cushman Wood to continue discussions with Mapleton Fall Creek Development Corporation and any other entities to explore and pursue the development described above.

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Task Force and the Senior Pastor will keep the Board and congregation fully apprised of these discussions, recognizing that the Board and the congregation (through the church conference) will have final authority and approval of any formal development proposals.