

Approved Minutes: Meeting of Mt. Seymour United Church Council

Nov 12, 2025 – 7pm; Mount Seymour United Church

1. Opening & Land Acknowledgement

Deb Bowman / Kirsten Harkins opened the meeting at 7pm with a check-in, reading and land acknowledgement.

In attendance: Steve Wellenbrink, Younes Skhissi, Catherine Branch, Doug Querns, Kirsten Harkins (partial by Zoom), Tierney Ness, Jeff Smith, Deb Bowman, Carla Wilks

2. Approve Previous Council Meeting Minutes

- **Motion to approve October 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Tierney/Younes PASSED with no amendments

3. Minister's Report

Deb Bowman (report was submitted - attached). Discussion of the Sacred Garden. Need help to raise awareness and messaging. Creating awe in the 21st century.

Update on the MPS Committee work, which is progressing.

4. Minister's Report

Carla Wilks (report was submitted - attached) – main focus was worship this month, leading a funeral and usual business.

The café monitor is now functioning with rotational slides. More can be added and regular updates will be needed. Next phase will be at the cashier area for the thrift shop.

5. Financial Report

Jeff Smith

In summary, good shape, on budget.

Slightly ahead on revenue side, thanks to the thrift shop revenue.

Congregational campaign to engage stewardship and legacy giving.

Expenditures are well managed and consistent.

No significant repairs or maintenance. \$25,000 budget is under.

Investments are yielding capital.

Financial oversight is well controlled.

Budget planning will begin in December.

Third quarter financial statements have been shared.

Update on Compensation for Employers of Reservists Program: Application in progress

6. Property Report

Steve Wellenbrink

Lighting retrofit in sanctuary, donation area
Proposal to add more cameras
Triaging of issues among members of property team.
New microphones are being quoted
Discussion of signage and approvals.

7. M & P Report

Catherine Branch

Hiring process has been completed for Brendan as café coordinator.
Moving forward on the M&P team membership.

8. New Business

- Sacred Garden Update – Steve Wellenbrink
 - Ordering chairs
 - Nature play area
 - Harvest table will be placed
 - Winter solstice event for community engagement – December 21st
- Thrift Shop donation to First United – Rev. Carla Wilks
 - A graphic report will be prepared showing the financial contributions of the church community, including the Thrift Shop (*Thrift shop income/expenses/First United contributions as a percentage year over year for the past 10 years) – tabled for next meeting
- Donation to Mental Health ministry has been offered for next three years – Rev. Deb Bowman
- Bequest update will be prepared for next AGM – Jeff Smith
- Donation software needs updating. Researching new products, e.g. SUNERGO church management software – Doug Querns will proceed.

9. Next Council meeting

- Wednesday, December 10, 2025 (at Kirsten's house)

10. Meeting Adjournment 8:48pm

Approved Minutes: Meeting of Mt. Seymour United Church Council

Nov 12, 2025 – 7pm; Mount Seymour United Church

Council Report Nov. 12, 2025

Rev. Debra Bowman

The Ministry Profile Committee had a slow start over the summer, but all members have now received orientation to the process and first tasks were divided up in September. There are several categories of information required for the profile, and the group are well on the way to gathering that information. This phase enables us to report on where the congregation is at in the moment. We also need to discern what direction to go in the future, a combination of what the congregation hopes for and what the Spirit might be calling you to. We have information from the gathering on Sept. 27 to review and will gather more information and thoughts. We had our first full meeting Nov. 6 and will meet again two weeks from then. Our first meeting was a chaotic as we had challenges with zoom and with the temptation to address the issues we identified within the congregation rather than stick with our task which is to identify the issues and then extrapolate from there what kind of staffing is needed to support the congregation. We will meet more regularly now that I'm back from Greece and people are back in town from the summer and early fall.

I am considering an Advent theme that will invite people to consider what new thing is being 'born' in the congregation as a way of helping the congregation think about the future in a sacred setting and gather their ideas and thoughts.

I will be the staff liaison for the Property Committee and the Sacred Garden Group. Carla and I will go to Worship Committee and Council together.

Any property issues that are raised are quickly addressed by members of the committee. I am particularly grateful for Jocelyne, Heathir and Steve's attentiveness to the building and staff concerns.

I have heard a couple of comments that make me wonder if the wider congregation understands the intent of the 'inside out' church and the Sacred Garden work. I'm interested in hearing from Council what they think. Given the strong investment of time and money and what I believe is a strong impact in the community, including what is being communicated about who Mt Seymour is and what matters to you, I think it's important to check this out and, if there is a gap in awareness, to address it. I will focus on creativity for the final worship in the Change Makers series and use these areas as a focus and example. I know Carla has also spoken about these areas in worship so will work from there.

I am grateful that members are wearing name tags to worship. This really helps me (and I'm guessing you).

Approved Minutes: Meeting of Mt. Seymour United Church Council

Nov 12, 2025 – 7pm; Mount Seymour United Church

The Book Study on Separating Church and Hate has had a very good attendance with animated discussion. I will lead another group in the evening, we are just finalizing dates.

The Pilgrims' Group continues. I am offering leadership, and we are encouraging help with the evening's tasks. There is a good attendance with 2 new members.

Alexis and I are meeting to talk about how we can work together to blend church themes with Thrift Shop activities and social media. Usually, Carla would be part of the conversation, but she will be away and I'm hoping we can do something for Advent time.

I am continuing to enjoy and be inspired by my dual role with you as a 'regular' minister and as a facilitator in your transition. Obviously, the roles overlap and as I connect with members of the congregation my ability to be helpful gets stronger. I'm glad Carla and I are both in the same place at the same time now, she is a great colleague.

November 2025 Minister's Update to Council – Rev Carla

- Since our October meeting, I have preached 4 times (Oct 12, 19, 26, Nov 9). I introduced the Changemakers series, which we started on Oct 19 and it goes through until Nov 23, for six weeks total. So far we have explored themes of Compassion, Collaboration, Courage (All Saints) and Peace. Remaining are Empowerment and Creativity, which Deb will reflect on. At the beginning of October we started having the personal introductions of the scripture reader, where they shared a little about themselves – borrowing the idea from when Rev. Debra saw them do it at West Van United.
- I met with the family and planned and presided at the funeral of Gordon Howland, a neighbour in the community who I had been called in to visit before his death.
- I got another 'community' call to visit someone at Cedar Springs, and I saw her and now am planning her memorial with the family, in December.
- I made several pastoral phone calls and had a few visits in the office.
- I met with the Worship and Christian Development team to look back on September and the summer months and look ahead to the Changemakers theme and to Advent for advanced planning.
- Deb and I met to plan out the preaching schedule for the next few months and to divide up other responsibilities.
- I worked with M&P and the café committee on updating the café coordinator Job description and posting so that the permanent job could be posted and advertised. We advertised it for a few weeks and interviewed this past weekend for the position.

Approved Minutes: Meeting of Mt. Seymour United Church Council

Nov 12, 2025 – 7pm; Mount Seymour United Church

- Met with the Caring Connections Team and talked about additional members to the team, and we now have a new member on the team.
- I led monthly meditation once since our last meeting.
- I had some follow up after the Sacred Garden Team meeting to discuss the solstice event on Dec 21 and prepared a new article about the Indigenous plants for the newsletter.
- I met with the Leadership Team of the Thrift Shop for our monthly meeting and shared with them a quote from my sermon that week where I talked about the thrift shop. I was present and welcomed/thanked volunteers at the annual Christmas Blitz. I checked in with volunteers during their shift and during tea time, and with customers in the shop and café on shop days.
- Corresponded with Peter Muirhead about the upcoming Turkey Lunch to do some preparatory coordination.
- I managed the Mental Health project correspondence and processed payment for therapy appointments for 4 ongoing applicants.
- I met with and checked in with staff regularly. I asked Fouad to complete the café scrolling advertising and provided him with a list of topics to include. That has been up for a few weeks now, and he will update it regularly. It is on during café days and hopefully can be left on during things like deep cove coffee house when more of the public are in the building.
- In wider church work, I coordinate the gatherings of the North Shore United Church Clergy, and we had a lunch together in October. We have another one coming up in December. I also met with a colleague for lunch in our café.
- I am on Study Leave for the next two weeks, back for Advent 1.