

Approved Minutes: Meeting of Mt. Seymour United Church Council

March 11, 2026 – 7pm; Mount Seymour United Church

1. Opening & Land Acknowledgement

Kirsten Harkins opened at 7:08 with a land acknowledgment. Rev. Carla Wilks shared a reading from Joyce Rupp.

In attendance: Kirsten Harkins, Catherine Branch, Tierney Ness, Doug Querns, Younes Skhissi, Steve Wellenbrink, Jeff Smith, Rev. Carla Wilks.

Regrets: Rev. Deb Bowman

2. Approve Previous Council Meeting Minutes

- **Motion to approve February 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes**
Confidential minutes have been uploaded.
Jeff/Catherine PASSED

SGM Congregational minutes will be approved at the AGM.

3. Ministers' Reports

- Carla Wilks

Items raised at Leadership Team meeting.

Scholarship proposal has been submitted, as incentive for volunteering.

Request from a Leadership Team member to participate on Property Team.

Concerns have been raised regarding recent behaviours.

ACTION ITEM: Rev. Carla and Catherine will speak with Thrift Shop Leadership Team

Next steps will be to communicate a new harassment policy for volunteers and can be shared at Thrift Shop AGM this spring.

Additional coverage for safe has been arranged.

4. Financial Report

Jeff Smith

Financial Report

- Positive financial performance.
- Slightly overspent, insignificant

Budget Planning

- Working with teams to prepare the 26-27 budget for AGM.
- Considering the property budget
- New minister expenses need to be planned.
- Facilitator contract will be included

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- Estimate for accessible front entrance will be included, as well as potential other improvements that could be part of the same project (back door)
- Compensation for Rev. Wilks study leave has been received from CAF.
- Residual legacy fund amount has been received. Will inform Trustees.
- Donation to cover increased maintenance costs for Sacred Garden will be finalized (in perpetuity).

5. Property Report

Steve Wellenbrink

- New microphones for sanctuary
- Budget to allow for stucco repairs
- Will get a quote for automated doors (with Jeff)

6. M & P Report

Catherine Branch

- Budget
- Job descriptions for 2 new minister positions have been sent to Pacific Mountain Region.

7. New Business

MPS Committee updates

- MPS Committee Report proposed job descriptions approved at Congregational Meeting March 8, 2026; next step: Regional approval COMPLETED
- Council sincerely thanks the members of the MPS Committee for their dedicated discernment and deliberation over the past several months. Their love for our community of faith was made evident through their deep commitment to its future success.
- A report from the MPS committee will be included in the Annual Report.

Search Committee updates

- Final approval of Search Committee as approved at last meeting: Catherine Branch, Mary Sparks, Judy White, Jocelyne Cottier, Dave Ballard, Susan Chambers, Keli Johnstone, Kim Branch

Motion to add Tierney Ness to the Search Committee Younes/Catherine PASSED

AGM Planning

- AGM date: April 26 notice and Annual Report must be publicized two weeks ahead of time.
- Review Council terms; possible new nominations

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CURRENT COUNCIL MEMBERS AND TERMS:

- KIM BRANCH – term ends 2027
- STEVE WELLENBRINK – term ends 2027
- TIERNEY NESS – term ends 2027
- KIRSTEN HARKINS – term ending 2026, 3rd term
- JEFFREY SMITH – term ending 2026 will continue
- CATHERINE BRANCH – term ending 2026, 2nd term
- DOUG QUERNS – term ending 2026, 1st term
- YOUNES SKHISSI – term ending 2026, 2nd term

*TRUSTEES WERE ALL ELECTED AT 2025 AGM FOR TERMS ENDING 2028

8. Next Council meeting

- Wednesday, April 8, 2026

9. Meeting Adjournment 9:20 pm

February/March 2026 Minister's Update to Council – Rev Carla

- I preached and presided most Sundays since our last meeting, with the new Lenten series, The Way. It seems to be very well received by people. I asked Pam to work with me for Lent 1 so we could do Spiritual Practice Stations, and she also enlisted Jocelyne's photographic excellence and develop a slide show to accompany the stations. We also changed up the oculus at the front door to accompany the theme. The stations were all with the theme of pilgrimage. I chose the theme because it fits with where we are as a congregation right now – on a journey... This Sunday is the 4th Sunday in Lent and Marcus and the Gospel Choir are coming.
- The hosted labyrinth walks are scheduled for Tuesday morning and Sunday afternoon. The Tuesdays haven't got much traction, but the Sunday time has had a few participants. I had Fouad make a small flyer which is being handed out in the shop (and I distributed to the café tables as well).
- Our theme is named for the movie "The Way" with Martin Sheen, about the Camino. We had a movie viewing this week, and 9 people came to watch it.
- Craft group is still going strong with new members each week. It has been a good and simple thing to begin and host. Lots of great conversation and sharing.
- I got a team together for the Coldest Night of the Year walk to raise money for First United, and our team of THREE raised over \$2500!
- I attended the follow up gathering to the blanketing ceremony, the Prayers for the Inlet gathering at St Andrews Wesley United downtown. The next one will be in May at Whey-ah-Wichen (Cates Park)
- For my regional responsibilities I hosted an online gathering for Lay Leaders in the region. There were about 60 people who attended, and they found it very helpful to connect with others in the region who have similar experiences in the church as they do. We will be having more of these, and I will share the information when we plan them. It would be great to have some MSUC people attend (one hour in an evening on zoom).
- I led monthly meditation one evening at the beginning of March.
- The Thrift Shop leadership team met this month once (it is this afternoon, so I'll report anything pertinent tonight).
- There was an incident this month where some Thrift Shop volunteers verbally (and physically) harassed a sacred garden team member and our landscaping contractors. The next day and following days I spoke to the volunteers at tea time and reminded them of the values of the church and that such behaviour is not tolerated. If they have concerns about anything to do with the church, they need to direct those concerns to me and/or Alexis, not to other volunteers. This was very disappointing after all the work I/we have been doing to prevent this stuff from happening. Their concern was that "the thrift shop hasn't been consulted at all about

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this project” which is simply not true. At every stage, Alexis is brought in either in a small group meeting or she is invited to the sacred garden meeting (and if she can't attend, I meet with her the next day to let her know what is happening) and then I send out e-mails to all the volunteers with updates about the garden, and I let the leadership team know, and I talk about it at tea time. But the comment remains “thrift shop wasn't consulted.” So I addressed that at tea time, and I will speak to it at the leadership team this afternoon as well.

- I have spent some time this month requesting adjustments to the newsletter and website, which Fouad has done.
- Pastorally – we lost another member this month – Gert Zandberg died. Sylvia has been coming to craft group, so she is feeling the love of this community. His funeral will be April 11.
- I have been checking in regularly with a few other members who are having health challenges and treatment at the moment.
- This morning when I intended to write this report, someone I hadn't met from the community stopped by needing support – shoulder to cry on and an ear to listen. I was glad that I was here and able to help.
- I am participating in our former Moderator's book study on the book *The Leader's Journey* – which nicely follows up on much of my sabbatical reading as well. There are about 20 or so ministry personnel from across the country who are in the group together. I am not finding it to be too inspiring a book, or helpful discussion. I have read other leadership books which have been much better. Our meetings are Mondays, which I try to take as a day off from work, so I may just finish the book on my own and not participate in the remainder of the zoom conversations.