



January 10th 2026 meeting of abbeycouncil

In attendance: Phil Mills, Isabela Azevedo, Josh Ruberg, Joy Hunter, Nick Hunter, Jen Strohschein, Matt Humphrey (Clergy), Margot Spence, Lucy O'Brien (Secretary)

The council met from 10:00am to 12:00pm and discussed the following:

We began with reflections and discussion of John O'Donahue's blessing *For Light*.

The meeting proceeds with a **review of board roles** led by Jen Strohschein:

Jen will take the role of Chair.

Lucy will take the role of Secretary.

Matt is the Clergy member on Council. He will lead discussion and decision-making on worship, while Council remains the lead on the discussion and decisions that affect the life of the church outside of worship.

There is an emerging committee of council called the Circle of Support and Accountability that will hold staff accountable and support them in moments of potential conflict. This includes Jen, Joy, Margot, and Michelle Slater who will be in an advising role.

There is a fledgling fundraising committee that currently consists of Nick and Lucy and Jen. They have yet to meet but will plan to soon.

Margot will take the lead on filling the worship helper rota.

Call for consensus on approving these roles. **Consensus granted.**

Action: Lucy will coordinate a fundraising committee meeting via email at the soonest convenient date.

Action: Margot will continue to fill the worship rota for the foreseeable future, with great thanks from Lucy.

We then entered into a review of our consensus-based decision making model, for the benefit of the newly-elected members of Council. This was led by Matt, and the main highlights were:

1. We discuss an item with the intent of coming to the best answer together. An individual who has concerns about the consequences of a decision may: Block

a decision by disagreeing with a path forward, or make their disagreement known without blocking the decision.

2. We do not wish to hold a vote that divides us, so if further discussion is required to come to a consensus then we shall hold space for that to happen. We will resolve concerns or monitor them but when a consensus is made we want all board members to be on the same page and speak with the same voice.

3. It is our responsibility as individuals to create a safe space where other Council members feel comfortable voicing their dissent.

At this time we discussed in-depth Matt's **upcoming leave** and how Council will rise to meet the gaps in our community that will arise from that.

Call for consensus on pausing our live-streaming while Matt is on leave. **Consensus granted.**

We discussed the need to create and distribute thank you cards for our donors to send out with the tax receipts. Jen and Lucy will work with Lynn on this.

We discussed creating a survey to collect **feedback** on the autumn home church program. Margot and Lucy will coordinate this. There was a concern about a lack of community social time if we don't gather in worship each week. Matt raised the idea of a post-service coffee social after every worship if we only worship every second week.

There was a discussion around our **capacity** to host extra events during Matt's leave, such as Shrove Tuesday pancake supper and contradance. We decided the following:

1. We will not host the Shrove Tuesday event that we usually do.
2. We will not participate in the Easter Saturday Spring Fling event.
3. We will not organize a Holy Week retreat.
4. We will not host an Ash Wednesday service outside of the normal morning prayer gathering.

Meeting **adjourned** at 12:00 pm.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

February 7th, 2026.