

SaLT 2024 Annual Report 2025 Annual Meeting

The Servant and Leadership Team (SaLT) is the administrative and executive body of McFarland United Church of Christ (MUCC). Members of SaLT are elected by congregational members at the Annual Meeting and includes a Moderator, Vice-Moderator, Treasurer, Clerk, and at least three At-large members. The pastor is an ex-officio member of SaLT and the Moderator chairs this team.

SaLT relies heavily on our community participants to fulfill the mission of our church but as a team, SaLT is ultimately accountable for monitoring our financial position and the coordination and promotion of church activities. This is done in close collaboration with the Buildings & Grounds, Finance, Outreach Funds, and Personnel committees, as well as the ministry teams which include Racial Justice, Creation Care (Ecojustice), Befriender Care, and Worship Arts, and NION (Now In Our Name). Finally, SaLT has a responsibility to maintain transparent, truthful communications with the entire congregation.

2024 SaLT Members

- Becky Cohen, Moderator (January 2024 – February 2, 2025)
- Donna Grossman, Vice-Moderator
- Diane Mikelbank, Clerk
- Kathy Schween, Treasurer
- Lynn Belleau SaLT Member at large
- Judy Tabor, SaLT Member at large
- Walt Jackson, SaLT Member at large
- Colleen Krattiger, SaLT Member at large
- Steve Davidson, SaLT Member at large
- Jill Miatech, SaLT Member at large
- Bryan Sirchio, Pastor, ex-officio Member

During monthly SaLT meetings, team members reviewed the prior month's financial, committee, and team reports. Based upon these reports and other inputs, SaLT made numerous decisions and recommendations, which included the review and approval of policies, extraordinary expenditures, and outreach ministries activities. SaLT addressed time sensitive items, buildings and grounds requests, updates for building use applications and other items. Each month the team completed a thorough budget vs actual financial review to ensure MUCC stayed on track financially, to identify and respond to financial areas in a timely manner led by Kathy Schween, newly appointed SaLT treasurer, and the Finance Committee.

Early in 2024, SaLT members rank-ordered goals, which were drafted for accomplishment in 2024. These goals included: Relationships and Spiritual Growth, Outreach and Community Resources, Communication, Strategic Planning and Financial Strategies.

Goals are being presented in an outline format and highlight this year's accomplishments. Of note in some cases, our ministry teams and committees drove the coordination and completion of the accomplishments documented.

Goal 1: Relationships and Spiritual Growth

- 1) Create a "Welcome" group to greet and interact with new members to MUCC so they are welcomed to MUCC, become more informed of committees and teams, identify opportunities to serve and become involved in the life of the church. **Outcome:** SaLT members met with several new member groups to introduce themselves; encouraged discussion about MUCC, shared information about its organizational processes, structure, and ministries. SaLT members and Pastor Bryan offered ways new members can support MUCC; gave information about the website and where to find information regarding the focus of teams, committees or groups i.e. greeting/ushering, kitchen, choir; technical crew, communion prep; we encouraged members to enhance their spiritual growth or reflection by joining daily devotional meditation group, Bible study, monthly healing service, and Befriender Care team.
- 2) Support youth and younger youth ministries. **Outcome:** SaLT supported the youth mission trip to Nashville. Leadership encouraged our congregation to financially get behind fund raising activities for participants with their associated costs for the Mission Trip. SaLT supported Pastor Bryan's work with youth and younger youth and families. We have supported Sheryl Rowe, who has taken an active, creative and dedicated leadership role to offer children's activities such as leading "A Time for All Ages" during services with children present, assisted with Mother and Fathers' days gift making, summer fun times, projects for Lent, Advent and Christmas, led the unrehearsed Christmas pageant, and arranged for the Epiphany Sunday with costumes and many other activities throughout the year. Pastor Bryan has developed a strong youth group community in which MUCC youth meet with other UCC congregations' youth regularly. A confirmation class has been developed which includes youth from other UCC churches.
- 3) Strengthen opportunities for members to spiritually grow and thrive, ways for all ages to become involved and participate in MUCC, our ministries and community. **Outcome:** The Befrienders Care team has grown and has made a tremendous difference in the lives of many members, families and friends. This team responds to members and friends in need (e.g. health events, families/individuals in crisis, grief and loss). Responses include: phone calls, in-person visits, presenting financial needs to proper committees, meal trains, and prayer chains). SaLT has been a supporter of the Care team since its inception (May 2023). Members Jean Duchrow and Lavon Geasland are very dedicated, exceptional leaders and trainers for the Befrienders Care team. The care team now has numerous trained members. There is continuing demand for training with more members from MUCC and another church to become a Befriender. MUCC has added a monthly a Contemplative (Healing) Service led by Cameron MacDonald. The service provides a time to come for prayer, healing and support. Members may share their physical, emotional and spiritual needs with a laying of hands if requested for healing and prayers. Bible study is offered weekly in-person and on zoom. Several events were sponsored through the Racial Justice ministry team. In February Rev. Kerri Parker from the Wisconsin Council on Churches presented the History of Land and Land Acknowledgement (Indigenous Peoples) which included information and impact of the Doctrine of Discovery. It was well-received. In April ten members and Pastor Bryan

attended a presentation “An afternoon of Practice” by Valerie Kaur. Focus was on cultivating love for ourselves, others and opponents. On August 3rd thirty-six members and Pastor Bryan attend “Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom” at the American Players theater. After the performance a potluck and discussion were held. The play presented many themes for the group to talk about, giving input, and sharing their perspectives. SaLT lent support to a training, “A Conversational Approach for Intentional Conversations” led by Tia Reinier from Planned Parenthood. Members Amy Cavi, Kathy Schween, and Becky Cohen were instrumental in arranging for the MUCC presentation. She gave an impactful presentation at the SW UCC Conference. It suggested her training could be helpful to MUCC during the political climate and was well-received. MUCC was indeed involved in the UCC Disaster Relief Campaign to aid those effected by the recent hurricanes Helene and Milton with related flooding and tornadoes. Members gave financial support and 60 hygiene kits were completed; Julie Woodward was leader. She wrote and received an additional grant for MUCC to send to the New Horizon UCC, who coordinates with the UCC Global HOPE group.

Goal 2: Outreach and Community Resources

- 1) In efforts to increase community awareness of MUCC and our ministries, SaLT with input (from Pastor, teams, committees and members) will choose *three* McFarland or other community events to offer support and have a MUCC presence in 2024. **Outcome:** Successfully accomplished this goal by providing MUCC financial sponsorship of the Pride in the Park event (Outreach Funds Committee); through coordination and leadership of SaLT members Lynn Belleau and Judy Taber, MUCC participated in the Pride in the Park festival with a MUCC table with many members covering shifts to promote MUCC and our ministries. MUCC offered a community Blood Drive onsite in conjunction with Impact Life Blood Center Organization. Geoff Brink, Chair of Building and Grounds and SaLT were supportive of a Gold Award Garden project initiated with Heather Drake, Girl Scout. MUCC assisted in serving dinner meals at the Luke House in joint participation with Christ the King. MUCC participated in a postcard campaign to Get Out the Vote with Jayne Fischer as lead. A Christmas card writing project was completed which shared Christmas messages to residents in the Four Oaks Nursing Home and Assisted Living Center in Verona. Project suggestions came from members Mandy Lewison, Lisa Schweitzer, and Becky Cohen. MUCC successfully offered the third Annual Christmas Day Community Meal with leadership from Lavon Geasland and Lynn Belleau. Many members and friends assisted in providing and preparing the meal.
- 2) Support identified needs as we are able through the MUCC Outreach Committee, our ministries, pastor’s discretionary funds, and community involvement. **Outcome:** A Memorial Garden was established through a memorial donation from the Denny Blackmore family. The garden was established with assist from the Building and Grounds team. A policy/procedure was written for spreading members ashes in the garden when requested. With donations from the Denny Blackmore memorial gift to MUCC a memorial plaque has also been purchased with room for numerous name plates that can be engraved who are the garden. The Outreach Committee met quarterly and funded several requests. See their report for details. MUCC has provided support, guidance and funding to the Tcheki Voltaire and Jeffrey Gineau family for their settlement here from Haiti. Both have secured jobs, housing, a vehicle, and completed education toward independence with their family in Madison. They are new MUCC members.

Goal 3: Communication

All structural committees, ministry teams, and groups to submit minutes or updates to SaLT for monthly meetings. **Outcome:** Ginger Hummer, MUCC's Office Administrator sends notices to leaders to request reports or other information, or any action items for SaLT to discuss or vote on. The leads have routinely provided documented committee or team reports or updates that are saved in a central location and available to anyone for review.

1. Moderator, officers and SaLT members are to be given names, emails, contact info of all team/committee leaders at beginning of terms to strengthen communication. **Outcome:** Contact information was given to SaLT members; each person was given access to the network, Pastor Bryan, Ginger and others as part of the MUCC Google network. Ginger serves as the Google network administrator.
2. Create an annual calendar to identify key ministry themes and/or events for each month. Ministry Teams, committees and others would schedule "work days" i.e. MUCC cleaning or yard work etc. "fellowship times" might offer social or family fun-focused outings i.e. American Player's Theater (APT). For outdoor services finalize dates, send "Save the Dates" out early and put on calendar. **Outcome:** Ginger routinely updates the MUCC Calendar of Events and Mission and Service pages on the website. Ministry team leads post information on bulletin boards, can ask Ginger to include in the weekly Pulse, and make announcements during service. The MUCC Facebook page is updated. Communication is ongoing as activities and events are identified, developed, or planned. Pastor occasionally may send an email to the congregation with updates or information re: a special concern or issue.
3. MUCC Directory to be updated using ICON. **Outcome:** Successfully developed and completed by SaLT member, Colleen Krattiger. Many thanks to Colleen for her diligent work on the Directory including hours spent culling member list, presenting during service and redesigning the Directory.

Goal 4: Strategic Planning and Financial Strategies

1. Initiate development of 2-3 Year Strategic Plan to shape a future vision that guides decisions for the congregation of MUCC and our ministries. SaLT with input (Pastor, teams and members) to draft a Strategic Plan in 2024. **Outcome:** Work was not initiated on a Strategic Plan in 2024. SaLT members did not select Strategic Planning as a high priority. Building and Grounds was encouraged to identify a list or spreadsheet of future building needs (major or otherwise) to be addressed.
2. Develop an action plan – identify goals, teams or groups to set milestones and timeframes for goal achievement. **Outcome:** More work can be considered for development of an Action Plan in 2025. In a related development, the Personnel Committee was redefined in 2024 and policy change made. The Personnel Committee member composition is now the Moderator, Vice-Moderator and the Treasurer. Duties include background checks. In 2024 checks were completed for two new leaders of the youth ministry group. Other Personnel Committee duties include completing annual performance reviews for MUCC Office Administrator and Pastor.

To prepare for the Annual Meeting in 2025, SaLT worked to identify prospects for Vice Moderator, two SaLT at-large members, and a Financial Secretary to replace Lavon Geasland who wishes to step down when her term ends at 2025 Annual Meeting. Candidates have been identified for each of these positions and McFarland UCC members will have an opportunity to vote to commission them. During 2024 two SaLT members at large resigned: Steve Davidson and Jill Miatech. Their requests were granted. SaLT plans to

fill the second year of Jill Miatech's term; Lynn Belleau agreed to serve another year on SaLT to finish that member at large term.

I am grateful for the patience, guidance, thoughtfulness and kindness given to me in my role, as Moderator. I appreciate and admire so many people who stepped up to volunteer and participate in giving of their time and energy to MUCC, our community, and caring for each other this past year. Without your love, caring, and faith, none of the things MUCC accomplished would have been possible.

Thank you for an outstanding year filled with love, spirit, light, growth and accomplishments!

Becky Cohen, 2024 Moderator and SaLT Chair