Rob called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m. and reviewed the agenda. Due to snow and icy road conditions attendance was limited and the meeting started late.

**Trustees’ Budget Recommendation to the Congregation:** Mike and David reviewed the budget as approved by the Trustees for consideration by the congregation at the Annual Meeting. They noted that the anticipated income for 2015 was $727,675, but the actual was only $671,000 including a $17,000 carry over. That left at $59,000 gap which was mostly due to loss of pledges from people who moved away or died. Due to the efforts of many to limit expenses the actual amount spent over budget was only about $17,000.

For 2016 anticipated income is $678,823. The reduction in income for 2016 is due mostly to a reduced number of pledges (to 134 in 2016 vs. 151 in 2015). Thus to balance the budget for 2016, it has to be reduced from the 2015 level by $57,000. David said that the guidance for church budgets allots 10% to benevolences, 10% to reserves, 30% to operations and 50% to staff. To continue our current staffing level would take 70% of our budget. Adding that to our goal of spending 20% on benevolences and there is nothing left for programs and operations. Additionally we must rebuild our major repair reserves. The Trustees are proposing a budget that includes funding for the Transitional Pastor for Faith Formation, Hank Fairman, only through July 31. It allots about 11% for benevolences with increases for operations and reserves.

Mike reported that the Trustees came to agreement on the proposed budget only after looking for other options and regretfully. **Dave Curtis moved that the Council affirm the Trustees recommendation for the 2016 budget proposal to the congregation.** Ann seconded the motion and it was affirmed.

**Proposed By-Laws changes:** In response to the Communications Advisory Team’s request to become the Communications Committee and be a member of the Ministry Board, the attached By-Laws changes are needed. **Heather moved that the wording of the By-Laws changes be approved and forwarded to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting.** Dave Curtis seconded the motion. Following discussion the motion was approved.
Proposed change to By-Laws Article XI, Church Council: Rob moved to recommend the attached Article XI to the congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting. Dave Curtis seconded the motion and it was approved after discussion. Proposed By-Laws Article XI is attached.

The next meeting of the Church Council will be a retreat and is scheduled for Saturday, March 5 at 9:30 a.m. The next Governance Board meeting will be determined by email poll as the regular scheduled date falls on Ash Wednesday.

David closed the meeting with a prayer. Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ann Lingo

Attached: Proposed By-Laws changes
PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES:
Current ARTICLE XI – CHURCH COUNCIL to be deleted and replaced with:
Church Council and Leadership
Responsibility and authority for ongoing church leadership shall be vested in the Officers, Boards, and Committees of the Church as provided for in the By-Laws. The Congregational officers and the chairpersons of the Boards and Committees and three Members-at-Large, shall constitute a Church Council, whose function is to consider the entire task of the Church and work cooperatively with the Pastor(s) to enable, coordinate, and implement the Church’s mission and vision. At large members shall be elected by the congregation for two year terms. After serving three full terms, the Members-at Large shall be ineligible for re-election for one year.

The Council will have two Boards to accomplish this, a Governance Board to provide an administrative and policy framework for the work of the Church and a Ministry Board to coordinate and implement the Church’s programs and ministries.

The Governance Board is responsible for developing and monitoring administrative and operational policies. The Governance Board shall consist of the Moderator, the Past Moderator, the Moderator Elect, the Church Clerk, the Treasurer, the Chair of the Board of Trustees, and three Members-at-Large. The Moderator is the chair of the Governance Board and the Senior Pastor serves as an ex-officio member.

The Ministry Board shall be responsible for coordination and oversight of the ministries, programs, and activities of the church in order to further the Church’s stated mission and vision. The Ministry Board shall consist of the Senior Pastor, the presiding officers of the Boards of Deacons, Christian Education, and Outreach and Social Justice, and also of the Stewardship, Music, and Communications Committees. The Senior Pastor shall chair the Ministry Board and the Moderator shall serve as an ex-officio member.

The Council shall meet as a whole at least three times annually - to review the proposed budget to be presented to the Congregation for approval at the Annual Meeting, to discuss an overall plan for the upcoming program year, and to evaluate church programs and operations late in the program year. The Governance Board or the Ministry Board may also call a meeting of the entire Council.

The Council, or the Governance and Ministry Boards individually, may operate in a manner to best accomplish other duties specified for the Council in these By-Laws.

The Council shall fill any vacancies on the Nominations and Appointments Committee and shall submit a slate of nominees for such Committee at the Annual Meeting.

In Article XII – Committees, add:
SECTION 8, The Communications Committee shall consist of three members elected by the Congregation for a term of three years, one being elected at each Annual Meeting, plus at-large members with particular communications skills and a representative of the Evangelism Committee of the Board of Deacons. After serving two full terms, elected members shall be ineligible for re-election for one year. The at-large members shall be approved by the Ministry Board. Working collaboratively with staff and others, the Committee shall seek to provide Little River United Church of Christ audiences, including members, friends, staff, and the wider community, with consistent and comprehensive information about all aspects of church life. Understanding that the diverse audiences require diverse communication, the Committee shall oversee the use of many communication channels while striving to maintain a consistent message and brand identity for the church.

Current SECTIONS 8 and 9: renumber these sections to become sections 9 and 10 respectively.