

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
Board of Trustees – Meeting Minutes
Date: September 13, 2017

Board Members Present: Shelly Wallace (2018), Brian MacConnell (2018), Beth McGrew (2018), Sarah Estes (2019), Amy Hunt (2019), Beth Whelan (2019), Dan Schneider (2020), Patricia Rohrer (2020), Gary Gebhart (2020), Rev. Benjamin Maucere (ex-officio), Dick Miltner (ex-officio)

Board Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Carrie Spiess, Meredith Plummer

Guests: Linnea Lose, Heather Zoller, Jayson Zoller

Call to Order: Beth McGrew, presider of this meeting, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, and Dick Miltner provided an opening reading.

Consent Agenda: Minutes of previous meeting, Agenda for current meeting, Staff and President's Reports: Gary moved and Beth Whelan seconded that the minutes, agenda and reports be accepted. Unanimous approval.

Treasurer's Report: Dick provided the report on the Capital and Treasury Budgets for fiscal year 2017 that ended June 30, 2017. The Capital Budget shows a carryover of \$33,944. The Heart and Hand Auction had all-time high results, and we have only one mortgage payment since money from the Froehlich estate was used to pay off another mortgage. The treasury has a carryover of \$315,549, or 3.3 months of budgeted spending, in reserve. Dick projected that by October we would have 4.25 months in reserve. The church began the fiscal year with a \$21,039 deficit and ended with a \$6,247 surplus. We collected 94.5% of pledges, building rentals were up, and expenses, particularly gas and electric and committee expenses, were below budget.

Bequests: Dick moved and Patricia seconded that the expenses of up to \$50,000 for the new boiler and related expenses already approved by the board be taken from bequests. Unanimous approval.

Donation: Dick moved and Dan seconded that an employer donation that matched a member pledge be considered as a donation to the Operating Budget. Unanimous approval. The board encourages other members to explore the possibility of employer matching donations.

Financial Report: Carrie presented a report on revenue and expenses for fiscal year 2018 through the end of August. The church has received 29% of projected annual pledges, 2% above normal for this time of year. Other revenue is already at 48% of the projected annual amount, primarily because the church has received \$10,407 from the Endowment Fund, which now makes quarterly payments to the church. Expenses are a little above normal because of tree removal and other necessary expenses.

Ministerial Search Update: Linnea Lose gave an update from the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC). The congregation has been very supportive and engaged in the search

process with 186 persons (about 2/3) completing the Congregational Survey, 140 persons (about 1/2) projected to attend the Input Groups, 71 (about 1/4) attending Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop, and MSC's 30 one-on-one interviews with persons inside and outside First Church. All this data will be combined with financial and membership data about First Church, First Church Future Task Force's 12 Congregational Conversations, Design Thinking Task Force's 20 interviews and one workshop, and First Church's study over the past 5 years of national trends of "high vital" churches of the future. This voluminous information will be combined and condensed by MSC into a Congregational Record that is due to the Unitarian Universalist Association by November 1. Potential candidates will be able to view the information online on November 24. Prospective candidates notify First Church of their interest on January 2. Members will vote at congregational meeting, as early as April 22.

Jayson and Heather Zoller assisted MSC with the design and analysis of the Congregational Survey. They presented key insights from the survey about member demographics and engagement levels, church strengths, important qualities for a minister to be successful at First Church, and accomplishments that church members want to see in 3-5 years.

Linnea cautioned that the qualitative findings cannot be finalized nor announced until Input Groups are completed. However, the quantitative data (member demographics, levels of engagement) is final, and will be shared beginning with Church Council on September 16, 2017.

Froehlich Estate Update: Patricia moved and Amy seconded that the board authorize attorney William Blessing to move forward with a lawsuit against former financial advisors to Phil and Doris Froehlich. The Blessing law firm to be paid 40% from any sum recovered as a result of the litigation, excluding the first \$12,917, which is the amount the church has paid to date. Additionally, the board approved up to \$2,000 for possible expenses. Unanimous approval.

Board Goals: Shelly reviewed the board goals that were established at the August retreat: (1) adopting revised bylaws by the January congregational meeting, (2) providing all needed support to the Ministerial Search Committee, (3) exploring a committee on ministry, and (4) questioning and examining our mission and vision in relation to First Church programming.

Project Updates: Carrie reported that the new boiler is in and should be operating by September 23. We will need to replace our water heater, but that expense should fall within the \$50,000 limit established by the board. Dick commended volunteers, including Becky Algenio, Bill Baker, Dick Bozian, Joe Busby and George Vila, who did a great deal of volunteer work that saved the church money.

Church Council: Beth McGrew shared the agenda for the Church Council meeting on September 16, which is to include an update from the Administrator, a report on a survey of other UU churches, a search committee update, updates to committee handbooks, a report on governance documents, a review of the Project Request Form, and a discussion of digital signage and media capability in the sanctuary.

Family Programming Update: Meredith reported that Amber Woods has been hired for the Infant/Toddler position. At the recommendation of the Infant/Toddler search team, and following

a clear background check, on September 11, the board voted by email, with 100% participation and unanimous approval, to hire Amber Woods as the Infant/Toddler teacher. Work continues on filling the senior high youth position.

Alice the Chalice: Beth Whelan presented Alice the Chalice to Meredith for her work in hiring a great person for the infant/toddler position.

At 8:52 pm Amy moved and Brian seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Unanimous approval.

President's Report to the Board for September 13, 2017 Board Meeting

1. Development Activity – Fundraising Taskforce
 - a. Gary Gebhart reached out to Chris Dendy regarding the process for evaluating fundraising ideas. Chris shared thoughts on what he has done in the past and suggestions for how this could be handled in the future. He also offered to help out with evaluating fundraising ideas and report to the board. The Executive Committee asked Gary Gebhart to work alongside of Chris to learn how this has been handled in the past, and to report to the board at monthly meetings as needed. Thank you to Chris and Gary!

2. Board Activity
 - a. Executive Committee reviewed the draft Emergency Action Plan that Carrie, David Johnson, and Cynthia Heinrich drafted as part of the Crisis Procedures Task Force. Exec feels that the topics covered and approach taken are appropriate, and made minor suggestions regarding wording. We requested that the team that previously worked on this, or a selection of others work to finalize the document. Carrie will coordinate. We appreciate the great job the Emergency Action Plan Task Force has done on this.

3. Committee Activity
 - a. None to report.

4. Member Activity
 - a. The following became members on 9/10/2017
 - i. Laura Pipitone
 - ii. Becky Sanchez (rejoining after having moved to CA 7 years ago)
 - iii. Bob and Joyce Stewart (longtime UUs having just moved to be with daughter Beth Lutz and her family)
 - b. Our current official membership count is 290.

5. Community Activity
 - a. None to report.

Shelly Wallace
Board President

Interim Minister's
Report to the Board
September 2017

I've looked over the Committee on Ministry on the UUA website—it's a good summary of the Robert Latham material in Moving on from Church Folly Lane. It can be found here:

http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/documents/lathamrobert/ministry_committee_model.pdf

I met with Dan and Brian on the Board goal on mission/vision, Dan is reporting on our plan. **Interrogation:** examination, exploration, inquiry, inspection, investigation, probe, query, questioning, scrutiny, search, taking information, testing.

September 17 I'll meet with the Transitions Team for planning work on mission/vision, conflict management, and behavioral covenant. In order not to compete with the work of the MSC, Linnea suggests that our first workshop be in early November.

Yours in faith,
Benjamin

Proposal: Interrogate the Mission/Vision Statements of the Church

Goal: *Gain clarity as to how they reflect, describe, and inspire the work of the church*

Mission: Our urban Unitarian Universalist Community celebrates and supports one another [*my preferred language: in our Unitarian Universalist community we celebrate and support one another*] in our spiritual and ethical paths. We work for justice, dignity and respect for the web of life.

Vision: we will be a liberal religious haven, sustained by tradition, boldly seeking justice, gently transforming lives.

Interrogation: examination, exploration, inquiry, inspection, investigation, probe, query, questioning, scrutiny, search, taking information, testing.

From Robert Latham,

- Mission is why a congregation exists
- Ministry is everything it does to fulfill this mission
- Mission is reason for being and ministry is how that reason is processed

- Mission and ministry are inseparable. Form follows function. Mission is function and ministry is form
- Thus, whatever the stated mission, the form will reveal the congregation's real mission. *An audit of where the congregation's energy is dominantly focused will display the real mission.*

Excerpted from the UUA manual

Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together

Foreword

Who are we, as individual Unitarian Universalist congregations? Who are you, within your own community when you gather on Sunday morning or Saturday afternoon, or Wednesday night, or any of the other times that you gather? Who are you, as a religious community?

This document on vision, mission, and covenant assumes that not only are Unitarian Universalist congregations worth strengthening but also that the message of our religious movement is important to the world around us. We provide a saving message that people need and want to hear—one of equality of all people, of the need to strive for social justice, of the glory that there is nothing that we need to do to be deemed worthy. In fact, if we didn't believe in the importance and possibility of this message for the world around our congregations, then there would be no need for mission, vision, and covenant statements. Rather, we could just continue to exist without paying attention to the deepest questions of why we gather and why we continue to be.

We also assume that every congregation can be strengthened or rejuvenated.

Concise Definitions

It is always helpful to understand how language is used in a particular context. There are many competing definitions of the words vision, mission, and covenant. In this document, the terms mean the following:

Vision: A carefully defined picture of where the congregation wants to be in five or more years. It is the dream of what the congregation can become.

Mission: A concise statement of what the congregation wants to be known for, or known as, within the wider world; what the congregation wants to mean to the community.

Covenant: A statement of how members of the congregation will be with, and will behave toward, one another, as well as what is promised or vowed to one another and to the congregation as a whole.

Why Undertake Vision, Mission, and Covenant Work?

With its richness from the past, vision, mission, and covenant come to life today in the midst of people gathered in religious community. In fact, the genius—and the risk—of liberal religion is that each new generation must discover its own understanding of vision, mission, and covenant. There is some truth to the remark that “liberal religion is always only one generation removed from extinction,” because without the valuable work in discovering and creating vision, mission, and covenant, the reasons why our congregations gather can be lost. Because we choose to allow (and to insist upon) individual determination of belief, we cannot fall back onto historical statements as the reasons why we exist. Rather, the members of each gathered community must determine for themselves the reasons why they continue to exist.

Some congregations have historical covenant statements—statements recited or posted by their congregations from centuries past—but these historic covenants serve a different purpose than newly created and renewed statements. These historic statements bind today’s people to those who came before, reminding them that the congregation is never really theirs; instead, the congregation is “borrowed” for the time being from those who came before and from those who will follow in their footsteps. These historic covenants do not necessarily set out who and what the congregation is now or wants to be as it moves forward, but rather they capture the spirit of the congregation’s history.

This talk about each generation’s needing to create its own vision, mission, and covenant might be a bit misleading, for according to the experience and advice of congregational experts, *these statements need to be revisited at least every five years*. With people entering and exiting our congregations, the way to keep these documents alive and vital is to make sure the gathered people have *ownership* of them. This ownership is best created through inviting the people into the process rather than just telling them the results. Yet as stated before, if this process is to be vital and the work productive, it cannot just be done and put on a shelf; instead, the vision, mission, and covenant must be live documents used in the everyday life of the congregation.

Studies have shown that the congregations that have *living* vision, mission, and covenant statements are the ones that are growing—not only in numbers but also in the depth of membership commitment. This growth shows in the depth of commitment members have to the world around them and to living more fulfilled lives. By terming these statements living, we mean that the process is followed through from vision to mission to objectives into the actualization of the congregation’s dreams. Too often, vision and mission work is done without the subsequent steps to make the results come alive, and they remain pretty words on paper. When this happens, resistance and resentment build up; people who helped craft the visions, missions, and covenants feel as if their time, thought, and emotion were not well spent.

When a congregation’s leadership follows through with the mission to create objectives, ties all major decisions back to these statements, and makes sure the statements are effectively used in worship, the commitment of the members is strengthened. Congregations with vital, living visions and missions are growing, whereas those without them have little substance to

attract new people to their midst. Districts that have done this work have discovered deeper resources and ideas for helping congregations fulfill themselves. The process of vision, mission, and covenant is ongoing; its richness grows as it is applied. No one can promise you that vision, mission, and covenant work will answer all your problems and directions, but it will help you determine where you want to go, and which paths you need to take to get you there.

A vision is a carefully defined picture of the congregation's future. It is not the current reality of the congregation, but it is a dream of what the congregation wants to make of itself. The vision answers the following question:

- What do we want the congregation to look like in five or ten years as a result of its efforts in ministry, programming, and outreach?

The vision needs to be empowering and to be more than a cherished possession of just a few. It needs to be a shared vision, created among and by the people who are in the congregation. A shared vision enables a congregation to move from the status quo toward a new reality. A shared vision can create new ways of thinking and acting, and it should be broad enough to provide growing room for the congregation. A shared vision needs to be *renewed continually* as a congregation grows and accepts new challenges. Although it may be tempting to limit the vision to what we conceive as possible or to what we know the congregation is currently doing, the vision must be bigger than this if it is to be inspiring and empowering. A vision requires of us the ability to take a long-term view of ourselves as a congregation. It also must be specific and concrete so that it can be known and worked toward.

Yet the vision is not a creed, nor is it a substitute for individual or collective theological reflection. It speaks of the institution and what it wants to be. For example, the vision of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) is to become an antiracist, anti-oppression, multicultural institution. This vision is a clear and concise statement, and although it is built upon the UUA's shared understanding of the inherent worth and dignity of every person, this vision statement is not a theological statement. It may well be that theological work by individuals alone and in concert within the congregation is a good beginning for work on a vision, but the two should not be confused.

What Is Mission?

The mission is a carefully defined, concise, and focused statement of what the congregation wants to mean to the community, and for what it wishes to be known. It is a statement of who you are and what you value, and it should be the measuring stick for all the congregation does. The mission statement should incorporate answers to the following questions:

- If this is our vision, where does this lead us in mission?
- What "must" we do?
- In what ways does our vision lead us in service toward others in the broader community?

Every congregation has a mission—a way it lives out its life—but too often the mission is

hidden in the fabric of the congregation and the “way we do things here.” Healthy congregations consciously articulate their mission, and this mission paints a path of how to move from the present reality to the dreamed-of vision. The mission should use active, not passive, verbs and should be the guide for congregational life.

The mission should relate a congregation to the community context by establishing the congregation’s sense of religious identity, relating this identity to the needs of those the congregation aims to serve. The mission should answer the question of who is to be served, what service is for those inside the congregation, and what service is offered to those in the wider community. To be effective, the mission must be owned by the congregation’s membership, committees, and staff.

There is a difference between a mission and a mission statement. Until the mission is made real through the development of goals and objectives, it is merely a statement, a piece of paper. *To be a mission fully lived, it requires specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound goals and objectives.*

Operations Manager Report to the Board
September 13, 2017 Board Meeting

A. Top Accomplishments August

a. Facilities

- i. Confirm schedule and monitor boiler replacement with Debra-Kuempel
- ii. Reach out to TriHealth Security to meet new Security Director
- iii. Manage scheduling the removal of three Bradford pears on west side of building that were past their lifespan; one large Bradford Pear tree limb removed from where it landed on side of building; coordinate use of Children’s for Children parking lot, so as not to disrupt parent drop-off and pick-up times. They are a wonderful neighbor and were very amenable to us using their lot to remove the trees.
- iv. Call Orkin for additional service for areas of concern found after work party – all resolved without incident
- v. Coordinate janitorial service and additional responsibilities of mopping basement floors after installation of boiler and the addition of fins in each of the classrooms
- vi. Obtain three estimates for sealcoating parking lot
- vii. Order office and janitorial supplies, as needed
- viii. Coordinate setup arrangements for committees, including MSC

b. Finance

- i. Provide end of fiscal year data and facilitate closing out the books
- ii. Begin data entry of financial data into QuickBooks to aid in exploring new options for our financial management system
- iii. Continue to be available to committees for MSC financial data report and Settled Minister contract

c. HR

- i. Interview with appointed team for Sr. High Youth Advisor position
- ii. Interview with Search team for Infant/Toddler Leader position
- iii. Proactively prepare for Infant/Toddler offer letter to keep process moving and adhere to hiring timeline
- iv. Manage administration of benefits, including retirement changes, payroll changes

d. Other

- i. Attend Governance, Constitution, and By-laws congregational conversation
- ii. Attend Board retreat
- iii. PTO days September 28, October 1
- iv. Schedule and lead monthly staff meeting
- v. Monthly meeting with Office Administrator and Custodian
- vi. Continue to receive youth Cuba trip updates

B. Priorities for Months ahead

- a. Safe congregation policy
- b. Financial systems review

**DFP's Report to the Board
9.13.17**

Prepared:8.31.17

Board Meeting

Top accomplishments this month:

- Hosted and led FP Retreat (Aug. 5)
- Attended Board Retreat (Aug. 12)
- Led Kindergarten Recognition (Aug. 13)
- Facilitated Children's Beyond Categorical Thinking Workshop (Aug. 19)
- 'Hired' Guest Speaker, Larissa – German Native – to speak to our children (Aug. 20).
- Administrative work for Sr. High Lake House Trip (Sept. 9)
- Chalice Lighter Administration
- Drafted Cuba Trip documents (Registration, and Consent / Release Form)
- Finalized 4th- 5th grade volunteer team. Continued building 1st – 3rd volunteer team.
- Continued recruiting Classroom Ambassador Families.
- Interviewed – in person and over the phone – Infant / Toddler and Sr. High candidates.
- Updated First Church Website for the 2017 – 2018 church year.
- Compiled 1st – 3rd and 4th – 5th grade curriculum for volunteer teams.
- Updated Sr. High parents on upcoming events.
- Prepared for Water Communion.

- Sent out mailers to every family in the congregation (mailers included a classroom letter, this year's booklet, the registration form, and timely flyers).
- Updated registrations
- Summer Camp Ideation

Priorities for the months ahead

- Finish hiring Infant / Toddler classroom leader.
- Hire a Sr. High youth advisor.
- Finish recruiting 1st – 3rd volunteer teachers
- Facilitate in-person Volunteer training.
- Finish recruiting Classroom Ambassador Families and facilitate meeting.
- Meet with Cuba Trip Planning Team.
- Water Communion (Sept. 10)
- Follow Up Sr. High Interview (Sept. 10)
- Church Council (Sept. 16)
- FP Open House (Sept. 17)
- Summer Camp Ideation
- Update Welcome Packets
- Infant / Toddler Classroom Recognition
- Registrations
- Finalize my goals (see 'other').

Other

- **Goals:** The FP Committee has chosen their goals for the year. These are...
 - Finalize Rites of Passage
 - Develop Measurable Feedback
 - Volunteer Restructuring (Methods of Recognition, Theology of Ministry, Volunteer Ladders & Covenants).
- **Numbers:** See below for August's numbers...
 - **Total Registrations:** 23 children and youth from 12 families.
 - **Average Attendance this Month:** 21 children and youth (attendance was low at the beginning of the month, but it has picked up with the start of school).

September 2017 music director board report

Accomplishments:

- Singers performed 2 times for worship services
- Guest musicians included one of our youth
- Singers rehearsed 4 times
- Ringers rehearsed 2 times
- Confirmed December Music Sunday repertoire
- Enhanced worship services with guest percussionist 2 times
- Coordinated music for 4 worship services
- Completed choir calendar through December
- Hired Noriko to accompany choir on October 8

Goals:

- Recruit new handbell members
- Determine date for Spring Music Sunday and program content

Help needed:

- Continued support

Submitted by,

Jera Cox

Music Director/keyboardist