

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing Board of Trustees

268 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 8, 2017



**Join the Journey.
Open to You.**

Pam Shadzik, acting president, called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Also in attendance: Acting Vice President Ed Dobrowolski; Treasurer Lynne Quinto; Trustees Andrew Conrad, Heather Edwards, and Pete Rafle; DLRE Robin Pugh; and Rev. Kim Wildszewski. Marianne Alt was also present. Andrew offered opening words.

Consent Agenda

Andrew moved that the board accept the monthly reports of the minister, DLRE, and office administrator from February, as well as the two-week updates for March (Appendices A, B, C, D, E, and F attached to these minutes). Peter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Kinship Circles

Tony Panzetta, Kevyn Malloy, Penny Gardner, and Lori Rahn attended the meeting to speak on behalf of the Kinship Circles Team. They described the Kinship Circles Program and the four pilot kinship circles that were in place this year, as well as the process of testing ideas for the kinship circles going forward. Kinship circles provide an opportunity for church members or friends to gather in small groups spanning the generations, helping to make congregational life intentionally multigenerational. The team is preparing for the launch of the second year of this program, which will occur this spring. An information session about the circles is tentatively scheduled for late April, to disseminate information to those who might be interested. Each circle includes “kid centered households” (an adult or adults with kids under 17); “independents,” including singles and people without children or with older children; and “nurturers,” who are typically retired adults. Circles were asked to gather a minimum of one time per month. The board expressed appreciation to the Kinship Circles Team for pioneering this exciting program and working to refine the process to make the circles even more successful going forward.

Nominating Update

Geri Koblis attended the meeting to speak on behalf of the Nominating Committee. The committee had lost several members and could still use another member. Jim Sanders will be joining Nominating mid-term. It was determined that the board has the ability to appoint a Nominating committee member in case of a vacancy (the church by-laws do not address this issue). Peter moved to appoint Jim Sanders be appointed to the Nominating Committee to serve until the end of June. Lynne seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Geri provided the Board with an update on other current vacancies and how the nominating process is working. Nominating encourages committees to have discussions earlier about upcoming transitions, to prepare someone for leadership of the committee and to allow a smooth transition.

CFA Black Lives Matter Survey Follow-up

Sallie Dunner and Nathalie Edmond discussed the Council for Faith in Action’s proposal that UUCWC hang a resistance banner developed by the UUA. The listening circles and survey about Black Lives Matter generated a majority positive response within the congregation about the idea of placing a Black Lives Matter banner in front of the church. The Racial Justice Initiative (RJI) then spoke with CFA about expanding the focus. The RJI believes the UUA banner would be more inclusive. UUCWC will add a component to it about including people of different abilities.

CFA asked the board whether it would be appropriate to hold a vote at the upcoming congregational meeting to display the banner. The board agreed. We discussed how to get information out to the

congregation before the congregational meeting. Lynne moved that the board support moving forward with hanging a banner similar to the UUA banner. Peter seconded. The motion passed unanimously. Andrew moved that the board support having a congregational vote on whether to hang a banner similar to the UUA banner. Ed seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Lynne reported that the church ran a deficit of \$7,400 for February but we are \$8,800 ahead for the year (\$2,700 ahead of the budget projection). She was not concerned about the deficit for February unless this were to become a trend. Grounds expenses for snow plowing have been more than expected due to increased insurance costs for vendors. We switched companies to find a better rate for our plowing. There is more program activity in the spring and also the auction, which brings in a significant amount of income towards the end of the budget year. Money from the building reserve fund was used for the well repair, but we should be set for 10-15 years now with the new well pump.

Budget Meeting

The board will meet on 4/26, which may be a regular board meeting or a budget meeting. The Finance Committee will schedule a budget meeting with the congregation, possibly on Sunday 5/21. This meeting will allow discussion of the budget and the opportunity for questions. This way, other church related issues can be discussed at the annual meeting.

Finance Committee Liaison

Andrew volunteered to serve as board liaison for the finance committee.

Service Awards

The board discussed implementing the revised process for awarding service awards, which was developed by a task force made up of board members and other members of the congregation. Going forward a board task force will review nominees and decide on recipients. Andrew motioned to accept the report of the awards committee including the annual service awards process and criteria, and to support that they go forward with this process. Peter seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Leadership Listening Circles

Kim reported that some people in the congregation felt they were not aware of the process which was used to choose our new intern. She will have listening circles with no agenda but to give people an opportunity to figure out what is going on and to ask questions. Kim would like to have at least one board member at each meeting. We will send out dates to arrange who can attend which meeting.

Capital Campaign Update

Peter provided an update on the capital campaign. The Strategic Visioning Committee is setting priorities in this order: must be done/ would really like to get done/ in long term would like to get done. They are planning for cottage groups to gather input from the congregation.

Housekeeping

- We discussed a newsletter article regarding the banner. An article is needed by March 20th. Pam volunteered to write the article.
- Heather is working on assembling a task force to brainstorm new idea for fellowship hour. People will email suggestions for possible task force members.

Adjournment and next meeting

The board adjourned at 9:06 pm. Next meeting is April 12 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Edwards, Board of Trustees

Exhibit A

Rev. Kim Wildszewski
Board Report February 2017

UUCWC Mission

To Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World
What does it mean to be a Community of Identity?

Create Community

The end of January and start of February have been strong at UUCWC. Since the last time we met UUCWC celebrated King Sunday by talking about the vulnerability in discussing race; celebrated Ruth Samsel's 90th birthday, and, among other things, celebrated many members' involvement in the Women's March in four of the area cities: DC, NYC, Philly and Trenton. As you know I was very humbled to be asked to give the opening prayer in Trenton; Ed Dolbrowski was able to record that offering; the words were also shared in the last Cross Currents.

In more recent weeks we had our first annual Chili Cook-off with the success and excitement of our newest Community Building leaders. This effort raised \$365 on one Sunday and was said to be "the most fun [one long term leader] has had at church in a long time!"

On the 22nd of January we welcomed our 9 newest members, while also grieving Karla Robinson's loss. Angelo Lewis led worship and soon after facilitated a pilot program on "conversations we rarely have". This past Sunday I finally met and joined with the RILA group.

Stewardship season is being planned for. I am joining the Capital Campaign / Strategic Visioning Task Force which is in full force, meeting twice a month and preparing for a full congregation communication effort before the Annual Meeting. The Staff (Susan, Robin, Katie, Caryl and me) had two day-long retreats to discuss only leadership and leadership development within the congregation. One aside: when reaching out to UU colleagues nationally, the clear and disappointing response is that no one is doing this well without a professional Volunteer and Leadership Coordinator [see "Change the World" for the Staff's proposals].

Sunday participation numbers are up, especially for second service. This has caused two notable problems: We have an unresolved potential Right Relations issue regarding a neighbor and a congregant who got into an altercation in late January due to parking. On a less serious note, members were stuck in the mud this past Sunday.

As you likely know from a previous sermon and other conversations our numbers are as follows:

Members: 272

Friends: 38

Participants *those who we know are participating at least 2x a month and involved in adult or children's RE*: 29

Children & Youth: 110

One third of the congregation has begun participating in the last five years.

Celebrate Life

The work of combining the Pastoral Associates and Caring Committee continues but is in good shape. George Desser has agreed to help lead this new ministry; we also have three other men currently serving in this capacity – a huge demographic shift of recent years!

Non-Member memorial service requests continue to come in but I have had to resource them to other area ministers.

I am currently in a week of blissful and blessed Study Leave, my first of four weeks afforded to me each year. I am reading: Hope in the Dark by Rebecca Solnit; When the Heart Waits (Spiritual practices and direction) by Sue Monk Kidd; Becoming Wise by Krista Tippett; Tears We Cannot Stop by Michael Eric Dyson (Racial Justice); Big Magic (spiritual practice) by Elizabeth Gilbert; and I am listening to the new (and amazing) podcast: Harry Potter and the Sacred Texts that discusses how any text can be sacred when we ask it meaningful and theme based questions that exist universally in our lives.

Pastoral Care in the congregation is taking on themes of disconnection with long term friendships; racial justice work; burn out; parent/child challenges; aging.

Change the World

On February 7th I spoke with area UU NJ ministers on exploring how others are becoming Sanctuary congregation for those facing deportation. UUCWC is not available for this effort as we do not have showers. Princeton is moving forward with this work and UULM-NJ is looking to see how congregation can support congregations who do hold this designation. Currently there are no UU congregations in NJ who are Sanctuaries.

On the 28th there will be a Panel Discussion for the Beloved Conversations curriculum. I've recruited three area community organizers who are men of color and will be speaking about the challenges and opportunities of working with white communities.

I have interviewed five potential interns (four women and one man; two in their 60s, one in their 50s, 2 in their 20s or 30s; one of the four is LGBTQ; all are white). I have asked the Intern Committee to interview two of those five. They will be doing so this upcoming Sunday and we will be making a decision the following Thursday with a due date from the UUA of March 1st!

Regarding Leadership Development: after two days of conversation and consideration, the staff is encouraging each Committee and Ministry to consider 1. "staffing" their groups by function. We have seen numerous committees/ ministries with ample number of participants but only a few or one (the chair) folks doing the work. This is due to over functioning chairs or lack of

comfort in delegation, among other things. We believe that when each person has a clear job, accountability is higher among all, work is shared and not overwhelming, folks are more willing to step into leadership / chair position over time, and the chair is willing to step away at the appropriate time before burn out. This will also hopefully address our one-person teams like Building, Grounds, and others.

We are also again highly encouraging each chair to make sure their last year is a year of mentorship. Identifying the next upcoming leader is as important as making sure the group knows this is the intended next step. Both the current leader and incoming will feel informed and trusted /trusting in the transition.

I have spoken with Nominating about these ideal changes in leadership culture at UUCWC.

At the retreat I will share the results of the recent Black Lives Matter survey that CFA put out.

Lastly, in late January I held the first New Member Connection gathering. Over 25 (of about 80+) were in attendance. I discussed with this group (new members of the last 5 years) our membership growth, their leadership that has already been felt (Capital Campaign, RE Committee, Auditing Task Force, Auction, ARE, to name only some), and the opportunities to come. We did group building work that was both eye-opening and fun. I'd like to do this on a regular basis – perhaps every other year.

Exhibit B

Rev. Kim Wildszewski
Board Report March 2017

Two Sundays ago we hosted 16 potential new members at Wings. 13 of these folks signed the book; one became a “friend,” the other two are waiting for their spouses to take Wings in April to sign the book. This group had a large number of folks who were already UU and coming from another congregation. The class also had more diversity within its makeup than usual: 1 gay couple, 2 lesbian couples, 1 person of color, and an age range from early 30s to late 60s.

The last week of February we made an offer to Susan Flynn to be our first Ministerial Intern. This offer was accepted and announced to the congregation this past Sunday. While there was celebration, there was also notable surprise from some key leaders and the general congregation. I’ve reached out to the Communications Team to consider our communication tactics and better practices as we are clearly missing opportunities.

Much of my work the last two weeks has been with Nominating and Pastoral Care. Tomorrow I’ll be going to the NJ Minister’s Cluster meeting; shamefully, only my second one of the year!

Exhibit C

To: UUCWC Board, Barbara Jensen, Susan Colket and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: 2/5/17

Re: Monthly DRE Report

Create Community:

- I am working to delegate more to the RE Committee. This will not only help me to keep my hours manageable, it will increase the commitment by the committee to the RE program. I want the RE Committee to “own” the program, so it is UUCWC’s RE program, not mine. Delegation is a growing edge of mine; some of my job is 100 mini tasks. It is faster and easier for me to just do it than to tell someone. But this is not helping the committee or me. I’ve met with Barbara Jensen to create additional responsibilities for each committee member.
- The function and the duties of the ARE Committee are being looked at by Susan Colket, (ARE Chair) Kim and I. Currently Susan does most of the work. This is not sustainable and has been a systemic problem with the Chair position. I am working with Susan to create job descriptions and to recruit new members for the committee (if needed).
- Several parents of the 7-9 class told me that their children needed a refresher on what it means to be a UU (this class has done Bible and neighboring Faiths for the last 2 years). I responded by changing the curriculum. (From “Popcorn theology” a film discussion class to a mini Coming of Age curriculum with food) and changing the teachers to more experienced ones. I am teaching several classes to get a feel for the dynamic in the classroom. Food helps too.

Celebrate Life

- OWL 5th -6th grade continues through the end of March. We have several participants with gender fluidity in this class, a first for me at this age. I reached out to UUA OWL staff and they have been helpful with suggestions on how to update the 17 year old 4-6 OWL curriculum’s lesson on gender (a revision is coming out in June). I also attended a webinar on “Supporting Gender-nonconforming Children and Their Families” which I think will be useful in the future.

Change the World

- Beloved Conversations is half way through its run. We have 2 sessions coming up where all 57 participants are together. The first is a panel of local community organizers (organized by Kim) who serve primarily African American communities. They will speak about the challenges of working with predominantly white volunteers. The second is the last session, which ends with brainstorming about what changes the congregation can make to further its antiracism commitment. Kim and I are aware that the 57 participants will want to know what is next, come April.
- I am working with Susan Colket and Kim to plan ARE programming for next year.

Exhibit D

To: UUCWC Board, Barbara Jensen, Susan Colket and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: 3/8/17

Re: March DRE Report (addendum to Feb report)

Create Community:

- I am planning for children's and adult RE for this summer and fall .

Celebrate Life

- We had our annual teacher appreciation brunch on March 3rd. 34 volunteers attended (out of 51 invited) and 20 children were fed in an adjoining room. The teachers enjoyed the conversation and thanks. However, we had several problems with the babysitting that highlighted the need for a better system of childcare when large numbers of multiage children are involved. I am working with the RE committee and our paid nursery providers on this. The babysitting problems are an example of our growing church and how old ways of doing things (less rules and structure) don't work, as we get larger.

Change the World

- Beloved Conversations had a panel discussion with 3 community leaders from Trenton. Kim recruited the speakers and I coordinated the 58 invited participants. It was inspiring to see the panel and imagine what UUCWC might do in partnership with organizations that serve underserved communities. I also noticed the learning that has occurred among the beloved conversation participants.

Exhibit E

Susan Irgang February 2017 BOT Report

UUCWC Mission: *To Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World*

Creating Community

On January 24th, the staff had an offsite planning retreat; Kim will be providing more information in her board report.

The new website launched this month and I received training on some of the newer aspects of the WordPress site.

One of the administrative responsibilities at the beginning of each year is certification of the congregation with the UUA. This involves reviewing the entire membership with Kim, Robin, Caryl, and Katie before reporting numbers on membership and on those who UUCWC reaches, providing financial information, updating our listings of leaders in the congregation, taking a congregational poll, and answering a survey. As a result of our review of the membership, we created an additional category for internal use that better represents how people participate in our congregation; the resulting numbers are below. I coordinated the gathering of all necessary information and submitted it to the UUA.

Celebrate Life

Previously, membership categories were Member (pledged and signed the book), Friend (pledged but has not signed the book) and Attendee (comes to services but does not financially contribute regularly via a pledge). Following our review for certification, we determined that a better representation of our congregation would include a new category called Participant: those who attend regularly but are on the path to membership or are engaged in other ways while an Attendee as someone who comes occasionally and does not regularly contribute financially or participate. Using these new categories for internal use, our membership numbers now are 272 Church Members, 38 Friends, 29 Participants and 11 Attendees. The decrease in the Church Member number (from 276 reported last month to 272 this month) is due to divorce or those who have moved from the area. We can also report that attendance is averaging 199 for the full church year, and 221 for those Sundays September through June when RE is offered.

Change the (UUCWC) World

I spent a majority of my time this past month dealing with issues surrounding our well and the need for a replacement of a 13-year-old well pump. While this replacement was slated for 2017, problems with air in the pipes impacting the ability to flush the pressure assist toilets forced the issue. Andrew Kidd was out of town and he is a committee of one, so I needed to manage the entire process. This included working with the vendor to diagnose and arrange for the pump replacement and installation, chlorination of the well, a second round of chlorination when the initial one was not done properly, flushing the chlorine from well, arranging for a water test, and working with our well compliance consultants, all in adherence to NJ state regulations for public wells. I also prepared the notifications to the congregation, arranged for drinking water for Sunday Fellowship Hour, coordinated with HomeFront and others on the use of the building during this incident, and many other details. After dealing with this for two weeks and working 14 days straight to oversee the process, I was able to issue an "all clear" and finally again offer safe drinking water to the congregation.

The new storage closet project is complete, thanks to help from Denny Rodgers. This new

space, conceived by the now disbanded Storage Allocation Team, adds badly needed storage for the auction team. I also dealt with an additional storage challenge as a result of meeting fire code, which essentially rendered the space that was holding fixtures for the bathroom renovation as unusable. I negotiated with various groups in the church to utilize a portion of their allocated storage to house materials until the summer bathroom renovation.

We also had our first snow closing of the winter on February 9th. Our new snow removal company is doing an acceptable job; however, prices are significantly higher and each snow treatment is running between \$900 –1700. Costs are somewhat contained if we do not try to stay open during a storm, but await the end of the snowfall for plowing; this has been shared at Council and alternatives to meeting at church were offered to church leaders.

The designer for the bathroom renovation project has created a “sample board” for approval by the Board. More information will be given to the Board shortly.

As the Board gathers for the 2017 winter retreat, I would like to just follow up on one of its 2016 winter retreat goals: visible improvements in the Facilities by 12 months. To recap what has been done in the past 12 months: the exterior of the building was painted, the lobby and hallways got new carpeting, the Crossings Room and downstairs hallway floors were refinished, the nursery was painted, a new closet was built in Room 103, a new fire door was installed in the downstairs landing, and a new well pump was installed. Not as visible are other facilities improvements including repair of the wheelchair lift and training of its use by our Sunday Steward, new WI-fi access points throughout the church, a new assisted listening system and a new CD recorder for the sound team. I would note that I was directly involved in each of these efforts, ranging from simply purchasing requested materials to initiating and managing the entire project for groups that disbanded or did not have sufficient help on their committees. Scheduled for this year will be the bathroom renovations and possibly the stove replacement, on hold from last year.

Conclusion:

This month the challenge for the office team, particularly me, was to meet the needs of our facilities in more than just an oversight capacity, while meeting the UUA certification deadline. Additionally, Katie Bergin was off last week, so I covered her work including processing visitor information, creating nametags, keeping the congregation informed through emails, Crossings II, orders of service, phone calls and emails and tending to ongoing projects and issues that arise as part of the day to day operations of the church. I am hopeful for a quieter month ahead.