

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing
Board of Trustees
268 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
January 13, 2021

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Nathalie Edmond called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Sue Saddlemire; Treasurer, Jim Sanders; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Scribe, Michael Howe-Smith; Trustees: Jeffrey Lang, Michael Waas, Jamie Evanini, Patrick Kahney; Senior Minister, Rev. Kim Wildszewski; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang; and DLFE, Robin Pugh. Also present were Andrew Kidd, Bob Alt, Ron Iannacone and Joan McCloughan representing the Stewardship Committee, and Susan Vigilante and Jayme Trott representing the Capital Campaign Committee.

First Hour

Consent Agenda - see appendix for complete reports.

- The Board confirmed that quarterly reports from Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang on social media engagement are appropriate.
- Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski discussed a proposal to hire a contract minister during her upcoming family leave; **ACTION:** Reverend Kim will share the proposal with the Finance Committee for budgetary consideration.
- The Board discussed at a high level DLFE Robin Pugh's recommendations on the importance of an existing staff member welcoming and assimilating members.

Treasurer's Report and Related Discussion

Treasurer Jim Sanders provided a summary of current finances; key points included:

- We are beginning to have activity from Northfield Bank and anticipate having everything moved over to them by the end of the month; the process has been user-friendly.
- Overall finances are in good shape; December was a strong month:
 - Income is at 97% of budget and we are ending the first half of the fiscal year with an \$11,000 surplus.
 - 6 months of 100% virtual operating finances provide a good basis for planning through the rest of the pandemic (2021 and 2022).
 - Still waiting on status of \$30,000 PPE loan forgiveness.

- End-of-year appeal exceeded \$26,000 - good time to discern value of ongoing pledges vs. end-of-year windfall; conversation should include Finance and Stewardship who are aware of the historical and ongoing nuances involved.
- Jim has been relying on Susan Irgang and Finance Committee Chair Mary Baltycki for more finance-related tasks but overall the Treasurer workload is still not sustainable in the long term.
- We may need to look at using a new database to generate contribution statements that can be more automated and intuitive.

Board Priorities from “Dreaming” Exercise on the Future of UUCWC

Board President Nathalie Edmond and Reverend Kim solicited Board input on the “Dreaming” outline prepared by the staff, to imagine what future culture and growth would look like at UUCWC over the next few years, across a wide-cross section of topics. The Board had previously reviewed the proposal at its 1/9/21 retreat but was invited to discuss specific items of interest in more detail. Discussion centered on items the Board generally supports including:

- Moving to one service
- Supporting a “one church, one budget” model to support a broader vision (vs. more restrictive line item budgeting)
- More focus on sustained pledges with less pressure on annual auction and year-end appeal
- Paid RE teachers to work with volunteer teachers
- Expert guest speakers
- Paid musicians
- Re-imagined joys and sorrows rituals

The Board discussed engaging the Stewardship Committee to focus on a message that is open-ended yet inspiring, and one that focuses on balancing virtual needs with “re-entry” considerations once in-person church becomes possible again.

Second Hour

Update from Stewardship Committee

- Andrew Kidd, Bob Alt, Ron Iannacone and Joan McCloughan from Stewardship attended the meeting to discuss goals and messaging for the upcoming fiscal year.
- Nathalie and Reverend Kim, along with other members of the Board and staff, shared the results of our discussion from the first hour, and asked how the Board can support Stewardship in its work.
- Members of Stewardship were largely in alignment with the Board’s areas of focus.
 - All agreed on the need to capture the spirit and intent of future goals while being relatively open-ended.

- Andrew Kidd agreed that there should be less focus on the auction but shared some thoughts on the value of the year-end appeal.
- **ACTION:** Stewardship has a good idea of necessary next steps for preparing the annual flyer and Board Trustee Jamie Evanini will continue to check in with them as their Board liaison.
- The Board also touched base with Stewardship on the current Gift Acceptance Policy in light of a of recent large gift; the Board and Stewardship discussed that, in the absence of a threshold for formal review before the Gift Acceptance Review Board (GARB), donor intent should be considered; in this case, the intent is that the money should be used where best needed.
- **The Board took a pulse check to establish whether the gift would be best used at this time for Capital Campaign expenses;** after further discussion, the Board affirmed that we should also discuss potentially holding some of the money in reserve for upcoming personnel needs during Rev. Kim's family leave (see Consent Agenda summary above and Minister's Report in Appendix for details).
 - The consensus is that based on what we know now, the Board is fine with using the gift to support the Capital Campaign, but we affirm the personnel needs as well and will defer to Finance on what is specifically needed.
 - **NOTE:** After further correspondence between the staff and Treasurer on the topic of the gift in question, subsequent to the Board meeting, additional considerations were proposed, including Sanctuary technology upgrades that go beyond the initial Capital Campaign scope; for now the money will be allocated to miscellaneous general contributions, and Rev. Kim will reach out directly to thank the donor for their generosity.
 - **ACTION:** The Gift Acceptance Policy may ultimately need to be revised.
- The Board thanked Stewardship for coming and they left the meeting.

Update from Capital Campaign Committee

- Susan Vigilante and Jayme Trott attended the meeting to present the results of the construction proposals.
- The proposals came in higher than expected; further discernment and due diligence is needed to study the impact of specific considerations, including but not limited to:
 - Are there less costly options for the HVAC and elevator?
 - Are there revised design options which can help to re-prioritize key considerations while saving costs in other areas?
 - Is additional money available through fundraising, national grants, endowments, etc.?
- The Board and Reverend Kim thanked the Committee for their ongoing hard work and they left the meeting.
- The Board agreed that ongoing communication between the Committee and the Board is needed; **ACTION:** As the Committee's Board liaisons, Trustees Jeff Lang and Michael Howe-Smith will continue to be involved and facilitate ongoing discussion.

Discussion of Finance Roles

- The Board continued its ongoing discussion of Treasurer/Finance roles and the Personnel Committee's recommendation to leverage Mary Baltycki in a volunteer bookkeeper/financial consultant role until after the pandemic, as a prerequisite toward hiring a paid staff member (more detail can be referenced in past Board Meeting Minutes from August - December of 2020).
- Nathalie recounted a recent discussion with Mary Baltycki which summarized the key discussion points to date.
- Each Board and staff member provided brief feedback in a roundtable, providing their recommendations on the Personnel proposal and how it aligns with current needs and future goals.
- There was a consensus poll via Zoom to vote on different versions of the proposal; ultimately, there was consensus (with one no vote) on a proposal for Mary to serve as bookkeeper in a time-bound role, shifting to an external paid position within 2 years, and within the context of a fiduciary team structure (to be defined in more detail).
- The Board acknowledged the overall due diligence process, discussions and multiple voices that contributed to this decision, and recognized that further due diligence and intentional discernment will be needed to define the details.
 - Nathalie thanked Vice President Sue Saddlemire for her role as Personnel Liaison, holding and lifting up multiple perspectives throughout this process.
 - **ACTION:** Nathalie will communicate the Board's decision to Mary Baltycki and Personnel and engage discussion with relevant parties on next steps.

Housekeeping and Other Action Items

- Board Trustee Jamie Evanini will write the next month's CrossCurrents article.
- Sue Saddlemire will coordinate with Nathalie and Reverend Kim on upcoming dates for the February Church Council meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Howe-Smith

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff and Treasurer Reports

Minister's Board Report January 2021 Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

Sunday mornings continue to be a place long term, new members and visitors connect to Unitarian Universalism and the UUCWC community. Susan Irgang's report should include data on attendance and how we are reading the data as well. All in all, participation is healthy if not strong; younger members who are typically teaching during worship are in attendance much more regularly; and our (returning) visitors are more racially diverse than in person church (which I believe deserves a larger conversation before we return to in-person).

The Christmas Eve service took an enormous amount of time, coordination and consideration but with the help of so many, most especially MJ Hansen and Ed Dolborwoski, who edited the many pieces, was a success. One family said to me after, they learned more about the Biblical Christmas story after one UU service than a lifetime of Catholicism. Personally, seeing so many of our UUCWC members threaded throughout that hour was enough to celebrate.

With the recent attack on the Capitol, Caryl Tipton and I put together a very last minute service for people needing to connect. 74 people signed on. I read poetry and she played piano; Nancy Neff was our tech host. Because Susan's phone was out of commission, I also lift up Lynne Quinto who sent out the all church email. We find the ways we need backups in moments like this, and we discover who we've begun to rely on in healthy ways too, in moments like this.

Robin suggested recently that I might hold a "Crucial Conversations" sermon series. I hope to begin this - once sermon a month - in February. These would be topics about UUCWC culture - current or where we might intentionally set for ourselves. If you have suggestions, I would be very interested in hearing what you think would be a "crucial conversation." (In reality, due to parental leave, I likely have space to do 3 or 4 of these before the end of the fiscal year). *For more on parental leave, please see last section of my report.

I've been asked to do an outdoor burial ceremony and companioning virtual service for a friend of the congregation; I have only agreed to do the virtual service.

Covid 19 seems to be getting closer to UUCWC after the holidays with numerous families in the congregation directly affected by the virus. We have one young family currently struggling with multiple family members who are ill; others are grieving losses.

Mental Health challenges, notably in our youngest population, are numerous right now. Our leadership teams - the co-chairs and participants - are burnt out.

I am working with the staff to fill positions now, that would normally be filled July 1. (A note: The Leadership Development Task Force is in need of encouragement, which I will take on but wouldn't mind your partnership in this, too).

Create Community (Small Groups)

Due to the last snow storm and high winds I had to reschedule the second session of the path to membership; it now meets Tuesday, (the evening before the BoT meeting). In this session we will go over the covenant shared at the Board retreat and their reflections after learning the histories, theologies, and evolution of Unitarian Universalism. This session also includes the first overt conversation on race in UUism that I've placed in the path to membership.

Robin and I are currently writing the next Family Chalice Circle & Tending the Flame sessions, this one on Power. I need to say again that I think these sessions and the way we are engaging in children's faith engagement this year will change the way we expect our children to participate and learn going forward. The sessions are theologically grounded, speak to current life cycles and concerns, and are connecting families to other families, while empowering adults to teach and live UUism at home.

So much of what we are doing in this pandemic time is what the staff had dreamed up for years now but could not break away from the set culture or norms. It has been a painful time but it has also set us on a path that I think is exciting.

Change the World (Serve)

I've reached out to my UU, larger faith-based and secular organizers to find out how we at UUCWC or myself as area clergy might play a supportive proactive and/or responsive role in what we are warned will be a violent day in Trenton on the 19th.

At the recent Racial Justice Ministry meeting I helped this group and the Right Relations representatives who were also there move the discussion along about policing and UUCWC. RJM should be sharing their minutes with the Board going forward and you will hopefully find in those notes that they are setting their agenda for the rest of the church year toward this effort.

I've also asked for RJM's (through Faith Expression Funding Team) financial support so I can continue to bring in speakers from marginalized identities to Sunday services. Our UUA fair share fees for guest preachers has gone up significantly this year (from \$300 for two services, to \$385 for one service). Not knowing to budget for this change, the worship budget is getting extremely tight and while I could rely on lay-led services for my Sundays off, we have an enormous opportunity doing church virtually to bring in folks who are geographically out of network. Each of our guest speakers this church year has been accountable to and in celebration of, the 8th Principle.

I will be leading the Worship Tech Team in a retreat at the end of January after they are led in covenanting work with the RRC. I am working with Susan Irgang to get this group, the Worship

Associates, and staff ready to welcome a hired media tech person at the start of the new fiscal year - and beginning to act as if that person is hired in March, so as to create and practice best systems in preparation.

Stewardship Sunday is January 31st. I hope to speak on some *collective* dream that the Board and staff share to engage the congregation on next year's plans and this year's giving. I hope that this will be the springboard for a personnel strategic plan.

Parental Leave

As you know, our third child is due at the start of May. Tara will have a c-section and so, as we get closer, I will be able to share the exact start of my leave. I will be taking the 8 weeks (consecutively) given to me in my contract and so expect to be out all of May and all but one week in June. Please note: that means I will be absent for the planning of the Annual Meeting. At this time I would, however, love to be present for that meeting and do my annual report, as well.

I would like to suggest that we contract with a minister for those 8 weeks. \$385 (the amount per service) x 8 weeks is \$3,080. If we added in 2 hours per week (regardless of if it's used) for pastoral care, this would be an additional \$270 / week or \$2,160 (at a rate of \$135 / hour for pastoral care according to UUMA fair share guidelines. A total of \$5,240.

Note: This, or some version of this, would come from this year's budget if agreed to.

Reference:

<https://www.uuma.org/page/professionalfees/Scale-of-Minimum-Fees-for-Professional-Services.htm?fbclid=IwAR1loQhoWxh-I0UPx62dMwvlooShG3YM5MDEfD1Gn1RpKT5cwbEvrw7gzWk>

Additional Projects

I continue to meet twice a month with my white female-identified clergy book group to discuss race and trauma. I continue to meet once a month with my NJ clergy group and once a month with a clergy support / coaching group.

Last week I met with an editor / publisher of the UUA's Skinner House publishing organization who is encouraging and working with me to write a proposal for a book on losing a child. The book would be a creative resource targeted for lay people who've experienced this type of loss. It would be a compilation of poetry, narrative of losses (ranging from at the time of birth through the loss of a young adult), ritual and theology. A companion guide would be published online for religious leaders to help companion people in this loss.

Susan Irgang
Administrator BOT Report for January 2021

Create Community

Communications work has been heavy, as Lynne Quinto transitions out of her key roles and new responsibilities and new team members join this work. Chris Piatek will be our new CrossCurrents editor. Wendy Stasolla and possibly another person will likely be taking on a role on the website updates and maintenance. However, experience with WordPress software isn't consistent and we all need additional help. I have reached out for advice on where to find a professional who could provide education for the group. The team meets this week to chart our path forward, which involves website updates, including posting service videos, content and layout changes, etc.

Expansion of our presence on social media expanded in the last two months with daily (scheduled) post for Soul Matters and a Connection Calendar. Social media engagement on the Community Building Facebook page as measured by comments is up 66% this month, and page views on the main (outward facing) church Facebook page are up 133%, though this is most likely attributable to the holiday. I would appreciate feedback from the Board as to whether statistics on social media engagement are informative enough to include in monthly reports, or if periodic updates are all that is required.

Following a concern expressed by a member of the Audit team concerning congregant privacy, I met with the Safety Team to discuss the posting of photos on social media of members of the congregation who may not have given express permission. Obtaining photo releases was a Communications Team effort years ago; while records were given to me, no further efforts to obtain missing permissions from existing members was made by the team. Photo permission language however was added to our new member forms a number of years ago. As a result of the privacy concern, I have reached out to about 200 members of our congregation through email to obtain their instructions, and will follow up until we have definitive instructions on everyone to protect privacy.

The virtual craft fair and bake sale brought in \$1000 income; considering the 2 week lead time on this event, it's a remarkable amount! Thanks to Laura Brandt, Wendy Stasolla and Barbara Drew for organizing this fundraiser. Still to be decided by the Board and others is how such non-program requests fit in with Simple Church.

Fundraisers, for example, bring in money for general operations, but do not neatly fit in the program/mission-driven Simple Church model.

Celebrate Life

With the passing of Richard Knight, our membership numbers are now 287 Members, 28 Friends, 42 Participants and 37 Attendees.

We will be conducting the annual UUA certification by February 3rd; this process involves reviewing member lists for compliance with bylaws (among other requirements, a member is defined as someone who “makes and contributes toward a recorded financial pledge each year”), updating leadership information, submitting financial data and statistics as requested. This year there is an optional poll (in which we always participate) asking if our congregation believes a [draft Statement of Conscience entitled "Undoing Intersectional White Supremacy"](#) should be placed on the final agenda for GA in 2021. To participate in the UUA poll, I will need to send a congregational survey; this may be a time to seek input from the congregation on other matters as well if the Board wishes.

Attendance: Looking back at the last 3 years, average attendance may seem lower but previous years’ attendance included children in RE classes; this skews last year’s numbers in a way that does not reflect Sunday service attendance. Average attendance in the chart below is based on previous reporting methods. To make a more meaningful comparison, I have adjusted the numbers to compare Sanctuary attendees only year to year, without the RE numbers. The third column illustrates this more realistic idea of how many people on average are attending Sunday services.

	Avg Attendance	Avg Attend Sanctuary Only
2020	176	165
2019	184	139
2018	184	140

Change the (UUCWC) World

The Capital Project bid has been issued and contractors have toured the building; bid estimates are expected by mid January. With groundbreaking slated for March 2021, I have assumed responsibility for the coordination staff and volunteers for packing, dismantling and storage of all the contents of the offices, lobby, Crossings Room,

kitchen and hallways prior to construction. This may include offering our sexton additional hours as well, something that is within our budget for that position.

In December, I ordered new checks, facilitated and recorded transfers of funds, and changed auto debits to mark the move from Oceanfirst to Northfield as our bank. We will close the Oceanfirst accounts by the end of January, and I am scheduling access approval and training on Northfield online banking, including online bill pay.

I had some preliminary meetings with members of the Audit team as they perform this bylaws driven task that must be completed no less than every five years. This team's work is complicated by the changing roles of those with financial responsibility, especially in the past 18 months. I shared with the team that other churches conduct annual reviews in lieu of or in conjunction with audits; this would not only make the 5 year audit process less onerous, but would also allow for more timely process/procedural adjustments and better transitions of responsibilities. It is definitely something they are considering as part of their recommendations.

I participated in both staff and board retreats last week as we envision the next year(s) and identify any changes in how we do things as well as what we need to accomplish any of our dreams.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Jan 12, 2020

Re: Monthly DRE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I continue to track visitors during the Sunday services. I personally connect with them during the service in the chat and by email. We are fortunate to have people who find us during the pandemic. Since November, 34 people have visited (10 visited around Christmas and may not return), and 9 people have come between 4-8 times since they started coming in November. These are the potential participants in our next new member class.
- The stuffed animal pageant received a lot of positive feedback from a surprising number of adults who are not actively parenting. I'm so glad we could continue our tradition of a pageant, keep the kids involved and offer a lighthearted moment to the congregation during a very different holiday season.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- For parents and families, Kim and I continue to work collaboratively to create programming for parents (the UU parenting class) and families (Family Chalice Circles for families with younger kids and older kids). Both programs are offering a new (for UUCWC) intentional way for participants to integrate UUism into the deepest part of themselves and their life. These are programs that we expect to continue next year.
- 7 chalice circles with 49 people in them are up and running. They are not only offering a way for people to connect deeply with each other. (Vital in this time of nonphysical church), participants discuss and experience how to be in covenant with one another. This is similar and different to the work in understanding what it means to be a covenantal church that the Board has done with each other and Kim has done with the new membership class. I am currently facilitating 4 groups, with new facilitators co-facilitating 2 of the 4. My plan is to transition out of co-facilitating by May.
- After months of planning, rewriting curriculum and scheduling, FOWL, UUCWC's continuation of the OWL curriculum online, began. Barbara Jensen and Scott Drew are teaching twice a month until June. There are 10 teens in the class.

Change the World:

- Since greeting and acclimating visitors during the pandemic, it is clear that the path to membership, engagement of congregants, ARE and leadership need to be overseen by a staff person, and specifically a staff person who is not a new hire.

We need weekly consistent attendance by someone who concentrates on welcoming visitors (knows who the visitors are) and speaks knowledgeably about UUism and UUCWC. As Kim says, it is a brave thing to walk into a new space. The first few visits to UUCWC are crucial. It is impossible for a group of rotating volunteers with different skills to adequately meet and acclimate visitors. They don't recognize them. This is what I've been doing during the pandemic just for visitors to give you an idea what a staff person can do.

I know everyone in the congregation so I recognize the visitors. I connect with each of them. I know how often they come and why they come because I've personally interacted with them. I remember the ones who want to dive right in to UUCWC and who want to get to know the congregation slowly and I integrate that into my approach. I know the visitors who have experience with Unitarian Universalism (and I find out how much they know) and those that do not. Again, I tailor my emails to contain the information they need. They are not form letters. I keep track of who attends Faith Forward and what their experience was. I individually invite them to other programs depending on their interests and if they may be particularly good at showing what UUCWC offers. I invited some new people to chalice circles because they were looking for community. Five accepted. These people will be attached to our community.

This is a small sample of what a staff person can do for membership. We know Kim's services, our programs, our caring congregants are wonderful and could help many people. A staff person is needed to greet visitors and integrate newer people into the congregation. In truth, it's remarkable we've grown the way we have without a position like this filled; it would be a disservice to the congregation and visitors to not invest in this position going forward.

Below is a list of characteristics of an assimilated member. For our current members, a congregational staff member, who knows them, can invite them to broaden their involvement at UUCWC and expand their faith so that everyone can be an engaged or "Assimilated member".

Characteristics of an Assimilated Member

1. 6-7 friends in congregation
2. Role/task consistent with gifts, interests, skills, personality
3. Involved in a small group
4. Regular worship attendance
5. Gives financially
6. Understands and identifies congregational goals
7. Feels a sense of spiritual growth
8. Taken a public step of affiliation
9. Engaging spiritual practices 1
10. Sharing faith with friends and family

Treasurers Report - Mid-Year July - December, 2020

The church year has hit a significant milestone - we are 6 months into a church year with 100% virtual church, giving us more perspective into the “unknown” than we had when we started the Budget creation activity in Finance only a month into the pandemic closures.

Mary Baltycki has continued to monitor closely our activity and presented initial first quarter update late September. She will be presenting the current status, 6 months in, later this month.

I will highlight some of our findings:

From the balance sheet, you will see that we have two major changes to our reports

- 1) Funds are continuing to be moved from Ocean First to Northfield, this will be completed by end of January,
- 2) Our operating account has a fund balance of \$128,853, approximately 3 months of normal operations budgeted expenses.

And one reminder to ourselves:

- 3) We still have the \$30,000 PPP loan, where we are waiting for that to be forgiven. No timing at this point.

From the YTD through December 2020

1. Plate is at 76.4% of budget, and we continue to get fewer but larger ongoing gifts to the plate for the month and \$109% for year to date.
2. Pledges made and exceeded budget for the month of December and remains roughly 12% behind budget (around \$22,000)
3. The EOY Holiday House Appeal - broke our aggressive goal of \$17,000 and raised by December 31st \$25,220. January gifts brings that total to over \$26,000 before we have a final tally
4. The Craft Fair brought in \$1,000
5. OVERALL INCOME is at 97% of budget
6. We are maintaining our staffing at Virtual closure levels on budget
7. Office and technology expenses are on budget
8. Utilities remains to be same as Pre-closure as our cost of electricity increased
9. We are able to maintain our Full Fair Share in Denominational support
10. December reflects our closing costs on our new mortgage loan (the capital bridge loan expenses will be reflected in the Capital expense budget). Even with the one time closing costs

We finish out the first 6 months \$25,905 in the black, \$11,000 more than we budgeted. Something to CELEBRATE.

The generosity that this pandemic life-style is evident and should be noted in any stewardship messaging moving into the new year. While we budget conservatively, we have a good handle on how our members and donors are responding. We will watch that carefully in the second half of the fiscal year.

Treasurer Transition activity:

It is important to note that Mary and Susan have both covered a large portion of my monthly reconciliation work in November and December. Due to my personal work load, the Treasurer, Finance Chair and Office Administrator continue to balance a workload that is not sustainable in the long run.

Respectfully submitted in faith and action,

Jim Sanders
Treasurer, UUCWC