

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
August 10, 2022

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini; Treasurer, Joe Schenk; Secretary Colleen McCourt; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Wendy Stasolla, Jim Sanders, Michael Waas (joined at 8:08pm), Gina Turner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

General discussion included:

- Rev. Kim reported that the Worship Associate team has been brainstorming and researching ways to increase plate donations by providing easier options to donate.
- Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang reported on a rental agreement with a local temple where the renting organization is looking to put up temporary signage at UUCWC to direct their members to the event. **The Board voted unanimously to affirm** the signage provided that it meets township placement recommendations. **ACTION:** The congregation will be informed ahead of time to avoid any confusion.
- The staff provided a general update on the new staff onboarding process and recent staff retreat.

Financial Task Force Update

The Board discussed details of the proposed plan to put together a financial task force to generate creative ideas to deal with upcoming budget challenges. Joe and Trustees Jim Sanders and Heather Edwards presented a draft of the desired tasks and outcomes that would be expected of the task force.

Key items of discussion included:

- The need to have diverse constituencies represented
- The timing of the task force's recommendations within the fiscal year
- The size and makeup of the task force and how volunteers will be selected/solicited
- The need to maintain an 8th Principle lens
- The task force having survey capabilities
- The need to maintain communication with the various financial teams at UUCWC
- Current bylaw terms related to task forces
- The need to establish a Board liaison to the task force
- **ACTIONS:** Jim will speak with Congregational Engagement, Joe will speak with the Finance committee, and Vice President Jamie Evanini will speak with the Stewardship Committee. They

will inform impacted teams, get guidance on volunteers, and identify a Board liaison. Rev. Kim and Susan will communicate with the congregation to invite volunteers.

Capital Campaign Update

In response to the Capital Campaign team's report, Maria sent the team some questions from the Board for clarification in specific areas. The team is pending additional budget numbers, and the Board will meet with them soon to discuss the latest bid information and next steps. Joe provided information on interest rates and their potential impact to the project budget.

Second Hour

Discussion of Somerville UU Proposal

Per last month's minutes, recently, a team from the UU Church of Somerville met with Rev. Kim to discuss a range of options for potentially sharing resources with UUCWC. The Board had affirmed the need for further discernment and identified that there would be a series of further conversations. To that end, Rev. Kim, Jamie, Jim and Trustee Michael Waas met with the Somerville team and summarized the key points:

- Regardless of the specific outcomes, it was nice to establish a relationship with another UU church.
- There are a lot of interesting options, representing a wide range of commitment levels, which provides some flexibility and openness in making decisions. Some of the potential models would be familiar to us (such as multi-platform connections) and our recent investments in technology makes them realistic possibilities.
- Assumes the Capital Campaign project would be resolved first, before embarking on the necessary pre-work involved with a potential collaboration with an outside group.
- There would need to be an alignment of congregational and business culture.
- **ACTION:** Rev. Kim, Jim, Jamie and Michael will have further discussions with the UU Somerville team.

COVID Survey Results

The Board reviewed and discussed the results of the recent congregational survey on COVID protocols, and examined the trends and feedback provided. Key points included:

- While there were a range of diverse opinions, when taking into account all reported factors, there would only be a net difference of 5% more people attending in person if mask and vaccine mandates/recommendations were changed. $\frac{2}{3}$ of congregants would not change current attendance practices regardless of any changes to UUCWC COVID guidelines.
- The Board also considered reports from other local and regional UU congregations on their current COVID practices.
- The Board discussed numerous implications of the current protocols and potential changes to them, including staff impacts, legal implications, reported survey sentiments as reflected by the data and open-ended comments, the need for transparency and caring communication, the ability to enforce protocols, etc. There was general agreement that there can be no perfect solution that will suit all individuals, but we continue to listen to feedback, support covenantal relationships and evolve slowly, cautiously and incrementally according to the guidelines of the

communities and municipalities around us, as well as sources such as the CDC and the UUA. We will continue to use the lanyard system and ensure that multi-platform options are consistently available to all.

- An initial poll regarding changing mask and vaccine guidelines showed that there was lack of consensus and further discussion was needed.
- After further discussion via discernment circle, **there was a vote** to make masks optional starting the first Sunday of September, and to leave current messaging regarding vaccines as it is. There was unanimous consent.
- **ACTIONS:** Rev. Kim and Susan will prepare communication for the congregation, focused on clarity and transparency of the Board's decision. The Board will re-evaluate changes to UUCWC's stated language on vaccinations at the next meeting.

Housekeeping & action items

We need a Board liaison to the Endowment Committee - volunteers should email Maria.
We are seeking to strengthen the church's protections around copyright use.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer Reports

August 2022

Minister Board Report

Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

This past month in worship I asked that we look again at some of our history and heritage, and wondered how it informs our current state and spirit: Communities that discerned Jesus's life and death; Michael Servetus's push against trinitarianism; John Murray's conversion to Universalism and the rest he required after. I then attempted to name and set a vision for our Unitarian Universalist future: Relationship, Justice, Wholeness and "naming the quiet things out loud."

Pastor Tabatha Holley held the pulpit on my Sunday off; Rev. Shawn Torres will take my upcoming Sunday off. Both preachers will be paid out of the Racial Justice worship budget.

Coming up in August, I will turn us toward Unitarian Universalist spiritual practices including giving the whole sermon over to a reintroduction of joys and sorrows as ritual and practice.

Additional Notes: In person attendance numbers seem to be steady or slightly growing. We are seeing different members return and come back.

Understanding that the plate income is low from our online participants, the Worship Associates and I discussed how we might invite folks into this practice more and with intentionality. Additionally, it was suggested that we consider using Zelle (rather than or in addition to Paypal) since that is not as accessible these days. Dan Lownie, who works for a bank and is a WA, is going to look into Zelle for business and get back to us.

We will of course be speaking about the survey responses that spoke so much about the timing of the service(s). As well as that 30% plan to remain online regardless of the covid restrictions or lack thereof. I've included a pre-read, separate from this report, on NJ UU congregation covid restrictions as additional food for thought.

I continue to recruit for my upcoming Sundays off from within the congregation. In total, I am looking to recruit and work with 30 volunteer speakers over the course of the upcoming church year.

Create Community (Small Groups)

I led a staff retreat this week to help each team member consider short- and long-term goals; what we think the most clear congregational challenges, blessings, and accessible wins are; the same themes for each person's portfolio; and how their particular role on the staff team will help us move toward a collective goal.

This time in congregational life requires a tremendous amount of holding on and letting go; knowing who is still invested in the community, and the work of reimagining for a very different future than what we've known. We are planning while dreaming and grieving.

Similarly, this Saturday I am leading a meeting, open to all who are interested in where we are headed with our justice ministries for the year, that will feature local, state and national leadership (NJ UU Faith Action leadership; HiTops; a local Board of Ed leader, and more). I am hoping that during this time, the collective will be able to show where their energy is, commit to certain projects, and be creative with how their particular passions can amplify a congregational justice theme.

Pastoral Care continues in small and large ways, with long term members and visitors who participate solely online but who identify me as their minister.

Change the World

As I said in last month's report:

I am working with Right Relations on their structure, purpose and short-term goals as they enter a new church year. I have identified three goals for them: 1. Help committees and ministries create covenants who they have not yet worked with 2. Return to the committees and ministries who do have a covenant and see how or if this is working for them 3. Facilitate quarterly Listening Circles in coordination /collaboration with staff, board, personnel, finance and any others who may need to have hard or important conversations with the congregation.

I continue to recruit and train new Worship Associates. We are welcoming Michael Howe-Smith, Alison Barron, and Al Migdal (remote).

Jamie, Michael, Jim and I met with the leadership of Somerset Hills to continue the exploratory conversation of a formal congregational relationship. Rev. Ann Marie and I are considering a pulpit swap this fall and an invitation for Somerset folks to join our Chalice Circles and the like.

Please note that I will be taking vacation with my family next week.

With care,

Kim

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for August 2022

Create Community

Question for Board: UUCWC has entered a rental agreement with Har Sinai Temple for the use of UUCWC during their High Holy Days in September and October (4 non-consecutive days). They have asked to put a temporary sign on our front lawn with their name and dates and times of their services in advance of the rental; this will help their congregation and others find them at our location. It would not obscure any of our signage. The sign would also recognize an emerging relationship between their congregation and ours: their Social Action team invited ours to partner in a Book Drive sponsored by Rep. Shirley Turner whose office is collecting books for Trenton school classrooms. I would ask them to share a preview in advance, but would like the Board's thoughts and approval to permit them to post a temporary sign on our front lawn in mid-September, as the [signage policy](#) does not address the use of signs from other organizations.

Celebrate Life

Our current membership is 273 Church Members, 22 Friends, 25 Participants and 22 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 274, we are actively serving a system of 342, not counting children or visitors.

Change the (UUCWC) World

Facilities:

- I received an Endowment Grant to purchase a [Meeting Owl](#), an interactive 365-degree camera, microphone and speaker that creates an immersive Zoom meeting experience for remote and in-person participants. I have been working with MJ Hansen and John Harvi to set up this multiplatform meeting system and procedures for use. Initially, a tech person will assist with set up until users are familiar with the technology in the Crossings Room or classrooms. UUCWC is now multiplatform for worship and other meetings of various sizes/locations.
- I assisted the Worship Tech team with the purchase of a second camera in the Sanctuary, which they hope to have operational shortly.
- Andrew Kidd, formerly of Electrosonic, has arranged for UUCWC to receive donated office furniture as the company's Ewing office permanently closes. Items (chairs, bookcases, files) will replace older items (which will be disposed of/donated); some is furniture that can be used in the future post construction. The transfer will happen this week.

Human Resources:

- Letters of agreement with staff for 2022/23 have been issued and have mostly been signed and returned (timing of vacations has impacted finalization).
- Much time was spent in the onboarding of new employees whose benefits administration required learning new procedures for UUCWC, making adjustments within the payroll company, and interactions with the UUA. I have updated onboarding resources with these new processes for future hires.

Administrative:

- I will be working with Lynne Quinto to address audit team issues and provide written information for a future Financial Policy/Procedures compilation by the Finance Committee.

IT:

- Most committees/ministries have been set up with shared drives and new “@uucwc.org” emails to enhance security and assure retention of important files during leader transitions. MJ Hansen and I have created this resource for Auction, Capital Campaign, Congregational Engagement, Endowment, Finance, Personnel, Right Relations, and the Treasurer; the last to be done will be CFA and its groups in August/September, concluding the initial launch of this project.

Communications:

- I learned about improving communications for accessibility from a recent workshop from the Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrator (AUUA) Professional Days. Improving accessibility, particularly for those with vision challenges, has or will be shared with Rachel Hansen (responsible for weekly announcements), Sarah Ahrens (Family Ministry Messenger newsletter editor) and Chris Piatek (CrossCurrents newsletter editor). I hope to make similar improvements on our website.
- I am working with Lori O’Neil on changes to UUCWC Style Guideline and possible redesign of weekly emails for improved accessibility and readability on mobile devices.

I will be participating in the staff retreat on August 9th, then will be taking vacation time later in August.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Aug 9, 2022

Re: Monthly DCL Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I continue to recruit and train our Sunday hosts. The job description is continuously updated as we make adjustments to being back in person.
- I continue to connect with virtual and in person visitors via email.
- I was on 5 days of study leave (and 5 days of vacation) in July. I attended Star Island Faith Development week on “Widening the Circle” about bringing the recommendations of the Commission on Institutional Change to home congregations.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- The bulk of my 2 weeks of working time this month was spent onboarding our new DFM and setting up my new email, google accounts, calendly accounts (more time consuming than it sounds with one hand!)
- I am planning ARE classes for the fall. This requires recruiting facilitators, training facilitators, scheduling, advertising both schedule and explaining what the class is, often targeted emails. etc.

This primarily serves as an FYI about my professional development opportunities that benefit my leadership at UUCWC.

I joined UUAMP, the Association of Membership Professionals. I will join their weekly check-ins this month. I will take Wellspring Sources this year starting in the fall in an online group for UU Spiritual Directors. Last time I took Wellspring was 10 years ago. I want to refamiliarize myself with the program so I can better advocate for it.

I am in my second year of a 2-year spiritual direction course for adults. I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

I've had surgery on my right hand. For the next few weeks, I am dictating. I apologize for any brevity and sloppiness.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski
From: Sarah Ahrens
Date: August 8, 2022
Re: Monthly Director of Family Ministry Report

CELEBRATE LIFE (Worship and Rites of Passage):

- I'm working with Rev. Kim to deliver messages during worship that are truly geared for a multigenerational audience. As I will be out of service on a number of occasions, I am working to find volunteers to deliver this message in my absence. This will also give others an opportunity to participate in worship as well.
- COA:
 - I have updated the applications and requirements for COA and have begun advertising this program to the congregation.
 - I am exploring both the UUA Safe Congregations Handbook and the Soul Matters new COA program, called Becoming, to see which is a better fit for this coming year. I may end up doing a hybrid of the programs, taking the best of both as it's a year long program .
 - I'm in process of recruiting mentors and advisors for this program
- OWL:
 - As mentioned before, OWL needs to be run for all grade levels this year as it has not been done in several due to the pandemic.
 - I reached out to several contacts at the UUA to see about getting elementary OWL teachers trained. I'm currently leading a cohort of several other religious educators in NJ who are also in need of teacher training. We have met several times to work on getting a training planned and implemented ASAP, in order to fulfill our needs.
 - We have recently determined that we will run the 7-8th grade OWL for a full year starting in September, as that is the most comprehensive curriculum. We will run OWL for grades 1-3, 4-6, and 9-10 in the second half of the year, starting in February, as those are shorter programs. Starting in Feb will also give us the necessary time to recruit and train the 6-8 teachers we need to run all the various levels.
 - I'm working with the religious educator in Princeton to see if there is a potential collaboration with them for any level of OWL. They have trained teachers (which we don't), but not enough students to run programs on their own. This would be entirely on UUCWC campus, as we are the host and they would just be visitors to the program.

CREATE COMMUNITY: To create community, I have been focusing on communication and connection:

- Creation of the “Family Ministry Messenger” -
 - I sent out the second edition in August, with the OWL and COA participant applications for families to begin to register for both general participation and specialty programs.
 - I had originally started sending this out via Mailchimp, but had to reformat the entire thing in iContact, so that we had more ready access to the churchwide contact database. This is also beneficial for streamlining and integrating this newsletter with other church communications.
 - This will be an important tool for recruitment to ensure we have enough volunteers. So far, I have already heard back from several folks with offers to assist via this channel.
- UU Identity Programming -
 - I met with both the Family Ministry Team and the Earth Ministry Team in July. In these meetings, I shared the vision and plan for the program year and we discussed planning/organizing for the programs in the fall, and the necessary recruitment to run those programs.
 - For the first half of the year, the students who are not in the full year OWL program (7-8) will engage in a UU Identity program that covers the 8 Principles and 6 Sources.
 - For each of these 14 sessions, I am seeking volunteers from various committees and groups in the congregation to come and be a guest speaker about their connection to a given principle/source. For instance, the Earth Ministry will come to present on the 7th Principle and 6th Source, relating to the earth. Students will engage in learning/discussion about the principle/source, and then will move to a tactile activity, followed by a spiritual practice, all focused on the theme of the day. I will work with the recruited volunteers to help create the lessons that are engaging to both the students and the guest presenters.
 - The goals are -
 - For students to become reacquainted with being UU after a long absence - from the ground up
 - For students to become reacquainted with each other after a long absence. This program keeps most of the children and youth together for the first half of the year, enabling them to bond once again (vs age siloed classes)
 - For older HS youth to begin to take on leadership roles as classroom assistants, helping the 1-6th graders through the programming
 - For students to make connections with more people in the congregation as the adults share their personal passions and experiences with the principles/sources
 - For adults who may not normally be interested in volunteering for RE to have a way to connect with children/youth. I’m hopeful that when folks get a taste of how rewarding and fun it is to work with the kids, they will be

more open to volunteer in the future. This is an easy, low commitment starting place!

- To have flexibility in the program as we begin to move back in person. We don't know how many participants we will have week to week, and so this enables us to adjust accordingly. It also significantly reduces the number of trained classroom teachers we would need to run each session.
- Youth Group Coalition -
 - For the 2022-23 program year, I will be collaborating with the religious educators from Princeton and Somerville in a Central Jersey Youth Coalition.
 - This will offer the students more of a critical mass of youth from four congregations, including Hunterdon county. Advisors will come from all congregations, and youth will rotate visiting each congregation once a month. They will also meet a second time each month, at a centralized event planned in the corridor in between all four congregations (such as hiking, bowling, mini golf, etc.). We have already determined this schedule for the entirety of the year.
 - I met with the other religious educators and we have planned our youth group teacher training for 9/11. We are exploring the new UUA 5 hour youth advisor online training, and will determine how we wish to integrate this for our new advisors
 - Safe Congregations work will be central to the planning and training for this group. As directors, the religious educators from all congregations will meet on 8/31 to determine which SC policy is the most robust so that we can follow a common set of guidelines and policies, regardless of where the group is meeting.
- Family Feedback Sessions - I ran several in person and online sessions in July to obtain feedback from families about what has worked or not in the past, and what current and future needs may be. I also pulled this feedback from a wide range of students in the July Sunday morning classes. The programs we have chosen for this year have been entirely informed by this feedback, to meet the needs of students and families at this time.
- In later August/Sept, I will be working with Susan and Rachel on updating the Family Ministry section of the website so that it holds all the updated, accurate information for the programs offered in 2022-23.

CHANGE THE WORLD:

- Social justice is very important for children and youth to engage in as a way to live our UU Principles in the world. To that end, we will have six new "Super Sundays" throughout the program year. These "Super Sundays" will be opportunities for K-12th grade students to come together for the duration of the worship service to explore and engage in community service and social justice projects together. It is also a time for them to get to know one another, outside of siloed age-specific groups. This additionally provides leadership opportunities to older youth. Another benefit to the Super Sundays

is that they don't require many volunteers, so this alleviates the teaching burden and gives the adults an opportunity to still enjoy the service on the occasion. Finally, it's a great way for folks interested in volunteering with Family Ministry to check it out or offer their time/talents for a singular event without making a huge commitment or going through extensive training.

- I've already met with Earth Ministry to see how they can collaborate with Family Ministry in a wide variety of ways: UU ID classes, Youth Group activities, Super Sundays, and multigenerational activities.
- I will be attending the Council for Faith in Action retreat in order to make connections with all other social justice initiatives in the congregation. I'm hoping to recruit individuals who would be interested to present on a principle/source for our UU ID classes; to collaborate with social justice work in our Super Sundays; and to possibly co-sponsor multigenerational events

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- August - taking several webinars from Soul Matters regarding the COA Becoming program and their Middle School curriculum so that I'm abreast of the latest offerings
- August - taking full weekend OWL teacher training for 7-10th grades so that I can assist with the planning for all levels of OWL (I'm already certified for Elementary, so this will complete my K-12 OWL certifications)
- August - taking the 5 hour UUA Youth Advisor training so that I can determine what aspects of this to incorporate into our own teacher training for the YG coalition
- Engaged in monthly Metro NY LREDA meetings with colleagues in order to share and create best practices.
- Participate in monthly OWL webinars offered by UUA/UCC to stay abreast of best practices and program changes.
- Participate in ongoing calls (weekly) and trainings (monthly) with Heartmath.org as a Resilience Advantage Trainer. This is a certification I received in January 2022

Treasurer's Report

July 30, 2022

- We start the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year with a \$56k surplus (income exceeding expenses) largely due to a recorded \$35k income line reflecting the approved memorial gift
- Recorded Pledge Income is strong at \$61k plus an additional \$6k in prior year pledge payments
- Expenses for the month were \$6k below budget with savings largely in Operations which can be expected to catch up over the next months
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.47 million:
 - \$532k Operating combined balances
 - \$692k Capital Campaign
 - \$275k Endowment
 - -\$5k Exchange

Year to Date Finances as of 7/31/2022

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	2,585	Staff	30,944
Pledge	67,203	Operations	14,718
Year End, Other Gifts	35,000	Program	1,642
Fund Raising (Auction)	1,050	Denomination	0
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	23	Debt Service	2,122
	105,861		49,426
Net Income (Loss)			56,435

Final Thoughts:

1. The strong Pledge Income should not be taken as anything extraordinary, instead reflecting typical start of year payments
2. \$38k Budget Deficit – The Board should continue strategizing how to close the budget gap