

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



**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED**  
**November 9, 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; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Wendy Stasolla, Jim Sanders, Michael Waas, Gina Turner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang. Absent were Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh and Secretary Colleen McCourt.*

# First Hour

## **Consent agenda (no vote):**

General discussion of reports, including:

- Ministerial Report:
  - Talked about ministerial resources during busy periods, including pulpit exchanges, Joys and Sorrows services, attendance trends; staff are tracking attendance and how these services are experienced by the congregation.
  - Discussion of Stewardship re-envisioning; simple plan for this year to break down the end of year asks to just a handful of tasks that can be shared among volunteers and staff to reduce the burden on the Stewardship team. General discussion of the future of Stewardship efforts.
- Congregational Administrator Report:
  - Discussed Chalice Lighter grant submission for Capital project lift, which will be coordinated by Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang in coordination with Treasurer Joe Schenk and the Capital Campaign team.
  - Talked about Board retreat and other ways for the Board to connect in person throughout the year. **ACTION:** We will try to have a retreat in January or February - will send a Doodle poll to assess availability.
  - Reviewed attendance and finances from Cuban music concert - due to low attendance, we lost money; we need to promote future efforts and have leadership attend. Susan reported that she and Erin Busch are making plans to expand publicity for the next event, with an earlier start time and robust coffee hour. May also call on people to promote on a community FB page in their towns.

**Filling Leadership Roles:**

The Board discussed the process, audiences and results to date from the Congregational Engagement team's leadership interest survey, as well as how these efforts tie into overall nominating needs. Discussion included types of information provided by current/former leaders, the need to communicate open roles/needs with the congregation, the idea of co-leadership roles, and the challenges of succession planning for small or one-person teams. **ACTION:** We will invite members of the Congregational Engagement team to the next Board meeting to check in and discuss the information that has been gathered and how it may tie into leadership openings.

## 2nd Hour

**Capital Campaign Update**

Board President Maria Baratta reported that while there are not many substantive updates currently, the paperwork has been submitted to attorneys for review. The Board discussed timing of communications and potential fundraising efforts with the congregation, likely once we've broken ground to coincide with construction efforts and avoid competing with other financial asks/messaging. Trustee Wendy Stasolla agreed to serve as liaison to the Capital Campaign team to keep lines of communication open and discuss future plans for growing/supporting the team.

**Ministerial Intern Discussion**

Rev. Kim is in contact with an individual who needs an internship site in order to be ordained. Board members expressed some concern about making sure that the person is a good fit and also whether this would be helpful for Rev. Kim or would provide additional work. Rev. Kim confirmed that anyone in this position would be fully interviewed by a committee, and that she would only want to go forward if the person were skilled enough to come into our system and be of help.

**General Finance Update**

Joe suggested that this be a monthly agenda topic for board meetings to remind us of the importance of proactively addressing our upcoming financial challenges. The Board discussed the current progress of the Financial Sustainability Task Force and the rate of response to the survey that they issued to the congregation. Joe acknowledged that it's important to correct any misperceptions about what the task force is doing; we commissioned them to help us understand where we are and get recommendations.

**Housekeeping/Action Items**

Trustee Michael Waas will write the Cross Currents article for December.

The meeting adjourned at 8:51pm

Respectfully Submitted,

***Heather Edwards***

Scribe, Board of Trustees

***Colleen McCourt***

Secretary, Board of Trustees

## **Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer Reports**

Board Exec Team Report - November 3, 2022

The Board is aware of the need to recruit people to fill key roles this year, many of them having to do with budget/finance. At the Exec Team meeting we discussed the prospects of having some people in leadership roles continue in a co-chair or co-officer role to allow for smoother transition with new comers to the leadership role. Recognizing both the complexity and time commitments of leadership roles, it makes sense to create a smooth pathway for anyone new to a role and may encourage more people to accept leadership roles if they feel well supported.

The Financial Sustainability Task Force has issued a survey to members, friends, visitors to UUCWC with an intention of learning more about people's view on how they want to learn/hear about UUCWC finances as well as their attitudes on charitable giving in general and toward UUCWC, specifically. Once this information is collected, they will prepare a report for the Board with their findings.

It's important to keep financial updates on the Board's monthly agenda as well as monitor the impact of the Capital Campaign projected needs and any other budget priorities while we are looking toward developing a stewardship campaign to begin in spring 2023, as well as prepare our 2023-2024 budget.

At a congregational meeting on October 16, our members voted to approve a construction loan to cover the capital project costs that exceed Capital Campaign pledges received. Once we break ground on the project there should be a request for members/friends to pledge, if they haven't yet, or consider adding an additional year or two onto their initial Capital Campaign pledge. More on this in the coming months.

In other CC news, the attorney for the church submitted updated site plans to the township. These require a full review even though they are reduced in scope from the original plans. Site inspection approvals were also submitted to the township through the attorney. The CC Team has an article in the upcoming Cross Currents to update the congregation. They plan to provide a monthly update as work progresses.

**November 2022 Board Report  
Ministers Report  
Rev. Kim Wildszewski**

**Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)**

Since the last Board report, **in worship** we introduced the monthly theme of Courage through topics such as:

- Generative, Faithful Conflict
- The Zechner’s auction sermon on the practical expressions of being a Unitarian Universalist
- A Joys & Sorrows service on Self-Forgiveness
- Our annual All Souls service through story telling and imagery

In November we introduced the theme of Change. On November 6<sup>th</sup> Rev. Ann Marie Alderman, from the Somerset Hills Congregation, and I **exchanged pulpits** for the day. We each preached, in our own ways, the role of community and being a church.

**Some additional notes on worship:**

- We continue to hold **Joys & Sorrows** once per month. These services have a longer meditation and no sermon. We are successfully hearing from those in person, online, and through the chat.
- After realizing that, with the pulpit exchange, I would be leading for six Sundays in a row (rather than three), *which did not include Tony’s memorial service, or the launch of Welcome Table Wednesday at the end of November*, Pastor Tabatha Holley, who led worship for us in the summer with a positive response, will be leading for me again on November 20<sup>th</sup>. This means that I am out of the UUCWC pulpit on Sundays more than I am in it in November but still providing a full slate of worship and/or programming within those same weeks.
- The **Worship Associates** and I had our first multiplatform meeting using the Owl technology. It was my first evening meeting in the building since fall of 2019!! It was odd and wonderful and I express my sincere thanks to the endowment folks for making it possible – and Susan Irgang for requesting it, setting it up, and making All Things Possible.
- We are averaging **175 people** on a Sunday from September through October. For a snap shot, this is how October shook out:

<b>In person</b>	<b>Virtual</b>	<b>Classrooms</b>	<b>Total</b>
77	81	20	178
70	66	23	159
75	87	29	191
67	66	20	153
88	84	24	196

### **On Music:**

From Erin on the recent Cuban Band **Concert**: We made \$511, which means we made a little over half of the amount that we paid them (\$1,000). With 29 attendees, this means each person gave an average of about \$17.50. The suggested donation is \$5-20, so that's pretty good. Since the concert series isn't in our budget for this year, it means it's basically unsustainable for the rest of the season unless we're able to find more funding somewhere. I'm hoping to guarantee the South Philly Big Band \$1,200 (ends up being \$75 per person), and I think we have a better chance of making that amount in full through ticket sales.

Lastly, Caryl had been in discussion with the **Trenton Children's Chorus** to perform for a service as part of the endowment grant award. Erin spoke with them earlier in the summer, and they're very interested. She will be reaching back out this month to talk about what specific dates might work for them.

### **Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)**

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, **Welcome Table Wednesday** will begin again for the first time since 2019! We will deck the halls (prepare the sanctuary for the holidays), provide holiday crafting, and desserts. With Robin out of the country for the lead up, and turning this cold crank, we will not be providing dinner this time. We hope to offer a Welcome Table at least 3 times this church year.

I continue to offer my weekly **Lectio Divina** practice via zoom. Each week the group grows numerically, but also in trust and sharing. Participants span in age from 30s to 80s and include both men and women. It is a space of self-reflection and communal care. It has been one of my most fulfilling offerings to provide.

This week I conclude the first **Pathways** (new member) classes of the year. The group started with 11 sign ups but only 8 who were able to see the program through. The 8 include:

- 6 women and 2 men
- 1 Person of Color
- 3 who were born into Unitarian Universalism
- 2 who were unchurched until their time at UUCWC
- 1 religiously and culturally Jewish identified participant
- 1 “far-flung” participant (from Virginia)

I will edit this document after I learn how many and who are welcomed into membership.

**Pastoral Care** is quite intense right now. Physical, emotional and mental challenges often begin to rise around this time. I am noticing how much some of us have aged during the pandemic and how hard it is to return as expected (expectations of others and ourselves).

This Saturday is Tony Panzetta's memorial service at 11am. I expect it to be a full service. Many from the congregation have eagerly volunteered to help in the numerous ways we've needed from hosting to food to providing special music.

## **Change the World**

**Staff evaluations** will be done early this year. They are scheduled for late November and early December. I am using a new template after taking the management class with The Management Center, and also reviewing the goals of evaluations, and how to communicate unmeasurable goals with a few select congregants in the congregation who have HR backgrounds.

I am working with Nathalie, Pam and Robin on **Congregational Engagement** structure, system and goals. They will be assisting Jamie Evanini in leading the Council meeting later this month. We are using Stewardship and the Finance Committee as the center of our conversations to imagine how we might fill slots but also shift the culture of leadership at UUCWC. I commend Nathalie and Pam's leadership and am so thrilled that this work has been fulfilling for them.

I am working with **Personnel** to conclude the editing and updating of the Handbook. They are also very helpful with the evaluation conversations.

I continue to work with the **Right Relations Committee** and celebrate that Kelsey Swanson and Mike Gianella are the newest members of this committee, beginning their first of three year leadership with this group.

Susan Irgang has created a manageable way to accomplish our **End of Year Campaign** without a Stewardship Committee. ! I am pleased to be a spokesperson, not only for this fundraising, but for the way folks can get involved in simple and one-off tasks that will help us accomplish the tasks of a committee.

I am in conversation with congregants to create a **Stewardship Committee** that is different in culture and design. Jane Root, Klaus Zechner and Denny Rogers have all expressed interest. I will report more as this becomes finalized.

I spent time with the **Food Ministry**, helping them reimagine who they are now post-pandemic. As they learn what their clients need now, and how that differs from 2019 and years before, we discussed:

- Ritualizing the receiving of canned goods during a worship service
- Holding low-cost healthy cooking classes for families and children to help our youngest ones learn about food and disparity
- Utilizing Allie's Garden more and more intentionally

I want to lift this group up for their willingness to name the need to reimagine themselves (which can be a grief of its own!) and their ability to be open to seeing through necessary changes.

I continue to work with and facilitate the **Council for Faith in Action**. Our next quarterly meeting will be next Monday. Some topics will certainly include Food Ministry's discussions, but also the new school board activism; fleshing out Faith Action Ministry's mission and structure; Faith Expression Funding Team's need for a focus or theme of financial giving based on the CFA's agreement.

I was approached by a 3<sup>rd</sup> year seminarian in Philadelphia asking about a two-year part-time **internship** for 2022-24. I am having lunch with her this week and have been transparent with her that we do not have the funds to support an Intern. The Intern Manual does, for the first time in recent history, discuss Interns taking on this work for free, given the financial state of our congregations.

I was **interviewed** and photographed by *River Towns*, “a quarterly magazine that tells stories about the people, places, events, history, and traditions that make our region unique.” Here is how they described the invitation:

*We would like to include you as one of ten diverse faith leaders we are featuring in our winter issue, which will be published February 23. With this project—a ten-page photo essay—we aim to portray the breadth of religious experiences being lived in the River Towns. Each page will feature a portrait shot of one faith leader (you), a photo that shows the space where worship takes place, and several paragraphs that talk about mission, history, and worship space.*

Having done the interview, I’m not sure they captured any of the above, but we’ll see!



## **Susan Irgang**

Administrator BOT Report for November 2022

### **Create Community**

We continue to grow community exposure for UUCWC:

- Local health officials held a late afternoon COVID vaccine/booster clinic on 11/1, and scheduled another one for all ages on January 12, 2023 at 11am.
- The 5<sup>th</sup> grade class of Bear Tavern Elementary school visited UUCWC's trail and stream for a Science class on water testing, led by a teacher trained by the Stony Brook Watershed Association (Our River Friendly certification is from Stony Brook)
- Last Sunday's Cuban music concert will be followed next month by the South Philly Big Band concert on 12/11. We hope to improve local publicity for the December concert.

Preparations for an upcoming memorial service have led to discussions about streamlining processes. Staff, who is currently responsible for procuring basic Fellowship Hour supplies (coffee, milk, cream, plates, napkins) has taken on purchasing Memorial Reception supplies formerly done by volunteers from the Pastoral Care Ministry. This lightens the burden on volunteers and prevents duplication of effort.

I have been working with the Financial Sustainability Task Force in several ways: obtaining historical data about pledging and number of donors, as well as assisting in prepping, testing, and deploying the survey issued on Monday. With a requested return date of 11/21, we will continue communications to spread the word about accessing the online or in the print version.

We are working on a return of Welcome Table Wednesdays later in November, reimagining this popular opportunity for connection and spiritual growth. Save the date: Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, time tba.

We held a Congregational Meeting on 10/16, attended by 87 members (40 online and 47 in person). The congregation voted to support the completion of the Capital Campaign project.

### **Celebrate Life**

Our current membership is 272 Church Members, 22 Friends, 31 Participants and 19 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 272, we are actively serving a system of 344, not counting children or visitors. On Saturday, we will honor the life of Tony Panzetta at a Celebration of Life, offered multiplatform.

## **Change the (UUCWC) World**

- I updated the look of the weekly announcements and Caring Notes emails to make them easier to read on mobile devices and more visually appealing.
- I am working with Jayme Trott on the Chalice Lighter Grant application for the Capital Campaign project, due December 1. In addition to the narrative around the project, the grant application requires detailed historical information on membership and attendance as well as budget and financial information, copies of our strategic plan (last one was for 2013-2018) and more.
- I recently enrolled in Medicare, rather than continue receiving my health insurance through the UUA Health Plan, due to better coverage at considerably lower cost. UUCWC had budgeted to contribute 80% of the UUA Plan cost this year; the change in coverage will save the church approximately \$1000/mo., for a cost savings this fiscal year of over \$8000.
- The Facilities Reserve Fund Review team held their fall meeting to check past fiscal year activity and assess potential activity for the current fiscal year. Several items which were marked for potential replacement this year were deferred until post construction.

I continue with my monthly chalice circle with fellow UU administrators.

## Treasurer's Report

As of October 31, 2022

- Year to Date, Net Cash Flow shows a surplus of \$21k (down from \$50k at the end of August) due to the following:
  - Year to Date income is \$15k below budget – Pledge income
  - Year to Date expenses are \$19k below budget with savings largely in Operations & Programming which can be expected to catch up over the next months
  - We have recorded a total of \$35k in gifts (includes the budgeted \$25k memorial gift)
- The positive cash flow (surplus) is expected to continue to dwindle and yield the budgeted deficit (\$38k)
  
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.45 million:
  - \$500k Operating combined balances
  - \$697k Capital Campaign
  - \$262k Endowment
  - -\$5k Exchange

### Year to Date Finances as of 10/31/2022

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	11,053	Staff	125,907
Pledge	151,096	Operations	29,477
Year End, Other Gifts	35,300	Program	8,721
Fund Raising	223	Denomination	6,322
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	2,519	Debt Service	8,488
			<b>178,915</b>
	<b>200,191</b>		
<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>		<b>21,276</b>	

### Final Thoughts:

- ***The Balances (above) includes a \$5k "Exchange" – these are funds being held pending Board action on allocation of the remaining \$5k of the Richard Knight estate. During the past budget cycle, the Board elected to hold \$5k for use in memorializing Richard and needs to discern a proper use of the funds.***
- This report shows a nearly \$21k surplus year to date, but we still are expecting an end of year, budget gap of \$38k with expenses and pledge income expected to moderate during the course of the year.