

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)
December 14, 2022
Multi-Platform Meeting

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini; Treasurer, Joe Schenk and Secretary Colleen McCourt; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Wendy Stasolla, Jim Sanders, Michael Waas, Gina Turner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh.

Note: this was the first multi-platform Board meeting since going all virtual due to the pandemic. President, Maria Baratta and Treasurer, Joe Schenk attended in person with other attendees joining online.

First Hour

Congregational Engagement Discussion

Pam Shadzik joined the meeting via Zoom at 7:15, as a representative of the Congregational Engagement team. Maria asked her to share a general update, including whether any individuals have identified an interest in church governance. Pam shared the following on the Congregational Engagement team's work:

- The work is grounded in the premise that serving the church should be nourishing to the individual in addition to being helpful to the church; everything flows from this premise, which is a culture shift.
- We are in an evolving time and we need to build more systemic structures to get to where we want to be; Congregational Engagement is looking to help build systems that support these needs over the next 5 years.
- There is a conscious discernment process and approach to frame how we present leadership and service opportunities to the congregation, helping them understand different access points and ways to serve without feeling overcommitted.
- The Congregational Engagement team has been collecting information through congregational surveys and input from committees and ministries.
 - To date there are 53 survey responses. Pam noted that the survey did not specifically ask about governance work or roles.
 - The information from the committee and ministry teams so far has been mostly task-oriented; hoping to shift toward mission-based descriptions of each group's work.

- There is good information from both sources but more work is needed to make it actionable.
- Pam noted that Congregational Engagement seeks ongoing communication and mutual support with and for the Board.
- There was general discussion with key points including:
 - Acknowledging that with culture shift comes potential discomfort and skepticism, and we can name that openly in the congregation while working toward change.
 - Pam expressed that she has received feedback expressing support for the new approach but some concern about timing regarding open positions; she stated that Congregational Engagement is committed to open and ongoing discussions of people's concerns.
 - Congregational Engagement is working with ministries and committees on diversified options for engagement (e.g discrete tasks vs. regular meetings) so people can realistically engage in ways they find meaningful and sustainable.
 - Potentially clustering some of the survey information to graphically illustrate what nourishes people in the congregation.
 - Current leaders are eager for new engagement, while newer members aren't often sure of how/where to engage. Chairs have said they want more structured opportunities to interact with people.
 - New communication methods and access points are needed to provide awareness and create excitement, especially messaging the personal and spiritual aspects of the work.
 - Faith Forward can be one avenue here, as well as new methods such as video interviews or live story sharing from current and past leaders on why they love what they do; could include a leadership/service recognition service. Other ideas include name badges, graphics and/or other visual content to spark conversation.
 - Be transparent about time commitment of specific tasks, while emphasizing that no specific credentials or tenure at UUCWC are required.
 - Immediate next steps can include communication, inviting people to Board meetings to spark curiosity without commitment, and letting people know there's a culture of support when it comes to leadership and governance work. Congregational Engagement is working on a bulletin board (in person and online).
- At 7:51, Maria thanked Pam and she left the meeting.

Consent agenda (no vote):

- Discussion centered on Rev. Kim's update regarding the status of the potential partnership with the Somerset Hills congregation. While there have been positive discussions with the Somerset Hills team and UUCWC (including Rev. Kim, Vice President Jamie Evanini, and Trustees Jim Sanders and Michael Waas) over the past several months, the last meeting ended with the decision that Somerset Hills has chosen not to pursue UUCWC's fee-for-service proposal at this time. This was due in part to additional parties being involved in the discussion from Somerset Hills with differing perspectives, along with their decision to seek potential partnerships with other congregations. The Board's discussion centered on the fact that this proposal was a useful

exercise for UUCWC for imagining potential future partnership scenarios and the careful discernment process involved. There was agreement that in this scenario, the decision not to move forward seems in the best interest of both parties.

- **ACTION:** DLFE Robin Pugh and Jim Sanders will connect offline regarding a miscommunication concerning CFA.
- There was a question on the Treasurer's Report regarding whether the Sunday plate amount is the total amount or the total after 50% goes to CFA; Joe clarified that it is the total amount.

2nd Hour

Board Retreat

The Board Retreat will be January 7th from 9am to 1pm. Location TBD - likely at church in the Crossings Room or possibly Gravity Hill Farm if available.

General Finance Update

- Per Joe, we are running \$30,000 behind in pledges, compared to where we were last year. We need to wait and see if there's catch up in January. We are on target to have the deficit that was projected and maybe a bit more - at least \$38,000.
- The Venmo payment option needs to be associated with an individual, not an entity. Joe and Lynne Quinto are working through this and it will be set up under Lynne's name and credentials.
- Joe reported that there was some recent discussion about the Facility Reserve Fund, including removing small expenses and truly maintaining it as a fund for big-ticket capital expenses.
 - **ACTIONS:** Finance Chair Steve Saddlemire is taking another look at the policy that was written to make sure it's unambiguous. Joe will provide the Board with a copy of the most recent revised policy/procedure. May not require a vote by the Board if it's more procedural than policy, per current practice. Per Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang, the team works in the fall and spring to review the fund budget; we can put this on a future agenda for review.
- A \$5,000 budget line item from Richard Knight's estate that was designated to memorialize him is waiting for a decision. Joe asked Bernie Ruekgauer for suggestions regarding the memorial garden; it was suggested that an accessible walkway to the garden would be very helpful. Susan noted that we need to consider the percentage of permeable/ impermeable material involved. Now that the Capital Campaign project footprint has been reduced, this might be possible.

Financial Sustainability Task Force

- Per Trustee Heather Edwards, the team just met and are looking through the raw survey data but have put together a document outlining findings. There was a high response rate for the survey and promising information around the congregation's confidence in church financial decisions and likelihood to increase pledges, as well as some opportunities for improved communication.

There are a lot of good takeaways and ways to look at the data. 60% of respondents are retired - might not be totally representative of congregational demographics. The Task Force will highlight recommendations, and they have also provided a table summarizing key themes, with the suggestion of a yearly fiscal theme to tie all these ideas together. Going forward, the members of the Task Force can serve as a resource but don't see themselves going forward with next phase. Rev. Kim expressed thanks for their work and appreciation for their results.

- Per Rev. Kim, she, Ron Iancone and Susan met with the new Stewardship Committee and are planning a four-week series to target conversation to different communication gaps.
- **ACTION:** The Financial Sustainability Task Force and Stewardship Team will be invited to attend the January Board Meeting to discuss these ideas/findings in more detail.

Prospective Intern (no cost)

Rev. Kim reported that she is in contact with a young adult from Hannah Capaldi (Gallo)'s congregation who is finishing studies with the UUA and needs to complete an internship. Rev. Kim has been transparent about lack of funds; even though 2 other congregations can offer the candidate a stipend, she is still interested in potentially serving UUCWC. She hasn't decided on a full-time vs. half-time model yet. She has good recommendations and seems like a good fit for UUCWC. If we decide to move forward, we would determine a vetting process with multiple voices. **The Board affirmed** the desire to continue further exploration. **ACTION:** Rev. Kim will communicate back to the candidate.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- In response to a member query about potential changes to service time, we discussed that there are no planned changes at this time; could possibly revisit in the spring but it would not happen during the church year.
- Cross Currents article for next month will be done by Michael Waas
- Reminder from process observer Jim that we have moved away from discernment circles in the past few meetings.
- Jim thanked staff and Heather for their work.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer Reports

December 2022 Executive Report

Several members of the Board participated in the Council meeting in late November. It was an engaging discussion about how leaders have been drawn in to leadership in ways that are both spiritual and service focused. We discussed ways to seek more leadership and ministry engagement from the broader church community as well as to encourage people to explore ministries and activities without feeling pressured to volunteer to join or take on leadership roles. At our December Board meeting we will have representative(s) from Congregational Engagement join us in a conversation about how the Board can put some of these ideas into practice.

The Chalice Lighter grant was completed in time for the December 1st deadline. A big shout out and thank you to Jayme Trott, Wendy Stasolla and especially Susan Irgang for all their work in putting this together. Should UUCWC receive this grant it will be very beneficial to the congregation in that it will help offset the expense of installing a lift as part of our capital project.

Several congregational leaders attended a UUA sponsored program on December 3 pertaining to sociocracy, which is a form of governance that focuses on seeking consent in discussions and in the decision making process. Discussions focused on the use of discernment circles and how to avoid a zero sum game in which the binary win/lose process leads to discord. There were also discussions that addressed how to bring people into the process of engaging in decision making leading to the consent process. There were members of other UU communities who spoke about how they use an iterative process that invites all voices into the decision making process. This process would seem to work well in small group decision making settings. It will take a lot of buy in and practice to apply this process effectively in a larger setting like a congregational meeting at UUCWC. It might be worth the effort and at the same time will take a committed group of people to guide the congregation through such processes.

The Board will hold a retreat in January. Currently, the best common date for the retreat is **January 7th**. Maria and Kim will work out an agenda to be shared closer to the meeting date.

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

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

Since the last Board report, **in worship** we

- Held a Joys and Sorrows Sunday through the lens of the Tuvan Throat Singing
- Hosted Pastor Tabatha Holley on Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Were led by lay leadership on the theme of Change
- Introduced the monthly theme of Wonder and
- Held our annual no-rehearsal Children's Pageant for the first time in three years!

Additionally, I am preparing for:

- Our (combined) Hanukkah and Solstice service this upcoming Sunday
- Our (first multi-platform) 8pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
- A pre-recorded Christmas Day service with colleagues from around the country that will be available to all UU congregations,
- Assisting Scott Cullen recruit for, coordinate and lead the pre-recorded New Year's Day annual Generations Service.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

On November 29th, we hosted **Welcome Table Wednesday** for the first time in three years. Even with unpleasant weather, over 45 adults and children came for dessert, community, crafting and decorating. The group was multigenerational and reflected our long term and new membership. I am forever grateful to the few who came back the following Friday who did a huge amount of finishing up and preparing: Holly Bussey, Jim Sanders, Greg Pontier and Jenny Cicollini.

I continue to offer my weekly **Lectio Divina** practice via zoom.

Pastoral Care remains a constant responsive and proactive part of my daily work.

Change the World

This week I meet with a small group of folks who have expressed interest in recreating the Stewardship Committee (Jane Root, Denny Rogers, Klaus Zechner and Ron Innacone). Congregational Engagement leadership and Susan Irgang will also be there to help us vision and have the historical knowledge needed.

I want to lift up that Regina Zilinski has successfully found her replacement in the Racial Justice Ministry and that Kelly Benson will be co-chairing with Chris Marietti.

The Right Relations Committee is doing excellent work of systematically reviewing covenanting work with committees and ministries, and continuing to reach out to those they've yet to work with. They are also considering bringing in a UU leader from outside of UUCWC to speak on interpersonal de-escalation training.

Robin and I have been asked to meet with the leadership of the JULIETs so they can consider a name change in order to be more welcoming to trans and non-binary people.

I met with Denny Rogers to invite him to serve as Board Treasurer for the 2023-24 church year. I met with Jamie Evanini and Barbara Jensen to discuss the current status of the Faith Action Ministry and its structure. To note: Jamie has concluded her time with this leadership team; Barbara remains as the person overseeing its work and purpose; while there are an infinite number of open leadership / co-coordinator seats available on FAM, two seats that will always function as a part of FAM will be the legislative ministries of NJ and PA (Mike Wilson and Leslie McGeorge, respectively).

Jim Sanders, Jamie Evanini and I met with the UUCSH leadership regarding the fee for service proposal given to them earlier in the year. It would seem that these conversations have come to a close at this time. Some of the UUCSH leadership understand themselves to be in a different financial and leveraging position than they are. I'm deeply appreciative to Jim, Jamie, Robin Pugh and Michael Waas for their time and energy that moved us through the 5 conversations we had with them.

As you know, early last week I got covid. I want to thank the staff team for showing up in such clear, quick and consistent ways so that I could rest and also take care of Otis who was also positive. Because of Otis's age, he will be unable to return to daycare for an additional week. We are all juggling during an inopportune time.

If I don't see you before or during the holidays, I am wishing everyone a joyful and meaningful time.

Respectively submitted,

Kim

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for December 2022

(Updated report)

Create Community

In late November/early December, we

- brought back Welcome Table Wednesdays, an opportunity for connection, spiritual growth and decorating fun. The event was attended by about 40 adults and 10 children.
- hosted the South Philly Big Band Concert, following the children's Nativity Pageant (attendance 170) and a bagel breakfast to entice people to stay. Turnout for the event was 104!
- began preparations for Christmas Eve, as well as Blue Christmas, Christmas Day and New Year's Day services.

Each of these events require additional communications/marketing, logistical coordination, and planning. We hope to continue to offer a variety of ways to connect and inform congregants. See the [Countdown to the Holidays](#) calendar on the website, in weekly announcements and on FB.

We continue to grow community exposure for UUCWC: flyers for the concert were placed on numerous local bulletin boards, in local papers, on the website and Facebook pages. Folks not seen before at UUCWC attended; these notices bring attention to our community even if the event is not attended.

Celebrate Life

Our current membership is 277 Church Members, 21 Friends, 31 Participants and 32 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 272, we are actively serving a system of 361 not counting children or visitors.

Since the last Board report, we honored Tony Panzetta at a multiplatform Celebration of Life, with attendance close to 200. Current average attendance for 2022 is 145; for the period of ingathering (9/11) through 12/13, the average is 165.

Change the (UUCWC) World

- Jayme Trott completed the narrative; I gathered past/current membership and attendance information; and Joe Schenk and Lynne Quinto provided past, present and future forecasts of financial information for the Chalice Lighter Grant, submitted on December 1. (Thanks to Wendy Stasolla for the final review.) One of the Central East Region Grant co-chairs noted, "I'm pleased that your

congregation has put together such a complete application”, which they will review in January. We hope to hear back in January/February. [The application can be viewed here.](#)

- Our first effort into sharing the load of the Stewardship Committee was the End of Year mailing. For the last several years, Stewardship Committee member David Schumann has designed the card, donating the cost of the printing. Each year, I create all the mailing labels, purchase envelopes and postage. This year, a group of volunteers took on the Committee task of assembling the mailing, stamping and delivering the 280 packets to the post office. This work, shared by 5 people over 2 hours, saved committee time while offering an opportunity for connection. This model of making church work more project oriented, involving more people in one-off efforts, eases the load on leaders and small teams.
- With the assistance of Roberto Santiago, we were able to find a new, local source for paper products and other janitorial supplies. Our previous vendor, located in central Pennsylvania, had raised minimum order amounts and shipping costs. The new vendor has lower prices and offers pick-up; Roberto, who passes their warehouse in Trenton daily, offered to pick up initial purchases as we test out this new source. We are happy to support a local business.
- I was able to resurrect the lobby screen for limited use, which fell into disuse during the network upgrades and equipment changes during the pandemic. While not fully operational (yet) due to some technical issues, we are again able to share announcements with Sunday in-person attendees. All the information is of course available in the weekly email announcements sent to all congregants.

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

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Dec 12, 2022

Re: Monthly DCL Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- The pageant was a success and remains a beloved tradition at UUCWC. I coordinated preparation for the pageant including the mural (erected by the Busch's) and the costumes (do you know we lend them to 1st U in Philadelphia? Hannah Capaldi (nee Gallo)'s church.) .
- I continue to connect with virtual and in person visitors via email. We have about 7 visitors online and 7 in person per week (some are returning visitors).

Create Community (Small Groups)

- Faith forward is back, and I am hosting it weekly. We feature 9 rotating committees and ministries. It is for both newcomers to learn about the church and members to hear about specific committees. I am finding those are very different audiences. I am tweaking the curriculum and coaching the presenters.
- The staff, including me, worked hard to bring back Welcome Table Wednesday on 11/30. The goals were fellowship and decorating the sanctuary for the holidays. Over 45 people attended. Attendees 1/2 completed decorating the church. They were too busy talking and enjoying each other. These community building events are crucial post pandemic.
- The Homefront holiday craft workshop was a success. I agreed to put it together as part of Congregational Life (not children's faith engagement). This workshop is a tradition that has gone on for more than 20 years and Homefront staff and UUCWC Homefront leaders did not want it to end. It was difficult to get all the volunteers needed but once obtained, the event was joyous. I was surprised to see that no UUCWC children attended. CFA warned me that they will not fund this event in the future (not within CFA's new mission) . I plan to work with CFA on this matter because It is an event for Homefront not UUCWC children.
- I've been coordinating food at coffee hour. From Jan-March, I am piloting a program of "Whatever is brought in on Sunday is what we offer." No sign ups. I notice that Fellowship hour is one of our parking lot items. Perhaps we may no longer need that item.
- We recently signed 6 new members and have 2 folks that will not sign the book now but have the commitment of members. I am welcoming and integrating these people into UUCWC.

Save The World

- I worked with Jamie Evanini and Congregational Engagement to plan and present a council meeting that was informative and nurturing. We emphasized the spirituality of service.

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

I attend the UUAMP, (the Association of Membership Professionals) weekly meetings when time permits. I'm taking Wellspring Sources this year. I am in my second year of a 2-year spiritual direction course. I will complete the training in March 2023. I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

Treasurer's Report

As of November 30, 2022

- Year to Date, Net Cash Flow shows a surplus of \$7k (down from \$50k at the end of August) due to the following:
 - **Year to Date Income is \$25k below budget**
 - **Pledge income recorded is \$30k below budget, year to date**
 - Gift income at \$41k in gifts includes the budgeted \$25k memorial gift)
 - Year to Date expenses are \$21k below budget with savings largely in Operations & Programming which will not be sustained
 - We have recorded a total of \$35k in gifts (includes \$5k in End of Year gifts and 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:**
 - \$498k Operating combined balances
 - \$698k Capital Campaign
 - \$262k Endowment
 - -\$9k Exchange (funds awaiting decision)

Year to Date Finances as of 11/30/2022

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	13,564	Staff	156,554
Pledge	170,074	Operations	36,101
Year End, Other Gifts	40,900	Program	11,629
Fund Raising	298	Denomination	6,322
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	3,140	Debt Service	10,610
			221,216
	227,976		6
Net Income (Loss)		6,760	

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 \$7k surplus year to date which is dwindling from the \$50k at the start of the year and \$21k at the end of October. 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. The dwindling surplus to date confirms this trajectory.