

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)
October 11, 2023
Zoom Meeting

President Wendy Stasolla called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini, Treasurer Denny Rodgers and Secretary Colleen McCourt; Trustees: Karen Kent, Michael Waas, Michelle Zechner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh and Ministerial Intern Lisa Schilansky. Absent were Trustees Maria Baratta and Gina Turner.

First Hour

Consent Agenda (no vote)

Brief discussion; President Wendy Stasolla reported that she co-signed the new construction loan negotiated between the bank and Treasurer Denny Rodgers (along with Jim Sanders and George Faulkner). Wendy also reported that the January fundraising concert proposed and organized with Nick Mellis is proceeding, and that Finance is helping to work through these projects until we have a Fundraising Chair.

Personnel Handbook Update

Scott Drew & Andi Ferrenz joined the meeting on behalf of the Personnel Committee to review revisions to the UUCWC Personnel handbook (2013 version) that have been in progress for 2+ years. Updates include small changes, deletions and edits to reflect the current business operations and covenantal philosophy of UUCWC and reflect UUA policies. Examples include refreshing the language to make it only relevant to employees and not volunteers or independent contractors, remove references to Right Relations, converting paid/sick/leave time to PTO based on employee hours, and removing requirements to obtain UUA health insurance where cheaper alternatives exist. There was some discussion of the definition of full-time vs. part-time hours at UUCWC. **ACTION:** Upon discussion, it was decided that a separate policy addendum should be drafted by Personnel and approved by the Board which defines full-time and part-time hours, which can be cross-referenced to the handbook accordingly. **There was a vote to affirm** acceptance of the handbook; it passed unanimously.

Rev. Kim thanked Scott and Andi for the intentionality and spirit of the handbook as a result of Personnel's work, and agreed to further discussion about FT/PT definitions. Scott thanked Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang for her input into the process. Scott and Andi left the meeting.

Capital Project Update

Susan and Rev. Kim reported that:

- A preconstruction meeting will take place on October 12 with Susan, the Capital Campaign team and a representative from the contractor to discuss logistical details before anything begins.
- Susan and Farzad Shadzik gave a tour to the bank's appraiser on October 11, which was a condition of the loan renegotiation. This will be followed by an environmental appraisal on October 12.
- On October 10, Susan and Rev. Kim met with members of the Capital Campaign team to talk about the next round of fundraising, with a teaser on October 15. Materials are being prepared and efforts will have targeted messaging for different groups.
- The contractor seems to be demonstrating a sense of momentum; we discovered that there may have been some previous confusion over the timing of payment, etc. which has since been resolved.

There was a recognition of the fact that we need to create boundaries around Susan's role during construction, as well as acknowledgement of the need to keep supporting and encouraging the Capital Campaign team in their fatigue given the long and arduous nature of this project. **ACTION:** Wendy will send a note to the team on behalf of the Board, expressing gratitude and offering our continued support.

2nd Hour

Boy Scout Project Task Force

- While Denny has taken an active role in being a supportive liaison to the Eagle Scout to this point, the Board agreed that we should nominate a Task Force to further support and advise on the project logistics, details, etc. This reduces burden on any one individual and reflects church policy on getting internal sponsorship for such projects. The Board generated a list of names from the congregation that would be good candidates. **ACTION:** Rev. Kim will send an email inviting these individuals to participate. The soonest the project could start would be Nov. 1, with an end date in the spring.
- Rev. Kim reported overall details of her recent discussion with a Lenape representative, who has indicated conceptual support for one of the proposed Eagle Scout project ideas to put a land acknowledgement sign on UUCWC property. This is one potential project idea; the Task Force can advise on others if needed.
- For larger context, Rev. Kim also shared additional information from her meeting with the Lenape representative and ways for UUCWC to partner (beyond the Scout project). Some important things to note include the idea that the Lenape will not advise on wording of land acknowledgements because that is our work to do, though any language used should acknowledge the present, not just the past tense. Our current language will evolve to be more overt. Further, they are receptive to the concept of reparations but in a way that's relational, not

transactional, and have provided good ideas for supporting specific initiatives and relationship-building.

- The Board expressed appreciation for the fact that the Eagle Scout project has served as a genesis for further relationship-building and justice work at UUCWC.

Board Goals / End Statements

Rev. Kim reported that Susan has progressed the initial notes from the Board retreat. Rev. Kim will be following up on next steps; likely a small group of Board members will finalize them so that we can try to approve them at the next Board meeting in November. After that, we will evaluate progress against them via quarterly check-ins.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- The next Council meeting will likely be on Sunday, Nov. 12 after service. It will incorporate a follow-up session from a workshop that Rev. Kim and Robin held recently for church ministries and committees to craft elevator speeches for Faith Forward. The workshop was designed to have people speak from a place of passion and engagement, focusing on active ways for people to get involved. It was well-received but needs more time so we are making space for it at the Council meeting. Denny noted that the elevator speeches can also be used to support the efforts of the Congregational Engagement team.
- The next Board meeting will be multi-platform.
- For the Nov. CrossCurrents article, Susan and Trustee Karen Kent will collaborate on an article about the recent survey results about the time of service. They thanked Michelle for getting it started.
- Liaisons: Karen has started engaging with the Capital Campaign team on how we can support them. Trustee Michelle Zechner reached out to Endowment and will be meeting with them in the spring.
- Denny will be meeting with Lynne Quinto tomorrow to put together a report for the end of the first quarter which can be shared with the whole congregation.
- Susan reported that Nick Mellis wants to come before the Board soon to talk about a June event.
- Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh served as process observer and shared that it was good to conduct Board business in a manner that's consistent with our values.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Jamie Evanini

Vice President and Scribe, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff and Treasurer Reports

October 2023 Board Report

Ministers Report

Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

Since the last Board meeting, the 2023-24 worship year has fully begun. The first Sunday of children's programming was a Joys & Sorrows service in the sanctuary, encouraging "Big Bites and Spoons for Everyone". The following week I introduced the idea of Third Spaces, and invited us to wonder how we don't just come upon those but create and cultivate those (congregational) spaces. With these – and the Sundays before – I have been wanting to bluntly remind and encourage our congregants that church does not just exist or exist meaningfully; we have to create church and its meaning in our lives.

In October we introduced the new theme of Heritage and our Acorn Earth Teacher, while reminding / teaching the congregation what they can expect from the worship team this year (monthly theme, spiritual practices in Sunday services, an Earth Teacher and Song). This past Sunday, we welcomed Jon Carl Lewis as a guest preacher. This upcoming Sunday our ministerial intern, Lisa Schilansky, will lead worship for the first time.

By the Numbers: We're averaging about 156 adults on a Sunday morning. Online and in person attendance fluctuates; there is no clear or consistent preference at this point for how our community "comes" on Sunday morning. This may be due to covid number rising.

The Team: The worship staff has begun once per month worship team meetings, to ensure that we are all clear on the short- and long-term goals of Sunday morning. Conversations range from what spiritual practices or earth teacher we will be introducing, to creative ways of engaging with the ritual stations; when tech challenges arise; how to communicate safety concerns; and why we are preaching or teaching on certain topics and when.

The Worship Associates are looking closely at how they can fully, and creatively, support our finance conversations (Stewardship, End of Year, Annual, Capital Project) in the weekly liturgy. They are also considering how to imbue purpose into the rote areas, like the opening and closing sequence of each service.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

We begin a new 4-part Pathways (path to membership) session next week. There will be 14 attendees in total, 10 potential new members and 4 current members. Robin and I are creating systems that create community and reengage members around specific commitment-oriented conversations (racial justice, stewardship, etc) for during and after the path to membership process.

I am leading a Faith Forward orientation and training for all committee and ministry members. We are hoping to shift Faith Forward from information and presentation, to an opportunity for conversation and connection.

Welcome Table Wednesday planning is well on its way, requiring something from most everyone on staff. I am thrilled to see so many new members and visitors already RSVPing and excited for the programming options that we'll be offering. As of now, WTW will be in person only. We hope to open it to remote participants later in the winter.

Lectio Divina continues on Thursdays, now at 12:30pm on zoom. You (yes you!) are invited to take 30 minutes out of your day to join me for a poem and time of reflection. Generally, pastoral care remains a significant part of my work and life with the congregation.

Change the World

I am proud of the work that the Personnel Committee has doggedly put into recreating and updating the Personnel Handbook. Assuming this new handbook is affirmed by the Board, this month I will turn our attention to changing the system and function of this committee.

Stewardship continues to do good work together – both with short term / immediate goals (end of year gift planning) and long term visioning. I am deeply impressed with their ability to hold onto their goals, even as they get some resistance from other teams they will be working alongside. As of 10/10, all fundraising teams will have one shared theme: The Gifts of Our Faith. Each particular ministry will have a specificity following that theme. For example:

The End of Year ask will be The Gifts of Our Faith: Gratitude. The Auction will be The Gifts of Our Faith: Community. The Capital Project will be The Gifts of Our Faith: Transformation. This is all a direct response to the Financial Sustainability Task Force's recommendations earlier last winter.

Later this month I will join with other NJ Faith Leaders to speak with the NJ Lt. Governor on reparations and racial justice accountability.

I have connected with Bluejay, a leader of the Lenape Nation, and can report specifically about the land acknowledgement and Scout Project during our meeting. In addition, I am excited about the possibilities for ongoing relationship:

Bluejay shared that while ongoing financial support (reparation in that form) would be appreciated, they would not accept it as a transactional gift. Instead, we discussed options for partnership: On January 14th, Bluejay will speak at our Sunday service; in April or May at our Welcome Table Wednesday, she and others would like to lead a discussion and tour of our property to point out native and medicinal plantings; every four years there is a Rising Nation River Journey where nations from around the area travel from the start of the river all the way to Cape May. UUCWC could be a sponsor and, at our part of the Delaware, meet the travelers with packed lunches that we'd make; the nation still does a lot of tent camping and perhaps our

property could be a place they camp from time to time -- and potentially use the facilities (bathrooms when needed). I'm touching base with her again at the start of January.

We continue to adjust to the new (limited) staff schedules. I am trying to minimize the number of meetings I am in as we need to have more and more individualized conversations.

Submitted with care and appreciation,
Rev. Kim

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for October 2023

Create Community

Based on the vision of Kim and Robin, I designed and launched “This Month at UUCWC”, a new communication vehicle and associated webpage compendium of all opportunities at UUCWC for exploration within (Celebrate Life), among (Create Community) and beyond (Change the World). I solicited groups for input and, with the help of the existing church calendar, created the basic structures to track and maintain this comprehensive list for continued monthly emails with links to a main and segmented section webpages. Feedback from the congregation has been very positive, with users finding it easy to navigate and wide-ranging in scope.

I am working with Robin on logistical aspects of Welcome Table Wednesday potluck and programming on 10/18; to date we have 31 “yes” responses from the 353 invitations sent and there will be many more as the date draws near.

I will be working with the Stewardship committee to issue quarterly statements as part of this year’s exploration of how the administrator can better support Stewardship’s use of the database. Prior committees needed to, roughly every two years, designate and train a system user to input pledges, issue statements and generate reports; this takes time away from visioning and implementing a stewardship pledge and end of year drive.

Groups within the church have been busy planning events and initiatives This work involves comparing vision to policy, offering historical information, reviewing logistics, providing a planning document to help guide the work of the leaders, and communications support. I have assisted with details for the events below:

- January 2023 concert fundraiser by Nick Mellis
- Relaunch of the airport/train transportation fundraising service by Caryl Tipton
- October Breathwork retreat sponsored by Pastoral Care and organized by Barbara Jensen

Celebrate Life

Our current membership is 276 Church Members, 25 Friends (those who pledge but haven’t signed the book), 23 Participants (active and/or on the path to membership) and 26 Attendees (attend worship only). There are also currently 34 registered children/youth.

Change the (UUCWC) World

This week, I will be attending meetings about the upcoming construction project. This includes a mobilization meeting, a preconstruction meeting and possibly a 3rd phase fundraising meeting. More news will be shared as available.

Despite upcoming construction, I am in conversations with two potential renters whose events can be contained within spaces that will not be impacted.

Currently Justin Roth, Building Committee chair, and I are investigating a repair to the leaking skylight, which in fact may not be the source of the leak. We are awaiting more information from the vendor.

Other Staff Notes:

In addition to his normal sexton/Sunday Steward duties, Roberto Santiago did a tremendous amount of additional physical work to move furniture between floors for the preparation of classroom spaces for children's faith engagement classes, which will now be held primarily upstairs (a new Youth Group space was created in Room 103 on the lower level). Rachel Hansen was also instrumental in the conversion and preparation of the classroom spaces. On another note, Lynne Quinto and I continue to connect weekly to discuss accounts payable and receivable questions and best practices where our areas of responsibility overlap. Since September and in response to my reduced hours, Lynne has taken over payroll submission responsibilities.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Oct 9, 2022

Re: Monthly DCL Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- Worship: meet as a staff team to plan out worship, I am offering a host training on 10/1 which will cover safety and welcoming tips I learned at GA in June - touch base with our Sunday hosts and remind them that they are “working” when their friends arrive.

Create Community (Small Groups).

- UU Wellspring sources launched. Our two facilitators are new to facilitating Wellspring. I had several orientation/ training meetings with them. Kathy Frey will be available for support during the year. I co-led the 4-hour wellspring orientation for participants. The effort of providing a purposeful launch of Wellspring sets the tone for the year. Wellspring will deepen the UU commitment of participants.
- Welcome Table Wednesday is returning next week. Kim, Lisa and I planned the programming. Susan and I planned the logistics. We’ve heard from a variety of members of all ages and time here that they are feeling disconnected from UUCWC. WTW is one way to reconnect that we are offering.
- Kim will begin our Pathways to membership class next week. I’ve publicized, personally invited and followed up with potential participants. We have 13 people registered. 8 are new and 5 are current members. This is an excellent class that provides a solid foundation for new members.
- I’ve restarted: Tending the Flame, a monthly supportive small group for UUCWC Parents. This month I will personally invite parents new to UUCWC to attend.
- Kim and I are dramatically changing up Faith Forward to structure it as a conversation that connects and informs. Presenters are asked to prepare a 5-minute talking point that covers why they volunteer for this particular ministry and what the ministry does. We are having a training for the presenters tonight.
- I continue to offer monthly support to the 16 chalice circle facilitators. This monthly meeting offers tips to facilitators and gives me a sense of how connection is showing up in these circles.

Change the World

- I attended the fall Board meeting where we considered the future of church and what the board's annual goals might be.

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 see a Spiritual Director monthly.

October 2023 Board Report
Ministerial Intern's Report
Lisa Schilansky

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

Since last month's report, I have had the opportunity to attend two services, one virtually and one in person. Due to my spouse contracting COVID on September 26th, my preaching Sunday was delayed from October 1st to October 15th. In preparation for my first Sunday preaching at UUCWC, I have been actively collaborating with Julie and Erin and receiving support from Rev. Kim. Preparing for October 15th has offered educational opportunities to learn about the unique ways UUCWC creates sermon "blurbs," and the unique aspects of the weekly liturgy, lessons that I will bring forward in my future monthly preaching opportunities.

Due to my spouse's diagnosis, and to keep the UUCWC community as safe and healthy as possible, I transitioned to a fully virtual role from the afternoon of September 26th through October 4th. Negotiating COVID in the household and caring for my spouse did result in less being accomplished this month than anticipated. Navigating COVID and ministry, while unfortunate, is also representative of church life in 2023 and a good learning opportunity about flexibility and the ability to pivot quickly.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

This past month I have continued to introduce myself and build relationships with congregants. This has involved two scheduled meetings and a myriad of spontaneous and more casual connections both in coffee hour and through email contact. On Sunday October 1st I attended services virtually and had the opportunity to meet with other virtual attendees after the service.

I have also engaged with lots of preparation for my new spiritual care initiative. "Breathe: The World Needs You Whole" is a monthly gathering to provide spiritual grounding and emotional resilience for those who are engaging in any form of justice work. Invitations have been sent out to all of the leaders of the CFA ministries and announcements are being shared with the congregation as well. This endeavor is open to all members, friends, and participants of UUCWC. The first gatherings will be October 12th and there will be monthly in-person (Thursday mornings) and virtual (Thursday evenings) meetings to reach the widest number of people.

Prior to launching *Breathe*, I met with Robin to discuss the needs of the congregation and best practices for church initiatives. Together we decided that my second initiative, a book club for this year's UUA Common Read, *On Repentance and Repair*, would occur in February for optimal church year timing.

Change the World

On September 26th I had the opportunity to observe the first convening of the NJ Reparations Council hosted by the NJ Institute for Social Justice. This meeting involved an hour-long presentation of the history of NJ as a key player in the existence of slavery in the United States. This was followed by a forum with public comments. In the history presentation, it was shared that NJ was the last northern state to criminalize slavery and that it was coined “the slave state of the North” due to the large number of enslaved individuals in the state prior to emancipation.. It is my hope to continue attending these meetings and to bring what I learn back to the congregation in collaboration with the Racial Justice Ministry and to help support any reparations-related conversations that may be occurring at UUCWC.

FJM’s September meeting was canceled. As such, I will be joining them for the first time on October 10th. It is my intention and hope to continue to attend meetings of each of the CFA ministries and to attend more regularly- as my half time schedule permits- with the Racial Justice Ministry.

October 7, 2023

Board Report
Erin Busch, Music Ministry

I'm very grateful to UUCWC and the board for officially underwriting the guest musician series. I remain strongly convinced that introducing new voices to our space is a valuable and rejuvenating offering for our congregants. Megnot Toggia joined us (to great applause!) in September, and we have pianist Dan Espie joining us in November and saxophonist Chris Oatts joining us in December, as well as our annual South Philly Big Band holiday concert. I anticipate inviting 3 guest musicians to our services in the spring, as well as one or two local youth musicians.

Choir has been going well! We ended last season on a bang with our guest musicians at the flower communion, and enthusiasm has continued to be high at the start of the fall season. I offered choir members an anonymous end-of-year survey back in June, and received 14 responses (out of approximately 22 regular members). 21.4% of the respondents were new members, and 64% of the respondents reported that they were using the practice audio files every week. In general, choir members seem to be happy and engaged with the work we are doing each week! You can see all of the responses [here](#). Based on these responses, I have continued to make audio practice files for every piece that we perform so that choir members who can't read music or want extra practice can learn the music at home.

We have recently commissioned an alum of Wildflower Composers, my Philly-based nonprofit that amplifies and supports female, transgender, nonbinary, and genderqueer composers. The winner of the commission is Madeline Cheng, who is currently writing a piece that uses text by our very own Rev. Kim! The piece will be premiered by our choir sometime this spring.

Recently, Kim and I have embarked on a new creative journey. Inspired by our monthly earth teacher, we are writing monthly centering songs for the congregation to perform. I am composing them to be about the duration and difficulty of a hymn, and am using Kim's text for the songs. By the end of the year, we'll have a collection of short hymns that are bespoke to our church! Down the road, we could potentially consider binding them and selling them to church members as a church fundraiser.

Treasurer's Report for September

September \$\$\$

Lynne is on vacation so we have no new numbers to report.

Merrill Lynch continues to generate around 5% income.

Cash Analysis

Cap Campaign - We have in hand \$780,471.

Northfield Bank has reduced the amount they will loan us from \$400,000 to \$325,000. Higher interest rate.

Phase 3 of the campaign will compensate for some of the \$75,000 loan reduction.

\$6,500 of additional expense will be covered mostly by \$6,366 escrow we have with Northfield. George Faulkner to verify.

Comments

\$335,765 Non-restricted/Reserve Cash Available will cover 7.19 months budgeted expenses.

Our goal is to maintain that at 3 months or better.

If we even maintain it at 4 months we have almost \$150,000 available for discretionary spending. At 5 months we would have \$102,000.

As liaison to Finance

We are going to review the Facility Reserve Fund to determine if we are making adequate yearly contributions.

Future replacement or repair costs will be reworked to reflect the impact of accelerated inflation costs for materials.

Estimated Remaining life of listed items will be adjusted as necessary.

Note that this list must be updated when new elevator is added. Operating budget should include anticipated maintenance costs.