

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)
March 13, 2024
Zoom Meeting

President Wendy Stasolla called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini, Treasurer Denny Rodgers and Secretary Colleen McCourt; Trustees: Karen Kent, Michael Waas, Maria Baratta; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang, Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh and Ministerial Intern Lisa Schilansky. Absent were Trustee Gina Turner, Michelle Zechner and Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski. Dave Thomas attended as a guest observer.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

- There was discussion about getting more involvement in virtual coffee hour; this is something the Worship Team is already reviewing.
- Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang provided an update on the Stewardship campaign; key points included:
 - We reached out to 277 households (members, friends, participants, attendees); 24% of the 277 households have responded.
 - 29% of members have pledged already.
 - We have \$214,500 in pledge commitments so far, or about half of the internal Stewardship Team's goal. That's a strong result so far historically higher pledges tend to come in early, so the remaining pledge levels may not be as consistent.
 - So far we are trending at an 8% increase in pledges but that can flatten out over the campaign.
 - We are running slightly behind last year with the number of pledges but total dollars is fairly on track.
 - The Stewardship team is meeting on Monday and will start making phone calls to reach out to members who have not yet pledged.

Fundraising Concert Updates/Concerns

President Wendy Stasolla and Treasurer Denny Rodgers met with 2 congregants who recently organized a concert fundraiser at church to debrief about the event and its impact on the sanctuary. The space was not fully cleaned and set up as expected prior to service on Sunday. The concert was larger than similar

events we've had in the past, which presented a challenge since there were not enough volunteers to take on the work of cleaning and restoring the sanctuary to normal afterward. Since there are similar concerts planned for the future, the Board wanted to make sure the volunteers are equipped to manage all necessary factors for such events in the future. Some specific ideas included:

- The organizers should recruit more volunteers for help; Trustee Karen Kent indicated that she might be interested in volunteering at an upcoming event.
- Concerts might be better timed on Friday nights instead of Saturday, giving more time for clean-up before Sunday service.
- The organizers can expense cleaning services out of the concert's profits.
- Susan will provide the organizers with the clean-up checklist that is used for rental events, which clearly outlines all steps involved.
- The organizers reinforced their commitment to the church's welfare as a priority and indicated that they would be flexible when assessing event feasibility going forward.

Miles for Malcolm

Wendy introduced the discussion around the Miles for Malcolm fundraiser and how it should be communicated given its unique context in our church community. Congregants often want to know how they can participate, but it places staff in a sensitive position balancing personal and professional considerations. The Board agreed that it is appropriate and important to announce details of the event to the congregation in the spirit of open acknowledgment of our shared history and collective care. There is precedent in the written communication that Robin shares with new members. **There was a vote to approve** an in-service announcement to the congregation; it passed unanimously. **ACTION:** Robin will provide an announcement during an upcoming service providing information about the event.

The Board noted that last year FEFT approved in-kind donation of space in the Crossings Room in support of the event; due to construction we can offer that again in the sanctuary this year, working with FEFT to coordinate.

2nd Hour

Article II

There was discussion about the status of the proposed Article II changes and what will happen at General Assembly, including understanding whether delegates are charged to vote with their conscience vs. voting as a reflection of what the congregation wants. We need to put some energy around discussions within the congregation formally and informally. Key points included:

- There's a UUA curriculum about this that we may consider doing at UUCWC.
- Rev. Kim is doing a series of Lectio Divina sessions about this.
- Trustee Maria Baratta will be a delegate at GA this year and is willing to speak with anyone in the congregation if they have questions/concerns.

- Susan has a post on the UUCWC website all about Article II that has lots of information provided by the UUA on the topic. As GA gets closer, she will make that page more prominent to that site on our homepage.

Cottage Meetings

The Board revisited an idea from the retreat to have small group discussions to discuss how congregants see themselves as part of UUCWC and visioning for the future. We discussed the potential logistics and timing of the meetings, including the need to balance them against other church initiatives. We need to communicate them to the congregation. **ACTIONS:** Wendy will create a Sign-up Genius for Board members and other volunteers can sign up to lead the meetings. Susan will resend the post-retreat action summary document from Rev. Kim so we can revisit our plans around this. Board and staff volunteers will craft some language introducing these meetings to the congregation. The details will be shared in upcoming emails, Board Minute and CrossCurrents.

We also touched on another item from the Board retreat to hold a separate series of stakeholder meetings to explore plans and dreams for building use after construction. We envision initiating those sessions in the next 5-6 months.

Congregational Pulse / Check In

We discussed what we are hearing about how people in the congregation are doing during construction:

- During Super Sunday, the kids made a special covenant.
- There is some anxiety about groups sharing cramped quarters and comparison to how things used to be done vs. how they will work now.
- Some people report a misconception that not much progress is happening week to week.
- There is confusion about why we are not using the downstairs even though construction hasn't started down there yet (it's an intentional decision regarding accessibility for all).
- There is also excitement, positivity, curiosity and more engagement since people are interacting more upstairs.
- Newer members and repeat visitors seem unfazed and comfortable with coffee hour upstairs.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- **CrossCurrents** - Wendy will check the submission date and see if we can talk about cottage meetings based on the timing.
- **Board Minute:** Secretary Colleen McCourt will talk about construction and cottage meetings in April.
- **Upcoming Board Meetings:** April 10 multiplatform budget meeting; tentative april 24 for second board meeting
- **Awards** - Susan will update the web page and create a form for service award nominations. The Board needs to identify a small awards team of 3 people to review them (Wendy, Karen and Maria tentatively if no one else volunteers). Susan suggested launching the first week of April with a due date of 4/21. That gives the review team time to go through the nominees and decide

on finalists by mid-May, in order to get all the certificates, slides, etc. done in time for the Annual Meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Jamie Evanini

Vice President and Scribe, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff and Treasurer Reports

Minister Board Report

March 2024

Create Community

February has come to a close and we're somehow already deep into March's theme of Transformation, a shell earth teacher, and new Centering Hymn: I am Found.

Attendance has rebounded and appears to be strong again for this Stewardship season. Over the last 4 weeks, we've gathered with an average of 172* Sunday morning participants (on average 95 people in the sanctuary and 66 online).

*A quick word on attendance and health: Healthy attendance, pre-covid, was considered to be 50% of one's membership. Given that we are "worshiping" more than 61% at this stage in American religious landscape is something to note, nurture, and be glad for.

It appears we've gotten used to the Sanctuary level coffee hour and I wonder now what it will feel like to return to a different floor for socializing once construction concludes.

This Thursday we begin our next season of Pathways, our 4-part path to membership. There are 9 potential new members from this group and 1 member who is seeking to review Unitarian Universalist history and story. Like in previous classes this year and last, we have a number of Unitarian Universalists joining us from other congregations, quickening their desire for connection and leadership.

After offering two Article II Lectio Divina explorations, Robin and I have added an additional three offerings: one evening (facilitated by Robin, no more than 8 participants), one daytime (facilitated by me, no more than 8 participants), and a Sunday afternoon in late March open to as many folks as possible (facilitated by Robin and me in person, by Lisa on zoom).

Though we canceled February's Welcome Table Wednesday, we are looking forward to the March offering online and in person.

The recent (first) fundraising concert proved to be a challenge for its leadership and the following day's worship team. Wendy, Susan and Denny are moving the conversation forward with Nick and Mark P to discuss next steps, expectations and fair accommodations.

Celebrate Life

Pastoral Care is a constant area of focus. Generally speaking, this year I notice each generation's specific needs, in contrast to other years in which the whole population is navigating stress, anxiety, losses, etc.

The Pastoral Care Ministry will be meeting this spring to regroup and bring on new members. My hope is that with this effort more informal and less crisis-related care will be more intentional and further reaching.

I want to lift up the excellent testimonials that have been offered by members in the last two services: Regina Zilinski, Jo Weidman and Nicole Robinson each offered wise, heartfelt reflections on why UUCWC matters. For the next two Sundays I have two remote folks lined up: Joseph Kiefer (local but remote young adult) and Morgan Robison (Ohio resident). On the last Sunday of March (Easter) the three Tavlaris children will be offering the final Stewardship testimonial!

I believe folks are feeling a sense of clarity and pride because of these reflections and those given by Lisa and Erin on Stewardship Sunday.

For the first time in quite a while, I've been asked to officiate non-member funerals and child dedications. I will be interested to see if this becomes a trend and how or if it matches our (once again and thank goodness) increasing visitor pool.

I continue to offer Lectio Divina, weekly, unless with my colleague group once per month. Thanks to Lisa for picking that session up for me and the group.

Change the World

Through my involvement in the NJ Faith Allies group, two weeks ago I offered a testimonial on the Spiritual and Moral Imperative for Reparations before local legislators and aids.

I held and led the Council for Faith in Action's quarterly meeting, gathering each of our justice ministries together for learning and collaboration.

Construction continues and by and large has had a low impact on the weekly usage of the building by staff and small groups. As they move into the building later this month or next, I am asking the staff to consider gathering together off site at local libraries or the like. Remote collegiality is a challenge that I do not want us to make a habit of.

Please note that I am on a partial vacation this week other than the Board meeting and Thursday evening's Pathways. I was not able to take my time in February due to a canceled Neutral Pulpit. I will be missing the Council Meeting and am grateful to Robin and Jamie's leadership so I can be out.

I am overdue in writing and offering the staff evaluations but hope to conclude these by the end of the month. I continue to work with Personnel on staffing and budgets. I will be working with Pastoral Care Ministry, Worship Associates and others on budgets in the coming weeks as well.

With thanks for each of you and your leadership and kindness,
Kim

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for March 2024

Create Community

It continues to be a challenge to meet the support needs for a number of committees and ministries:

- Auction: I continue to discuss facilities needs with this group, who are now planning the kickoff party in May.
- Stewardship:
 - The pledge drive launched successfully with a “stuffing party” on 2.23
 - My new responsibility this year is entering all pledges and reporting on metrics for the Stewardship drive. As of 3/7, we received 39 pledges (14% of solicited households) and \$141,100 (33% of current budgeted pledge total). Compared to last year at this time, we had collected \$98,000 from 30 households.
 - I also continue to assist with publicity and created the PowerPoint (turned into a video by MJ Hansen) “What Pledges Make Possible” shown this past Sunday. I am hoping to use the wonderful testimonials from Sunday services in a video that can reside on the website as well.
- Congregational Engagement: I worked with Pam Shadzik to create a somewhat complex SignUp Genius for interviewers, scribes and interviewees, with associated Zoom meetings/classroom assignments for Congregational Engagement interviews. Pam and I are working out the fine points, but the newly created system seems to meet their needs.
- Racial Justice Ministry and RaiseRight have requested updates and/or new pages on our website that better and more permanently hold information on what these teams offer. I hope to have these created and live by end of the week.

Church Council will be held online on 3/12; Welcome Table Wednesday, postponed from February due to low sign up, will be held 3/20 online and in-person.

Celebrate Life

We currently have 280 church members, 30 Friends, 13 Participants and 28 Attendees. There are also currently 34 registered children/youth. These numbers may shift after the

pledge drive, as we hope to see Participants and/or Attendees move to the Friend category with a pledge for 2024/2025.

Change the (UUCWC) World

Construction continues to amaze us, while also presenting new and often weekly challenges:

- Denny Rodgers (as Grounds chair) and Justin Roth (as Building Chair) worked to finance and install a transitional walkway from the driveway to the new sidewalks for those with mobility issues.
- Justin and I also installed and tested a new video doorbell for the Sanctuary entrance, so those needing this handicapped access can ring the doorbell if the door is locked when people are in the building.
- I worked with Farzad Shadzik and Tyler Shablin of Mizu to address an issue that arose when the electrical wiring to the parking lot lights were damaged; Mizu has repaired the wires and installed additional front spotlights to aid lighting along the driveway and permeable parking lot.

We are still seeking competing bids for an estimate we received to replace the skylights, believed to be the cause of continued leaks in the Sanctuary. The current estimate is in the \$12,000 range; we are experiencing challenges finding other commercial roofing contractors who would install skylights.

An ongoing challenge is to meet the space needs of our many active groups and ministries, particularly on Sundays. I have created a SignUp Genius to manage the Sanctuary table requests and am assigning classrooms around the needs of several groups (choir, Congregational Engagement, Wellspring, and other groups).

Rachel Hansen, Lynne Quinto and Roberto Santiago continue to support administrative and facilities work behind the scenes. Roberto in particular has been invaluable and has gone above and beyond in last minute cleanings following events, moving furniture level to level, and other tasks. (We unfortunately were unable to “save” the wheelchair lift, which experienced a failure that is not worth repairing at this stage, as it will be removed soon as part of construction. This means Roberto has to use the steps to move furniture from level to level and carry everything for coffee hour.)

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski
From: Robin Pugh
Date: March 12, 2022
Re: Monthly DCL Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I'm thankful for the 28 hosts who have pivoted to welcoming people with a new set up. We continue to have visitors every Sunday. I follow up with them during the week.

Create Community (Small Groups).

- Kim will offer the next Pathways to membership class beginning 3/14. There are 10 people attending, 9 are frequent visitors. I personally contacted all frequent visitors.
- Tending the Flame, a monthly supportive small group for UUCWC Parents continues monthly. It is a small group, and the parents really appreciate it.
- 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. I also facilitate 2 chalice circles monthly.
- Once members have joined UUCWC, they need more information about repairing covenant, racial justice and governance. Kim and I are planning a new member lunch for the members that have joined in the past year. Right relations and Racial justice ministry will participate. Our goal is to reconnect everyone, take the pulse of the new members and give them a bit more information about UUCWC.
- Jamie Evanini and I planned and will host the council meeting tonight. The focus is on budget, stewardship, capital campaign, and endowment grants.

Change the World

- I plan, advertise, and administer Adult Faith Engagement Programs. This Semester so far, UUCWC will offer 2 book discussions: the UUA Common Read On Repentance and Repair and Black AF History: The Unwhitewashed Story of America, 5 sessions of Lectio Divina using Article II as the text, Pathways, and 4 sessions on rest taught by Kim (the person who does not rest! ☺)

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. I will attend for General Assembly.

March 2024 Board Report
Ministerial Intern's Report
Lisa Schilansky

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

This past month I have had the honor to provide a variety of liturgical pieces for worship every week. As part of the multigen 30 Days of Love service on February 11th I offered a homily on community safety, exploring the ways that mutual aid can lead to decarceration and decriminalization of society. This service also brought an opportunity to foster an interactive activity with the congregation where a few brave volunteers demonstrated mutual aid in action.

On February 18th I had my first opportunity to write and deliver a story for all ages. While I have offered them in the past, they have been written by DFE Julie. I offered an accessible tactile exploration of our February Earth Teacher, helping the congregation connect to nature and their bodies.

For Stewardship Sunday, Rev. Kim requested that I offer a testimonial on my internship experience and on the impact UUCWC will have on my future ministry. It was a delight to get to offer, essentially, a “love letter” to the congregation, speaking to the ways that I have felt nurtured by you all and the ways that fiscal generosity has enabled me to lead even more boldly and less anxiously. Following the service, Rev. Kim and I co-led, along with UCC minister Rev. Alexis Fuller-Wright of Salem Church in Doylestown, a vigil in honor of Nex Benedict and all unnamed trans and non-binary youth whose lives have ended too soon. This vigil could truly fall in any of the three categories and was a deeply pastoral and prophetic endeavor, including opportunities for one-on-one conversation with congregants after the vigil.

On March 3rd I wrote and offered the prayer, inviting the congregation to slow down and care for themselves amidst the stress and hecticness of life and the 24/7 news cycle. Finally, this past Sunday I had the opportunity to return to my home congregation. I was invited by the senior minister at First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia to join with her and Rev. Sana Saeed, First Unitarian's Affiliated Community Minister, to speak on the moral imperative of responding to the violence in Gaza. This was a vital part of my ministerial formation and I offered a short homily on living in the tension of Jewish/UU dual-faithness while genocide is being committed in the name of worldwide Jews. I also offered a clear call to action and helped facilitate congregants contacting with their members of Congress after the service. The homily was received very well and it was meaningful to return home to my congregation of 13.5 years to demonstrate what I have learned thus far in the internship.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

Breathe, my monthly drop-in grounding initiative, continued in February with a morning-only offering due to a scheduling conflict with the book club. While I continue to have a lot of folks asking about joining and wishing they could be there, attendance continues to be low. As such, we are taking an intentional hiatus in March and will resume in April with evenings-only. It was a hard decision, recognizing that those who attend in the morning might

not be adequately served by this option, but the numbers and limits of my time as a half-time intern dictate that this switch is necessary. There is a *Breathe* mailing list and I have communicated this change with all of them personally, in addition to church-wide communications.

This past month I had the incredible opportunity to offer a four-week, covenanted group discussion on the UUA Common Read, *On Repentance and Repair*. This group was partially engaged in scholarly study on Maimonides' Five Stages of Repair and Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg's deft application to the modern day. Equally important, however, was the group's multiple opportunities for personal reflection and sharing on the ways that they have missed the mark in their own lives and the challenges of navigating true repentance. I have encouraged this group to stay connected with each other and do plan to check in in two months or so to foster further discussion. There were six attendees and only one session was missed by any of them, demonstrating a commitment to the group and the material.

I have continued to engage in cold call pastoral care encounters and have some meetings scheduled for later this month. These calls and meetings are happening in conjunction with ongoing relationships that I am fostering with congregants and the unexpected pastoral care moments that happen via email or before or after the Sunday service.

Each month I have the opportunity to lead Lectio Devina in Rev. Kim's place. This is a close knit group who has welcomed me very generously and engages strongly in the weeks that I lead. As Rev. Kim has noted in her reports, this time often leads to impromptu pastoral care and the deep spiritual practice leads to a strong connection, while also generously welcoming those who do not attend every week.

Finally, on March 3rd I was the staff presence in virtual coffee hour to help engage the virtual attendees. I am excited to return on March 24th and recognize the ways that further work is needed to help virtual attendees want to stay for coffee hour and to stay connected with each other. This work is being done to address growing isolation among virtual attendees and a concern about a disconnect between in-person and virtual attendance.

Change the World

I am continuing to participate in the meetings of NJ Faith Action (NJFA), including attending their statewide hearings on Reparations in NJ. This month I attended, with Rev. Kim and congregant Regina Zelinsky, an interfaith prayer breakfast, an opportunity for faith leaders to engage with New Jersey state legislators. This was a wonderful learning opportunity and provided me with lots of information to bring back to the congregation.

Within the UUCWC community, I was able to attend the quarterly Council for Faith in Action meeting. This was a great opportunity to interact with the different justice leaders at UUCWC and furthered my knowledge of the justice ministries here. I was also able to engage with the leader of Community Action Ministry following the meeting to offer suggestions and support around furthering LGBTQ justice ministries at UUCWC.

On March 2nd I was very excited to lead a group of 11 UUCWC community members to the New Jersey Poor People's Campaign rally. In addition to the 11 who attended, five others had voiced an interest and participated in the pre-discussions. We were seated near four other UUs, the minister and two congregants from the Unitarian Society in East Brunswick, and with the director of UU Faith Action New Jersey. I brought the Poor People's Campaign to the attention

of the congregation and coordinated and facilitated RSVPs and connections to help folks organize carpools and attend. I am proud to say that UUCWC had one of the largest groups of any organizations present. I am continuing to educate the congregation about the Poor People's Campaign and their forty weeks of action leading up to Election Day, in addition to encouraging the rally attendees to take charge on this initiative here at UUCWC.

Finally, I am in communication with numerous congregants to help connect them with UU the Vote and to help them feel the support of UUCWC even as I am carefully not taking on a sole leadership role with this endeavor.

Additional Notes

In service of my ministerial formation, I met this past month with a dual-vocational minister/therapist to discuss the unique overlaps and considerations of the two professions. This is one of my learning objectives to intentionally discern the ways my therapist profession helps and hinders my ministry. I have connected with multiple other ministers and plan to have similar meetings. In addition, I have been attending monthly collegial groups with the Philadelphia-area UU Ministerial Association chapter and working monthly with both a spiritual director and a UU ministerial mentor. I also continue to read the books from the Ministerial Formation Committee reading list (a list of books that must be read prior to appearing before the committee for preliminary fellowship approval) and do my best to align the book choices with the life of the congregation and my learning, for example focusing on stewardship books this month.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,
Lisa

Treasurer's Report to Board for February 2024

February Actual vs budgeted

Total gross revenue for the month was \$12,000 under budgeted amount due to shortfall in pledges. Controller Lynne Quinto says this is not unusual for February. We are where we should be at 66% of budget for the year.

Expenses were within -\$1,057 of budgeted amount.

Investment income totaled \$1,935 **and exceeded budgeted amount by \$623.**

July - February YTD Actual vs February YTD Budget

Gross revenue reflects the same -\$12,000 shortfall in pledges.

Expenditures were -\$19,457 short of budget (\$14,628 after adjustment for New Addition debt service). Should be more in line with the budget after quarterly adjustment in March.

Cash Analysis & Financial Statement

\$318,563 Non-restricted/Reserve Cash Available will cover 6.73 months budgeted expenses, far exceeding our goal of 3 months or better. Project near 6.00 by end of year.

Endowment fund is at \$320,998.

FYI

Things are even better than the Fiscal Year **Expenditures** line reflects because \$14,488 new construction debt service budgeted for the fiscal year will not be incurred until '24-'25.

On the **Revenue** side, Richard Knight's NJ tax refund will be deposited for Lisa's '24-'25 stipend. Amount not yet known.

Snow removal expenses were high due to 3 events, but there is a \$2,900 reserve for that.

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

Feb 24 YTD vs FY24 Budget

July 2023 - February 2024

| | TOTAL | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | ACTUAL | BUDGET | OVER BUDGET | % OF BUDGET |
| Revenue | | | | |
| A1. Plate Collections | 23,822.67 | 31,248.00 | -7,425.33 | 76.24 % |
| A2. Operating Pledges | 284,801.75 | 430,840.00 | -146,038.25 | 66.10 % |
| A3. Other Misc Gifts/Contribs | 51,629.75 | 50,000.00 | 1,629.75 | 103.26 % |
| B. Fund-Raising | 928.92 | 32,550.00 | -31,621.08 | 2.85 % |
| E. Other Income | 19,569.61 | 20,800.00 | -1,230.39 | 94.08 % |
| Total Revenue | \$380,752.70 | \$565,438.00 | \$ -184,685.30 | 67.34 % |
| GROSS PROFIT | \$380,752.70 | \$565,438.00 | \$ -184,685.30 | 67.34 % |
| Expenditures | | | | |
| A. STAFF | 229,942.83 | 361,160.00 | -131,217.17 | 63.67 % |
| B. OPERATIONS | 58,556.35 | 95,164.04 | -36,607.69 | 61.53 % |
| C. PROGRAM | 27,442.32 | 46,387.00 | -18,944.68 | 59.16 % |
| D. DENOMIN | 11,379.50 | 22,759.00 | -11,379.50 | 50.00 % |
| E. DEBT SERVICE | 16,976.64 | 39,952.96 | -22,976.32 | 42.49 % |
| Total Expenditures | \$344,297.64 | \$565,423.00 | \$ -221,125.36 | 60.89 % |
| NET OPERATING REVENUE | \$36,455.06 | \$15.00 | \$36,440.06 | 243,033.73 % |
| NET REVENUE | \$36,455.06 | \$15.00 | \$36,440.06 | 243,033.73 % |