

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



**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)**  
**APRIL 9, 2025**  
***Multi-Platform Meeting***

*President Wendy Stasolla called the multi-platform Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Karen Kent, Treasurer Denny Rodgers and Secretary Michelle Zechner; Trustees: Maria Baratta, Bob Busch, David Thomas, Chris Marietti, Colleen McCourt; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Marilyn Gonzalez, Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh and Assistant Minister Lisa Schilansky.*

## **First Hour**

**Consent agenda (no vote):** President Wendy Stasolla summarized her monthly report. Trustee Maria Baratta has drafted a revised gift policy and will be sending out to all trustees, Endowment and Finance for review and input. Rev. Kim Wildszewski noted a request about taking sabbatical. The board discusses Rev. Kim's request to take her sabbatical in chunks rather than all at once, with a 6 week initial sabbatical. The board members discussed and expressed support for this approach. Wendy called for a vote to approve this approach as outlined in her report. The vote unanimously passed. Treasurer Denny Rodgers noted that the Chair of Finance Committee Sandee Steinberg will be attending and reviewing the full budget.

**Finance Committee Update:** Sandee discussed the budget for the upcoming year. She reviewed budget line items. The operations budget has increased by \$14,000, mainly due to higher utility costs and maintenance agreements. The programs budget has decreased due to no longer paying for an intern. The denominational support has increased to \$27,000, and the mortgage remains at \$25,000. The total expenses for the year are \$669,000, with an expected income of \$558,000, resulting in a deficit of \$111,000. However, \$52,000 of this deficit is already covered by savings, leaving a final deficit of \$59,000.

Sandee noted that the current year's deficit was predicted to be \$35,000, but may be reduced with potential extra income or gifts. Of note, pledges have remained static and expenses have risen. There are increases in the plate donations.

The board discussed financial challenges facing the church, including declining investment income, increased expenses post-COVID, and the potential loss of pledges. They acknowledged the need to make difficult decisions about budget cuts and staffing in the future. The board emphasized the importance of transparent communication with the congregation about these issues, recognizing that many members may be facing their own financial uncertainties. They also discussed the need to adapt the approach to fundraising and membership growth, considering the changing financial realities of younger generations.

Congregational Administrator Marilyn Gonzalez noted a recent uptick in rental inquiries for space and a potential for increased income. Board discussed various rental options and pricing, with examples ranging from \$500 to \$1000 per event based on needs and size of event. The possibility of long-term rentals, such as a daycare center, is briefly considered but dismissed due to logistical and insurance challenges. The conversation then shifts to the upcoming budget and annual meetings, with Sandee planning to provide a high-level update on the budget at the next council meeting.

## Second Hour

### **Endowment Taskforce Update:**

Denny discussed the work of the Endowment Taskforce and their recommendations to make changes to the bylaws. These changes need to take effect prior to the annual meeting, with a focus on the endowment fund distribution process. Specifically, there will be a change in the language about distribution of endowment funds to grant requests that benefit the church's mission. The committee's quorum and the selection of chairs were also discussed. There are discrepancies between the proposed changes and the existing bylaws, which the board agreed to address in the next church year. The proposed changes must be sent out by 5/1 to prepare for the annual meeting. Marilyn will send out the bylaw proposed changes to the congregation.

**Additional Task Force Needs:**

Wendy reviewed a list of potential Task Force needs in the upcoming year. The rental policy task force is making progress, with Sandee and Marilyn working on adjustments. The board discusses the need for kitchen and food ministry policies, which will be addressed after the rental policy is finalized. They also discuss the need for two safety task forces - one for physical safety and one for digital safety. Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh will write a newsletter article about current safety measures and invite volunteers for the physical safety task force. The board agrees to recruit members for both safety task forces, aiming for a balance of vigilant and flexible individuals. Secretary Michelle Zechner will follow-up with board members to seek nominations for these Safety Task Force groups.

**Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary**

Robin described the event will be hosted by another UU church and will be broadcast live from their location. The event at UUCWC will run from 9 AM to 4 PM and will include activities, networking spaces, and pastoral support from Assistant Minister Lisa Schilansky. . Michelle mentioned that they are inviting members to attend as allies and also inviting select people from other UU churches and local groups. There will be specified networking spaces and places for trans and non-binary folks. The team also discussed the possibility of making the event more accessible for their congregation by using resources like the "Beloved Communities" training. Wendy also mentioned that people can register through a centralized website to be a remote participant if they can't attend in person.

**Assistant Minister Transition and New Roles:** Rev. Lisa announced her new role and responsibilities, which will focus on worship, pastoral care, and justice. She will be adjusting her responsibilities from intern to the Assistant Minister. Lisa noted that she has a new email and can no longer be reached at the intern email.

**Housekeeping & Action Items:** Wendy asked for volunteers to write the May Cross Currents and to provide details about the council meeting. Trustee Chris Marietti has agreed to write a piece for April. There was the suggestion that someone who had attended BBCBB in person write on that for May.

The group was reminded that there will be a Council Meeting next week prior to the Vespers service.

Action Items:

- \*Michelle to send reminder emails to the board about suggesting names for safety task forces (physical and digital) at 1 week, 2 weeks, and 3 weeks from the meeting date.
- \*Marilyn will distribute Endowment Committee bylaw changes to the congregation by May 1st.
- \*Robin to write a newsletter article for Crossings about current safety measures and invite interested people to join the physical safety task force.
- \*Board members to consider and suggest names for both physical and digital safety task forces.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Michelle Zechner***

Secretary, Board of Trustees

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

Executive Summary April 7, 2025

By Wendy Stasolla

I attended the Climate Justice Dialogues on March 22<sup>nd</sup> as Board President to give a welcome address, and also as a participant. This was an informative, productive and community creating event! It was well attended, and much information was gleaned for possible actions. To reiterate something I said that day: I was especially excited to see our various justice ministries working together, through our Council for Faith in Action (CFA), to highlight how issues of climate, racial, economic, food insecurity and social justice are truly interconnected.

And just a reminder that this Board also supported the related Earth & Climate Ministry's recommendation for the church to work together toward UU recognition of the newer Green Sanctuary program when they attended our meeting last summer.

Maria Barrata did a great job combining and editing the UUCWC Gift Policies and will be sharing the new document with Endowment and Finance before it comes back to the board for final approval.

An executive decision was made to allow Homefront to bring a film crew to UUCWC on 4/14 to film tutoring. Chris Marchetti, Homefront's Monday night tutoring director, asked if this would be okay. Riverview Studios along with a couple of Homefront colleagues will come to UUCWC to capture footage of Monday Night tutoring in action for their Women's Initiative Luncheon video."

## **Senior Minister Board Report April 2025**

### **Create Community**

This past month we've been lucky to have Pauline Nijander return to our pulpit twice to lead worship. In the weeks between, we invited the multigenerational community to consider the sacred work in being inefficient; welcomed back Lisa Schilansky in her new Assistant Minister role; celebrated 12 new members; and honored the work of a Wildflower composer through the talents of our own choir.

Our attendance is remarkably consistent and strong, averaging about 190 attendees (adults and children) every week. More than half of the participants worship online.

This week, at our quarterly Worship Associate meeting, I invited the group to consider a significant moment our church has had this year in worship, and what can be done to foster more of these moments. I would love to hear your responses, too!

Additionally to note, of the 8 worship associates, 5 have been serving since pandemic lockdown. We are beginning to plan for who will be rolling off in the fall, and then the rest in the spring of '26. This has been one of my strongest, and most reliable and flexible WA teams. I will miss them!

Tomorrow I begin a 6-session discussion on the book *On Tyranny*. This powerful, timely and terrifying text is sure to connect this group in important ways.

### **Celebrate Life**

With thanks to Bonnie Gilbert for taking the lead, I was able to launch a Gratitude Ministry: a small group who will meet monthly and write cards to congregants for their formal and informal ways of impacting our community (eg for Andrea Kalb, who always enthusiastically greets newcomers even though she is not a host). The staff is providing the list to this ministry, but we welcome your additions.

In addition to regular pastoral care and weekly *Lectio Divina*, I've been meeting with the families of Diane Knights, Carole Erb and Kevyn Malloy to plan their memorial services.

With Lisa's return, I have already felt the great relief of being able to pass off some pastoral care to her, both during my vacation last week, and throughout the day.

## **Change the World**

The Earth Climate Ministry folks, Marianne Alt, and the entire Council for Faith in Action deserve massive applause for their good work in creating the Climate Dialogues on March 22<sup>nd</sup>. With nearly 50 people on a full Saturday, there was connection, education and organizing.

Pam Shadzik and Martha Bell should also be thanked immensely for their systematic and thoughtful work with congregational engagement. By interviewing each committee and ministry lead, and organizing the conversation into a transparent tool for marketing and recruiting, they have updated our communication for the first time in 10 years.

The Personnel Committee has approved my time away for late June & July to begin chipping away at my sabbatical time – **but this still requires Board approval**. Having served nearly 11 years at UUCWC, I have earned 10 months of sabbatical but only used 4. As we've spoken about in the past, I do not think long periods of time away from the congregation are healthy for me or the congregation and I look forward to taking month or 6-week long sabbaticals in the spring / summer instead. With my sabbatical reserve money, we can increase Lisa's hours to cover worship and the additional pastoral care for the 6 weeks of June 16<sup>th</sup> through July 25<sup>th</sup> coverage. Note: I will still be officiating Carole Erb's memorial service on July 5<sup>th</sup> and working with the worship team the week of July 21<sup>st</sup> to prepare for that following Sunday.

Marilyn, Sandee Steinberg and I met to once again clarify the differences between a fundraiser and rental, and also tease out the distinctions within both categories. New and/or updated policies should be coming to the Board in the months to come because of these conversations.

With thanks for each of you and all you do,  
Kim

## **Assistant Minister Board Report April 2025**

### **Minister for Justice and Pastoral Care's Report Lisa Schilansky**

*This report is being written at the end of the day on Thursday April 3rd, two-and-a-half days into my new position. As such, this will perhaps be the briefest of board reports.*

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

It was an immense joy to return to this wonderful community and to embody my new role via the Sunday service. Rev. Kim and I were in touch the week preceding my start date, but out of respect for the remainder of my time off, I did not have any original writing to do for this past Sunday. I was delighted to get to formally welcome our newest members, concluding the current journey we began when I joined them for the first two sessions of Pathways.

I will be off for the next two Sundays due to family commitments and am very excited to return on Easter Sunday as a fully ordained minister. In my brief time at the church, I have already begun to prepare for my first Sunday preaching (April 27th), for April's Vespers service (the 16th), and for a wedding I will be officiating for the daughter of a congregant (August 31st).

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

My primary goal for this first week was to reconnect with those most in need in our community. Rev. Kim provided me with updates on the various pastoral care emergencies that arose in my absence. With my first week coinciding with Rev. Kim's week off, I made sure to connect with individuals, helping them feel the support of this community. I also reconnected with the Pastoral Care lay leadership, offering support.

Robin Pugh and I are in discussion around acute needs of the congregation at the moment and are exploring creative possibilities for ways that I might provide group pastoral care in the future.

In Rev. Kim's absence, I led Lectio Divina this morning. This vibrant and committed group always dives in deep to the poem and to the opportunity to connect. As Rev. Kim has said on multiple occasions, this is a deeply pastoral offering.

#### **Change the World**

My second goal for this first week was to reach out to our various justice ministries, helping them understand my new role and feel the support that this role offers. Almost all of the CFA ministries were contacted personally and individual meetings will be beginning April 21st. I also connected with all of the CFA ministries to help prepare them for our quarterly meeting



happening at the end of this month. I have also reconnected with our community justice partners: NJ Faith Allies and Hope Rises Up.

I will be very involved in the April 26th Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary event and had a helpful coordinating meeting with Robin to catch up on all of the planning that happened during my time away. I am very excited about this offering to the community and how we can show up boldly and pastorally in these critical times.

It was also very exciting to begin my position while very active organizing was already happening in the congregation around the April 5th nationwide day of action. While an existing family commitment means that I will not be able to attend any of the marches in person, I immediately dove in and helped nudge along the coordination that was already organically happening in our community facebook group by helping folks connect more deeply and securely through email. I plan to offer support and debriefing to the different individuals planning to attend

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,  
Lisa

## **Director of Congregational Life Report**

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski, Personnel Committee

From: Robin Pugh

Date: 4/9/25

Re: Monthly DCL Report

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### **Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)**

- We welcomed 12 new members at our service on March 30<sup>th</sup>. I've been busy reaching out to each of them individually to welcome them personally and connect them to a small group if they are interested. Three of the 12 were from other UU congregations, 4 have school age children, 3 are people of color and 7 are under 45,

### **Create Community (Small Groups).**

- Congregational Engagement and I will implement a new plan with this membership class to welcome new members and integrate them into our community. We are setting up a buddy system where new people will be teamed up with one person 6 weeks after joining UUCWC.
- After careful nurturing, several new people are joining chalice circles this month. It is a brave thing to enter a community for the first time.

### **Change the World**

· I continue to work with a terrific planning committee to bring the Building the Beloved Community Beyond the Binary conference to UUCWC on 4/26. The conference is for transgender, nonbinary people and their allies to gather, learn, and grow. Most of the conference will be live streamed from UU Syracuse. The conference is from 9-4 with the Keynote at 1 PM. Folks are welcome to participate in all or part of this event. More information and the schedule are here: <https://www.uucwc.org/building-beloved-community-beyond-the-binary/>

- Homefront tutoring on Monday nights is going well. We continue to tutor about 27 kids with as many tutors.

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

I am on the UU Wellspring Board

I attend the UUAMP, (the Association of Membership Professionals) weekly meetings when time permits.

I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

## **Administrator Report**

Marilyn Gonzalez

Administrator BOT Report for April 2025

### **Create Community**

It's officially spring and things are definitely picking up again at the church. We have several events in the calendar over the next couple of months including the Auction, the Building Beloved Community Conference, a rental, and preparations for the Annual Meeting. I will once again be meeting with Susan Irgang to continue the knowledge dump we started back in August (I've been here six months!).

Over this past month, I met with Barbara Drew, Leslie McGeorge, Al Johnson, and Denny Rodgers to discuss Earth & Climate Ministry and how I could help support them in an administrative capacity and as a member of the facilities team. We discussed the improvements that were made to the mechanical room and how that can help them to continue their work on getting a display monitor for the solar panel system that they received through an endowment grant last July.

We have had several rental inquiries and I was able to build a relationship with The Laurel School of Princeton which is a local school for children with dyslexia and other learning differences. They will be holding their school play in our Sanctuary on May 28. We're excited to partner with them and hope to make this a long-term relationship. I've also met with the NJ Chorale Society who are currently working based in Ewing to show them the property as a possible place for them to host their upcoming concert. I also met with the leaders of INDIVISIBLE Lambertville NJ / New Hope PA as potential renters of our space. They are looking to rent UUCWC to use as a possible meeting place for their organization as well as for fundraising events.

Lastly, and as a side note, April also means moving time for me. As many of you know, I've been commuting from Westfield, NJ to UUCWC since I started in September. I will be taking some time off during the week of April 14 to make the move down to Lawrenceville. Glad to be done with that commute!

### **Celebrate Life**

Our membership numbers are 283 church members, 27 Friends, 17 Participants and 45 Attendees.

In April, we happily welcomed 12 new members, but unfortunately lost 3 long-time members of the congregation. We are currently preparing for the following Memorials:

- Diane Knights will be remembered and celebrated on May 17.
- Kevyn Malloy's will be remembered and celebrated on June 7.
- Carole Erb will be remembered and celebrated on July 5.

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

The following is an update on our ongoing Facilities issues:

**HVAC:** Now that the heating part of the year is done, we have had to worry less about the HVAC failing prior to our services. This gives us a little breathing room to think about what our next steps will be. Currently, the Facilities Committee is taking in quotes from HVAC companies to have the unit in question replaced. We expect this would happen in the fall at the very earliest due to availability.

**PFAS:** We recently had the P.O.E.T. System installed and Garden State Labs have stopped by to test the water. The final approval should be coming within the next week...fingers crossed. That being said, because the system has been installed, we are fairly certain that the water is safe to drink but will not take down the signs until we know we have the test results and approval from GSL.

**Refrigerator and Freezer:** We had a new refrigerator and freezer installed on Tuesday, April 1. Unfortunately, the floors in front of the kitchen doors were damaged by the delivery guys. Mike Muccioli and I are now in the process of getting the delivery company to pay for damages. I requested a quote from Tyler Shablin of Mizu Contracting who gave me a quote for \$1125.

**Storage Room 101:** During the renovation, it became very apparent that we have a lot of nice new spaces but not enough storage. To that end, we decided that while we are not using the downstairs classrooms as much on Sundays, we would reserve Room 101 as a storage room. Denny Rodgers has been leading the charge on cleaning out the space and trying to reduce the amount of items stored there so we can keep it organized. We are trying to be intentional and thoughtful about what should be in that room and how much space everyone has for storage. The Auction Committee will be using the space for about two-three weeks during the Auction for items with the knowledge that once all auction items have been delivered, the space will no longer house any items.

## **Treasurer's Report**

### **Treasurer's Report for March 2025**

#### March YTD Actual vs March YTD Budget

Plate is at 129% of budget.

Pledges for '24-'25 are at almost 98%.

Merrill Lynch income exceeds budget by 6%.

Income is at 100% of budget.

Expenditures are currently at 97% of budget.

#### Cash Analysis

Unrestricted Cash reserves are at \$118,000 ( Actually at \$188,000 but we shifted \$70K to Cap Campaign temporarily.)

Allowing for \$37K operations deficit, \$40K CAP loan and \$12.5K for Lisa's salary thru June, we will still have \$98.5K Non-restricted/Reserve Funds).

We can cover the '25-'26 anticipated deficit as Cap loan is paid off with delayed pledges of up to \$60K.