

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - FINAL
July 7, 2025
Multi-Platform Meeting

Co-Presidents Bob Alt & Chris Marietti called the multi-platform Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Also in attendance: Treasurer Denny Rodgers and Secretary Michelle Zechner; Trustees: Bob Busch, Patty Mikes, Wendy Stasolla, David Thomas, Congregational Administrator, Marilyn Gonzalez, and Assistant Minister Lisa Schilansky. Excused: Karen Kent, Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote): Introduction of the new co-Board Presidents Bob Alt and Chris Marietti. Discussed changes to bank signatory with the new board presidents and changes in staffing. Congregational Administer Marilyn Gonzalez recommended that all board members use their UUCWC assigned emails. Marilyn will assist the board presidents with setting up new email accounts. Called a proposition to vote that the bank signatory be changed to reflect new co-presidents and the treasurer. The vote was unanimously passed. Review of additional Staff reports. Treasurer Denny Rodgers noted that there is no updated fiscal report this month as this is the end of the fiscal year. Information will be shared with the board as it comes in.

Church Facility Use Policy: Guest Sandee Steinberg and Congregational Administrator Marilyn Gonzalez reviewed the proposed changes that were related to multiple requests. The Finance Committee will review the draft as it pertains to fundraising events. Discussed issues with rentals and need for property insurance for groups using the space. New language discussed categories of use by church events, fundraisers for church or external entities sponsored by the church and rentals. Some consideration will need to be given about expected fund raising and the possible wear and tear on the church. Additional considerations include food service, setting up for Sunday service and potential non-approved use. The group discussed the need to clarify who will be responsible for opening and closing the building and the need for a rental coordinator. Currently church member Mike Muccioli and Marilyn are the rental coordinators. After extensive discussion, co-president Bob Alt suggested that additional wording may be needed to the policy and the Board was not ready for a vote.

Action Items: Board members can review the policy and suggest changes via email. A discernment circle to come to consensus may be needed to facilitate a vote on the proposed policy.

Second Hour

Upcoming Events: Assistant Minister Rev. Lisa Schilansky noted that the Board Retreat will take place on 7/26 from 9-2 to be held at the church. Rev. Lisa will coordinate details with Kim. On 7/12 Rev. Lisa will offer an Activism 101 class. Water Communion will take place on 9/7.

Task Force Development (Financial Health & Safety): Co-President Bob Alt discussed current task forces that are underway. The Strategic Implementation Taskforce and the Financial Health 2025-2028 are at the beginning stages. He suggested an organizing strategy would be helpful for these groups and presented a charter template for each task force. Board members discussed templates with ideas and input. Strategic plan implementation groups can use the goals identified from the Board Retreat once they have been finalized. Clarified that the Safety Task Force has been in the planning stages but has not been formalized yet.

Action Item: Co-Presidents will consider discussion points, revise documents and share.

Safety Committee Ideas from General Assembly: Trustee Wendy Stasolla discussed GA resources regarding safety (Flourish Congregations) and a digital guide. Trustees discussed potential members of two safety committees: 1) Building Safety and 2) Digital Safety. Marilyn suggested an inventory of current safety practices being used. Wendy suggested communicating about the committees to the congregation by Cross Currents. Discussion about the process to begin the task forces.

Action Items: Wendy will approach several members to ascertain interest in the task forces.

Board Retreat Planning: Co-Presidents are drafting agenda and content to review past year goals and visioning for the new year. Senior Minister Kim Wildszewski will review upon her return to office.

Review Board Liaisons: This item will be discussed at the Board Retreat

Housekeeping & Action Items: Co-Presidents noted that Welcome Packets will be shared with new Trustees.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Zechner

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Board Executive Team Meeting Minutes

July 3, 2025

Attendees: Bob Alt (co-President), Karen Kent (Vice President), Chris Marietti (co-President), Denny Rogers (Treasurer), Rev. Lisa Schilansky, Michelle Zechner (Secretary).

Next Steps agreed upon at meeting:

- Share Board Executive Team meeting minutes to Board pre-read folder (Bob)
- Draft proposed Board retreat agenda, send to Rev. Lisa to review with Rev. Kim (Bob)
- Obtain copy of revised Facility Usage Policy to share as Board pre-read (Michelle)
- Create charter template for task forces; to review at upcoming Board meeting (Bob)
- Introduce Carmen Pinto to other members of the Financial Health 2025-2028 Task Force (Denny) Check if Board has previously approved the formation of a Safety Task Force (Michelle from prior records; Chris to follow-up with Wendy)

Discussion

- Agreed on next Board meeting topics
 - Facility Usage Policy - Sandee Steinberg, Marilyn Gonzalez (guest come at 7:30)
 - Endorsement of charter template
 - Liaisons for committees - Wendy
 - Safety update from GA - Wendy Stasolla
- Board retreat
 - Location: UUCWC
 - Proposed topics:
 - Year in review; how we did on last year's goals
 - Developing goals for this fiscal year
 - Review of the 2 new task forces (charters)
 - Discuss Board roles & responsibilities; ensure liaisons for committees
- Future Board Exec Team meetings

- Michelle has conflict from Sept. – Dec. due to a teaching commitment. We agreed to move Exec Team meetings to the first Wednesdays during this time period (September through December)
- Financial Health 2025-2028 Task Force
 - Agreed on name for the new financial task force: Financial Health 2025-2028 Task Force
 - Will limit the size of the task force to six people. Task force will officially kick off after the Board retreat, following guidance from the Board on objectives and deliverables for the task force.
- Safety
 - Discussed if Safety Task Force exists; consideration for whether one is needed. Next steps to ascertain if Board already endorsed such a task force, and to hear Safety update from Wendy at next Board meeting to inform next steps.
- Succession plan for Board roles
 - Discussed plan to identify successors for Board roles (i.e., President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary) and have sufficient overlap periods to ensure transition. Next position for this need will be Secretary, as Michelle has one year left on the Board.

July 2025 Board Report
Minister for Justice and Pastoral Care's Report
Lisa Schilansky

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

In the final Sunday before Rev. Kim's sabbatical, I offered liturgical support, writing and delivering a prayer to address the military being set against US Citizens and the horrifying assassination of Rep. Melissa Hortman. While the following week was Ministry Days and GA, there were multiple acute needs that arose at the church requiring both a worship and pastoral care response (more on pastoral care below). Knowing that there was no clergy on site for the incredible Hymn Sing being offered by Erin Busch and Greg Pontier, I wrote a prayer to be read during the service, in response to the shocking bombing of Iran the night before.

On June 29th I reminded us of the important life-saving ministry of the OWL program, educating those who are unfamiliar with the program and exciting others who have long been proponents. While the sermon was not intended to be overtly political, the Supreme Court decisions over the previous ten days resulted in the sermon including a call to action.

In honor of the complexity of the Fourth of July holiday, I preached "Dissent is Patriotic" on July 6th. Weaving in the words of those who have fought this battle before, I worked to nuance the flattened holiday and help our congregation learn about the risk and reward of protest.

Vespers was canceled in June due to low attendance in May. I will relaunch the program in September for a trial period of two months.

This past month I had my final of three coordinating meetings with a couple for whom I will be officiating their wedding in August. One member of the couple is the daughter of a longtime UUCWC member. I also continue to coordinate with a local mother who is not a congregant for her September baby dedication. This will be independent of a Sunday service.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

Since Rev. Kim's sabbatical began on June 16th, I have taken over the pastoral care responsibilities of the congregation. These three weeks, thus far, have been a time of high acuity. Just in the past 3 weeks, I have offered pastoral care support to fourteen different congregants, some of whom are facing very serious situations. This has included late night communication. If Rev. Kim was present, this task would be shared. Thus, it is a clear reminder of the importance of the Assistant Minister position as our congregation continues to age and continues to navigate a very difficult world. Our pastoral care needs will not lessen over the next few years and will likely increase in frequency and complexity- surpassing the time availability of the one minister model.

I am excited to share that on July 1st I launched our new Caregivers Support Group. There were four people in attendance with a fifth who had hoped to make it but had an emergency pull her away. Already I have received positive feedback about this offering and the group is excited to continue to meet once-per-month.

In Rev. Kim's absence I have been facilitating weekly Lectio Devina (with Anne Godlasky masterfully stepping in during my time at GA). I look forward to continuing with this

group for two more weeks and to have the opportunity to sub in as needed once Rev. Kim returns. As she has reported to you all many times, this is a dedicated group and through reflections on the poetry, pastoral care often happens as well.

In the lead up to GA and during the five day conference, I provided support and guidance to the nine people who were attending and/or serving as delegates. While in Baltimore this included supportive and clarifying conversations to help our delegates understand the complexity of UUA polity and treating everyone to lunch to allow an opportunity to casually get together during the very stressful and draining week. I attended some of the large events with the group, helping them feel connected to my ministry and to each other. Acute pastoral care needs arose both during GA and following it and I was able to support two members of our delegation. On July 6th I will be meeting with our group for a post-GA debrief. When the Skrametti decision was announced during GA, I reached out to the trans and non-binary congregants of UUCWC and the parents of trans and non-binary kids to offer additional targeted support.

Change the World

I continue to advertise our Faith in Action FB group, hoping to move much of the protest and lobbying-related coordination over to there. Since the relaunch last month, the group has grown significantly. Marilyn Gonzalez and I have officially taken over administrating this group from congregant Nathalie Edmond, part of a broader communication strategy at the church to ensure that group administration lives with staff not congregants.

Public Theology continues to be an important part of my ministry. This past month I returned to the weekly Hopewell Borough sidewalk protest. We have had a solid showing of a few UUCWC members each week, joining about thirty residents, and I hope that my attendance can help bolster this group, even as it is unrealistic for me to be able to attend more than once every other month or so. On July 2nd I responded to a rapid call to action by one of our congregants and was a visible member of clergy at a local US representative's office, participating in a large-scale "die-in" to lobby this representative to vote no on a harmful bill. While the bill very sadly passed the next day, he did vote no and the protest action did result in national coverage as well. Five UUCWC-affiliated people were in attendance and I made important connections with local organizers who were excited to learn about our church, including one person who used to regularly attend years ago and shared that after speaking with me is thinking about returning.

I also continue to serve in the core group of statewide UU clergy who are offering direct support to trans individuals in the state. Due to the sensitivity of this work, you will likely not hear much more from me than this level of information, but know that currently we have three UUCWC members plugged into this work as well.

This month I am actively reaching out to area clergy, meeting to discuss ways that we might be able to coordinate across faith traditions to work for a more just world. These connections are important in any justice work and in our church's goal to make a difference in our local community.

The ongoing work I have done with the NJ Faith Allies for a Reparations Task Force reached a pivotal moment this June. I attended, alongside UUCWC congregant Regina Podhorin Zilinski, their annual lobby day. I want to celebrate Regina who provided all of the

behind-the-scenes coordination for the lobby event, making it possible for twenty people to attend and important conversations to happen with legislators. At this event I had the opportunity to sit down with a member of Governor Murphy's staff and explain the moral imperative of this work. NJ Faith Allies works closely with the NJ Institute for Social Justice. The NJISJ released their report on the need for Reparations (intended in a holistic sense) in New Jersey. Many UUCWC members attended the official launch of this report on Juneteenth and I have helped disseminate the information about this report even as, unfortunately, the launch event coincided with my time at GA.

On July 13th, I will be offering an Activism 101 training, rescheduled from late June. Now more than ever it is vital that we live into our values and do so in a safe, secure, and communal way.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,
Lisa

Administrator Report

Marilyn Gonzalez

BOT Report for June 2025

Create Community

Today is my first day back from vacation and I feel a renewed energy. Grateful to everyone for letting me have the week to spend with my family and familiarize myself with my new surroundings!

Upon returning, I have jumped back into the Church Management System project. Just before I left on vacation, I met with representatives from Tithely (formerly Breeze) and Realm. I asked for help from a small task force consisting of the following people: Jane Root, Sandee Steinberg, George Faulkner, Lynne Quinto, Loren McAllister, Rab Bell, and MJ Hansen. I sent them all information and demos of each of the products to hear their thoughts and everyone seemed more inclined to move forward with Tithely. We will hopefully be meeting with the Tithely representative soon for a demo and should have a decision on moving forward soon after that.

Celebrate Life

Our membership numbers hold at 273 church members, 31 Friends, 15 Participants and 29 Attendees.

We had a memorial service for Carole Erb on July 5th.

Change the (UUCWC) World

The recent weather pattern has delayed the start of the downstairs bathroom project but the ROMEO's have been hard at work! Over the summer, the ROMEO's are re-painting our classrooms to give them a fresh new look.

Some good news is that we had a recent roof/skylight repair which seems to have helped with the leaking in the sanctuary. Farzad Shadzik organized that repair with a former roofing friend who was able to go up and fix some cracks, dried up caulk, and punctures on our roof. Hopefully, this will hold and allow us some time before we have to address a new roof in upcoming years.

Other good news is that the NJ State Dept of Environment approved our application for reimbursement from the NJ Spillfund and covered the cost of P.O.E.T. System that was installed earlier this year. The cost of coverage was the full \$5000+.

Our work on getting a new HVAC is still ongoing. We have been facing challenges on getting quotes for the 20-ton unit on our roof. We hope to address this before the fall but tariffs and rising prices are making it difficult for us to get numbers from dealers. This work is on-going for the facilities team.

