

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)
June 11, 2025
Multi-Platform Meeting

President Wendy Stasolla called the multi-platform Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:08 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. Guest, Patty Mikes.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote): Review of the Executive Team and Staff reports. Treasurer Denny Rodgers reviewed the financial report. President Wendy Stasolla and Denny led a brief discussion about the possibility of maintaining the Assistant Minister position beyond 2026. Current Congregational Administrator Marilyn Gonzalez noted that additional work to the downstairs bathrooms and hallway will be taking place at the end of June resulting in the gender-neutral restroom being unavailable until work is completed. She also noted the importance of advance communication of this to the community.

Data Security: Guest MJ Hansen from the Technology Team discussed data management and digital security concerns. MJ highlighted the lack of standardized procedures, naming conventions, and policies for digital data storage across the organization. MJ suggested creating a task force or committee to establish data management standards, train staff and volunteers, and ensure compliance, emphasizing the need for accountability and proper documentation of digital assets, including historical archives. Wendy acknowledged the importance of the issue and suggested starting with a task force, while also noting the need to address the volunteer deficit affecting various committees, including archives. The board agreed to consider MJ's proposal and explore ways to implement data governance practices.

Second Hour

Upcoming Events: Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski reviewed the upcoming calendar of events. Assistant Minister Rev. Lisa Schilansky will offer a follow-up program from the Gender 101 class she offered previously called Gender 201. On June 22 there will be two General Assembly Services, the first a hymn service led by Music Director Dr. Erin Busch and member Greg Pontier and the second a traditional service. Rev. Lisa noted that about 12 people from the congregation will be participating in the upcoming nationwide march, with some also joining in Philadelphia. Wendy noted that there will be an annual board retreat. Board members should respond to the scheduling poll for planning.

Annual Meeting Debrief: Wendy reflected on the successful annual meeting and positive feedback from congregants. She noted that having a run-through for new presidents and access to the slide deck in advance would be helpful. The group discussed abstentions to see if there were any identifiable patterns. Rev. Kim emphasized the need to systematize tasks for future annual meetings to avoid last-minute rushes, and she praised Marilyn's performance in her first annual meeting. There was also discussion about the number of awards given out and consideration about the process and need for more proactive planning in the future. Wendy noted that questions about the budget are encouraged during the budget meeting. Questions brought to the budget meeting will be reviewed during the annual meeting.

Action Item: Begin planning and discussion for Annual Meeting in December or January

Art & Aesthetics Committee: Wendy discussed the formation of an Art and Aesthetics Committee to improve the congregation's physical space by hanging art in public spaces and painting public spaces. Wendy proposed several potential members. The group emphasized the importance of having diverse representation on the committee to reflect the congregation's values and demographics.

Board Liaisons Needed: Wendy brought up the need for Board Liaisons for all committees. There is a need for an Endowment Board Member, which meets about 4 times a year. There is also a need for the Personnel Committee Board Liaison, which meets 6-7 times per year. Additionally, there is a new committee developing – Online Committee, which serves the needs of the online participants, that needs a board liaison. Trustee David Thomas is the liaison for Congregational Engagement. The board will need to identify board liaisons in the July meeting.

Gift Policy & Vote: Wendy and Trustee Maria Baratta reviewed the new Gift Policy. The board approved the new Gift Policy unanimously. Marilyn will update the website and remove the previous policy. Wendy noted the need to share an update in the CrossCurrents.

Endowment Policy: Denny reviewed the changes to the endowment policy. The bylaws were updated and voted on at the annual meeting, but the policy needs to be voted on and approved by the board. The board approved the new Endowment Policy unanimously. Denny will notify the Endowment Committee and Endowment Task Force of the passing of the new policy.

Creating new Task Forces for Church Financial Sustainability, On-site Safety and Digital Safety: Denny noted that several congregants had approached him to support the Financial Sustainability committee. He also noted that there had been a previous Financial Sustainability Committee in the past with a slightly different goal, therefore, this Committee should have a new name to reflect its new mission.

Wendy and Rev. Kim discussed the Safety Task Force which is centered on the building and safety and potential congregants who may be interested in this. Trustees David Thomas and Bob Busch are interested in supporting this Task Force. The Digital Safety Task Force, which is centered on safeguarding online data and information, will also be formed.

Housekeeping & Action Items: Wendy noted that a Cross Current article is needed for July to announce the upcoming Task Force(s) development and to raise awareness and potential interested members.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Zechner

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Executive Summary June 5, 2025

By Wendy Stasolla

We got good feedback overall about the annual meeting and had no disagrees and only had two abstentions across the three things that were voted on. One abstention was for the Endowment Bylaws, and the other was for the Budget. The Gifts and gratitude were well received by the two members of the Capital Campaign team who were in attendance and George got his gift this past Sunday and I'll be getting the other one to Susan V. shortly. I gave Roberto a big hug and thanks this past Sunday and a card with \$50 from the board.

We already have people interested in joining the Art & Aesthetics Committee. This is being formed to make decorating decisions for our lovely building and possibly also facilitate rotating exhibits of creative works by members or the UUCWC community. Some ideas for our walls are: *Chalice art, pictures of UU historic sites, display UUA Honor Congregation certificate, Committee and Ministry bulletin boards with photos and actions, Board of Trustees photos and names, UU informational Posters, upcoming events board etc. Visiting other UU congregations is a great resource for ideas as I found out by going to Cherry Hill last month.*

MJ Hanson will attend the June board meeting to discuss digital security and best practices. We talked about the need for naming conventions, creating a filing system where those who are doing the work of the church can store and access cloud-based files so they are not spread across individual home computers, and security measures to prevent bad actors.

In lieu of having a member of our online community join the board at this time, we would like to have a board liaison to be a point person for online concerns and suggestions. For example: I learned that our online attendees don't like to be referred to as screens, that often 4-6 people will linger at virtual coffee hour for up to an hour, and that we should absolutely be tapping them for committees and ministries.

Senior Minister Board Report

Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski

On behalf of your staff, let me tell you a little bit about who we are as we close out this congregational year.

After a significant cull, the first real hard look at our books since covid, we are a congregation of 261 members and 42 friends, 16 participants or an adult system of 319.

Since election day, we've had 42 people fill out a connection card. And just since April, we welcomed 12 new members. Next Sunday, after the conclusion of another pathways series, we very well may be welcoming another 13.

You'll hear me say this next week when we celebrate that newest group, but when I asked them to write a covenant during their first conversation together they said:

- I need to feel like a person worth knowing
- I want rituals that honor and speak to me; that feel invitational.
- I want to be allowed to grow, to make a mistake, to change my mind
- I want authenticity

Since September's Water Communion through the end of May, we averaged about 176 people on a Sunday morning.

If congregations are bringing in half of their membership on a Sunday morning, they are considered highly successful. We are "worshipping" 69% on a Sunday. Yes, our member numbers are lower than in years past. But our engagement is significantly higher.

Now, listen to this one: our average in person attendance is about 102, and our average online participation is 84. Meaning on any given Sunday, about half the congregation is online.

Is this good or bad? I honestly have no idea. But what I can say is that it is, again, unheard of in our sister congregations and across mainline religion today. And we owe a great deal to our worship tech ministry for their efforts in keeping us tethered.

Through Rev. Lisa's ministry, we offered 8 evening Vespers services, including the night after the election. We're grateful for Rachel Hansen and Christa Olson and the 9 singers in the pop-up choir who also made this gorgeous ministry possible.

And, speaking of music, our Choir currently has 22 core members plus another 7 singers who drop in during some of our holiday events. Over the course of the year they sang 23 pieces, after next week it will be 25.

We welcomed 7 guest musicians - which does not include the 13 big band members who will be joining us for next week's flower communion. And 14 musicians from our congregation, reminding us that there is excellence right here.

The LOVE Jazz Orchestra returned (formerly known as the South Philly Big Band), which brought in 107 adults and children from within and outside our church community.

And, in addition to it all, the Wildflower commission allowed the choir to stretch into new musical territories, once again bringing a world premiere into our space, and provided money and opportunity to a young composer, Addison Hill.

That's what's been happening in the sanctuary.

This year in Children's Faith Engagement, we had 33 children registered, raising our total number of people we serve to 352.

Our youngest elementary group learned about the new UU values. Our 7th-9th graders participated in the Our Whole Lives program with youth from neighboring congregations in Princeton and Somerset Hills. Our high school youth group focused on racial justice, learning about UU history and racism, famous Black UUs, and more. The year concluded with an overnight trip to Philadelphia with the UU Cherry Hill youth group to visit the African American Museum of Philadelphia.

We had fun, family oriented events such as our Homemade Holidays in December and our Easter Scavenger Hunt in the spring. Plus our annual Christmas Eve and Palm Sunday multigen pageants.

Through our Adult Faith Engagement, we continued to connect people through small groups like chalice circles, Wellspring and Tending the Flame. Lay leaders facilitated 3 impactful racial justice book discussions. Rev. Lisa and I facilitate 6 different offerings including *Getting Good at Getting Older*, *On Tyranny*, 2 sessions of *Pathways*, our weekly *Lectio Divina* and *Gender 101*.

That is some look into what happened here on Sundays. But you know there was more.

Remember that it was this year that Susan Irgang retired, but continued on in a consulting role throughout these 10 months. That time now concludes, and so, we begin a new relationship with her in the time to come.

And with Susan's retirement, came Marilyn, as if she had also always been here knowing exactly what to do.

Friends, do you understand? Marilyn has not yet been here for a full year and during her tenure, the staff was not only sharing an office space for 5 months, she and the building committee had to deal with:

Bees, Snakes, Mice, Well-Chlorination; multiple HVAC failures on Saturdays before services; PFAS in the water; and replacing the water heater, freezer and refrigerator. There were - are - ongoing leaks throughout the building (Sanctuary Skylight, Offices, Crossings Room, and Dragon Hallway). And of course some of that was because of our capital project!

Now, you are going to hear from the Capital Project soon enough, but folks, what this team made possible because of your generosity is astounding. Like I said, at the beginning of this church year your staff was in shared office space in the back classrooms trying to eat carrots and apples quietly, and now we have the gift of our incredible offices, our elevator, the conference room, that lobby!

And let me just say this: we say that Marilyn and I are the only full time employees but that is wrong. Every single day that I was here, so was Farzad. Every single phone call that Marilyn had to make, Farzad was the call before and after. He worked with the staff, the construction crew, with lawyers, designers and consultants. He stayed past our working hours. He added countless beautiful touches - those chalices in the stairwell and making sure the stained glass was displayed.

To be fair, we can't count him as one of the full time employees because he wasn't paid for any of it. He saved us a tremendous amount of money along the way. Farzad, when you travel, I miss you. Welcome home. Thank you for the ways you made this home what it is for all of us.

Friends, later when these leaders are recognized, I hope your applause creates a new leak in the roof.

There was a little more -

We launched a strategic plan, and then, after November, had to launch it once more after realizing the world was going to look very different than what we had hoped.

Our justice ministries reminded us that it is important that we do something, and do something together. To remind us of only some of what that means: Climate dialogues and revivals bookended our year; we joined with others around the country for a Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary Trans and non Binary workshop; we hosted the Trans Day of Remembrance and Resilience for the Hopewell Valley Community; we went to rallies and marches and protests and had numerous voices pushing for a reparations task force in Trenton. We participated heartily in Get Out the Vote efforts through multiple UU the Vote phonebanks, postcarding, and voter registration, celebrated by Side With Love for our efforts this year.

For 27 years UUCWC has offered a hot nutritious meal and tutoring to 27 children with housing insecurity from HomeFront. This year, Robin brought her energy to the program and doubled the number of volunteers for this outreach this year.

Our Auction gave us joy and connection and raised enough money to support our budget and also justice efforts outside our own.

We cheered Lisa on as she moved from her internship, through the Ministerial Fellowship Committee, and into the position of our Minister for Justice and Pastoral Care.

And friends, guess what, this year, it is 10 years of Roberto Santiago's employment and friendship with us.

This was a big year. Let me close by asking us to hold a moment of silence, for the five inimitable women, whose lives shaped this community, and whose deaths occurred just this year, changing us all once more.

Mary Kay Mitchell
Susan Colket
Diane Knights
Carole Erb
Kevyn Malloy

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

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

Throughout May, I have offered liturgical support at our Sunday services. This was especially true for our Rituals Service. This is rare for me to note in a Board Report, but I have not preached since last month's report. This is due to the standard schedule of end-of-year services.

On May 21st, I offered a Vespers service. No members of the popup choir were available that evening, so it was a slightly different format than normal. The attendance of the service was quite low, so we decided to cancel June's service, starting the summer hiatus earlier than originally planned. We are aware that this is a vital offering for those who attend, even as attendance has generally been fairly low. As such, we are going to offer the services in September and October and re-evaluate their popularity at that time. I hope the summer hiatus and relaunch will increase interest in this program, otherwise it will be discontinued after October due to the large volunteer commitment required to present the service.

Finally, I am working closely with a couple whose wedding I will be officiating in late August and beginning to coordinate with a family whose child I will dedicate in September.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

In the aftermath of the Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary conference, I met with two out trans members of our community. This meeting was a mix of pastoral care and dreaming of a better and more inclusive UUCWC. From here I will be working to better support the trans and gender nonconforming members of our congregation, providing tangible and emotional support.

With the support of Robin Pugh, we are getting closer to being able to launch our Caregivers Support Group. I will be taking over the logistical organizing of this endeavor to help things begin this summer. Again, the goal of this group is to initially have clergy support but to eventually morph into a lay-led initiative.

I continue to offer formal pastoral care support when Rev. Kim is unable to attend to certain needs as they arise. Informal pastoral care support continues to be a central part of my ministry both on Sundays and in the impromptu interactions during the week. Starting with Rev. Kim's sabbatical on June 16th, I will be the primary pastoral care support for the congregation, increasing my hours commensurately.

Change the World

Changing the World continues to be the primary focus of my work. This past month I relaunched our participation in the UU Faith Action NJ, coordinating 8 volunteers and 6

delegates as we hosted their statewide Annual Meeting. I have been in conversation with participants hoping to find co-liaisons to continue this vital work.

In my leadership of the Council for Faith in Action, I have been working with CFA leaders who are interested in cycling out of leadership and helping to come up with creative solutions where we might readjust the task load to another ministry team if it is more appropriate to sunset certain of our ministry teams.

Recognizing the speed in which activist-related actions arise, I have formally relaunched our Faith in Action facebook group with a big focus on this Saturday's (June 14th) nationwide march. My role is to help connect congregants with each other, helping folks feel support.

This past month, my ministry continued to bring me out into the community, a central goal of this new position. I offered a blessing at the Ewing Townhall Pride Flag Raising on June 3rd and at Capital Health's main campus on June 10th. At both events, important connections were made with community leaders and community members, resulting in people asking me about the church. We are honored to be invited to speak at these events and they are important ways that we can enact our values and also demonstrate to the public who we are and what we stand for.

Public Theology continues to be an important part of my ministry. While I am not able to attend Hopewell Borough's weekly protest on a regular basis (due to often having evening meetings for the church), I have been promoting this event and helping our congregants connect with others. I also continue to serve in the core group of statewide UU clergy who are offering direct support to trans individuals in the state, co-leading a statewide training on this initiative on June 4th. UUCWC congregants are involved in this initiative as well.

Our participation in New Hope Pride was a great success. I heard from many members of UUCWC's LGBTQ community how meaningful it was to have such a large UUCWC presence. We marched with 35 people from across the generations and interacted with at least ten other congregants in the crowd. The reality is that this took quite a lot of leg work on my part, clergy leadership supporting lay volunteers to help drum up excitement and interest, including incorporating it into an April sermon. This extensive work was only able to happen due to this being such a central part of my portfolio. It is meaningful that there was such a larger contingent at Pride than in recent years and is definitely an identifiable benefit of the two minister model.

Since my last report, the state of the world has grown more dire and it is even more important that our congregants know how to keep themselves safe. My June 29th Activism 101 training cannot come soon enough and I hope that our people can feel my support as they take to the streets this coming Saturday. Now more than ever it is vital that we live into our values and do so in a safe, secure, and communal way.

Tonight I will attend the third and final meeting of the Mosaic Cohort, an invited group of clergy and lay folks working with the UUA's Side With Love to envision how to build the Beloved Community here on Earth and how to work towards a Unitarian Universalism embracing multiculturalism and anti-oppression. This work supports the work I am doing as your minister and provides me with important and helpful tools, in addition to connecting us with the broader UUA.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,
Lisa

Marilyn Gonzalez
BOT Report for June 2025

Create Community

Now that the Annual Meeting is behind us, it's time for me to start understanding what my role will be without the help of Susan Irgang who has been such a great help to me over the past nine months. The training wheels are coming off and thanks to Susan and the rest of the staff, I feel ready to do so. My final meeting/wrap up with Susan is scheduled for the week of June 23rd.

I have been working with Sandee Steinberg to revise our Facility Use Policy for Rentals and Fundraisers. We will also look at the Rental policy as it needs to be updated. Having gotten a letter from our Insurance Co. asking if we had an updated policy for Sexual Misconduct, I was thinking we probably need to look at those policies. I would like to suggest the new Safety Task Force take this on along with the other work they will be doing.

I had an initial meeting with Breeze, now Tithely, to learn about the program and see if it works for our church. My next step is to reach out to two other church management companies to do the same. Once I've met with them and done an initial yes/no, I will reach out to church members who have shown interest or have a stake in the church management system to put together a task force. My hope is to be on a new system by later this year and before we need to renew with ICON in November.

On the facilities team, we welcomed new member Mike Toole as part of the team. Mike is an asset to the team with his former experience as an engineer and a self-professed enjoyment of reading manuals, financials, and contracts. We welcome that energy!

Celebrate Life

Just before the Annual Meeting, Rev. Kim, Robin, and I reviewed the church rolls. We removed individuals who are no longer active in the church and added the numerous new members we have had the pleasure of welcoming into our community. Here are the most recent figures.

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

Sadly, we have had three celebrations of life this past month. We had memorial services for Diane Knights on May 17, and for Kevyn Malloy, on June 7. We interred Carole Erb on June 7, as well, but will be holding her memorial service on July 5th.

Change the (UUCWC) World

Grounds Clean Up – Facilities and Earth & Climate got together on Saturday, May 3 & 24 to do a spring grounds clean up.

Beginning at the end of June (hopefully), the same contracting company that worked on the church renovations will begin the downstairs bathroom project. This project will also include fixing the floors on the 2nd floor in the classroom hallway.

Also planned for this summer is the painting of the classrooms by the ROMEO's. We are going to move away from having different colors for the classrooms and will paint them all the same color.

Treasurer's Report
Denny Rodgers

Notes for May 2025

Spring Plant Sale

Income \$890.00
Expense \$357.87
Net \$532.13

Auction: As of the end of May, the Auction has netted about \$40,100. There will be a fee assessed for the credit card charges made through the Auction platform in May at the beginning of June.

Music income: Cosmic Crossing concert on May 17.

Endowment

Endowment grant expenditures totaling \$12,706.24 made to date:

New freezer \$5,622
New water heater \$3,450
Serving dishes / pieces \$2,585.24
OWL camera for meetings \$1,049

The above grants were made for the 2025-2026 church year, but the Endowment Committee agreed that the funds could be made available now. We have received withdrawals from the Endowment Fund for \$11,551.68 to date. The remaining \$1,154.56 will be withdrawn from the Endowment Fund in the first part of June.

An additional grant purchase has been made for a book cart for the Racial Justice Ministry (\$498.99). Funds for this will be available at the start of the next church year.

The Endowment Reserve of \$1,653.55 is made up of the pending UUCEF reimbursement and the RJM expenditure.

Building expenses includes \$1,014 for Septic / grease trap pumping

Grounds maintenance – April lawn mowing fee (mowing started in mid-April)

Office expenses / subscriptions – included \$580 for our annual Zoom fee

Denominational Affairs: Scholarships towards registration fees for three GA delegates

Prepaid pledges: \$685 received in May (\$30,591 total to date)

Capital Campaign: no donations received in May

Transferred \$35,000 from the Capital Campaign checking account to the Merrill Lynch operating account for partial repayment of the “loan” to the Capital Campaign for the final expenses.