

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
November 11, 2020

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Nathalie Edmond called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Sue Saddlemire; Treasurer, Jim Sanders; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Scribe, Michael Howe-Smith; Trustees: Jeffrey Lang, Michael Waas, Jamie Evanini, Patrick Kahney; Senior Minister, Rev. Kim Wildszewski; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang; and DLFE, Robin Pugh.

First Hour

Consent Agenda - see appendix for complete reports.

Discussion Related to Consent Agenda

- Reverend Kim Wildszewski lifted up Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement Robin Pugh's ministry with adults and youth in the congregation during this time.
- The Board concluded that it's permissible and within relevant policy and procedure guidelines to publicly name UUCWC as a contributor to the Reach Out and Read initiative (established by the ROMEOS and JULIETS in honor of Malcolm) on the group's website and Facebook account.

Treasurer's Report and Related Discussion

- Board Treasurer Jim Sanders provided an overall update with key points as follows:
 - UUCWC is in good financial shape; the latest numbers are still pending pledge and plate additions which will be corrected/added for next month.
 - The YTD budget is being revised to show reduction of expenses in building maintenance, copier/printer lease end, trash collection, etc.
 - Amazon link sales have stopped; we are investigating working with GuideStar to be eligible for the Amazon Smile program. **ACTION:** Jim will provide FEIN number.
 - Electricity usage is still over anticipated amount but is still being investigated; there was also a recent rate increase by PSE&G which may impact expenses. **ACTION:** staff will potentially look into getting quotes from other energy providers as an alternative.*
 - ***NOTE:** In the days following this Board meeting, further investigation by Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang and Board Trustee Michael Howe-Smith showed that while PSE&G rates (\$ per KWH) have changed very

little, their maximum demand charge (\$ per KW) has increased by 23%. Building Committee Chair George Faulkner is researching cheaper alternatives.

- Recent Finance Committee meeting takeaways included:
 - End-of-year appeal budget was reduced by \$5,000; no Capital Campaign push is expected for at least a year until we have firm numbers on construction, bridge loan, etc.
 - The bank loan/refinancing process is proceeding via the Finance Committee and needs no further action from the Board at this time. **ACTION:** In the interest of transparency, the Board and Finance Committee will continue to provide relevant updates to the congregation via multiple methods, but no congregational votes are needed at this time as the congregation was updated at the annual meeting in June 2020 about potential \$400,000 bridge/construction loan.
- Jim's formal treasurer's report is pending.
- Jamie Evanini, Board Liaison to the Stewardship Committee, reported that the committee is making progress planning the end-of-year appeal campaign.
- Susan noted that some church members are researching the idea of a virtual craft fair as a potential fundraiser.

Congregant Privacy Policy

- Finance Committee Chair Mary Baltycki recently presented the Board with proposed revisions to the existing policy, which was approved in 2016.
 - Most of the changes were around "housekeeping" procedures, not wholesale policy revisions.
 - The Board discussed a larger long-term goal of separating policies from procedures, but housing them together. This is part of an ongoing Board goal related to the practice of "*Capturing Institutional Wisdom by Generating Policy.*"
 - **There was a motion to approve the policy** as revised, while asking the Finance Committee to de-couple the policy content from the procedure content. The motion passed unanimously via Zoom poll. **ACTION:** Board Secretary Colleen McCourt will follow up with Mary to advise her of the outcome.

Second Hour

Report on October Council Meeting

Board Vice President Sue Saddlemire reported that the Council Meeting was well-attended and received positive feedback. The next Council Meeting is scheduled for February.

Personnel Committee/Staffing Update

- As Board Liaison to the Personnel Committee, Sue reported on the committee's progress regarding the staffing proposals discussed at the November Board meeting. These would involve

hiring part-time support around specific administrative functions that are placing a growing burden on staff and volunteers. The Personnel Committee, in conjunction with Finance, was researching related costs, timing, roles and responsibilities.

- There was a proposal to use volunteer efforts from the church's current Finance Committee leadership to satisfy needs related to bookkeeping/financial administration. This would decrease some of the burden on existing staff but increase the burden on lay leadership.
- The Board discussed the pros and cons of the proposal, and whether it was aligned with UUCWC's longer-term strategic and tactical goals for healthy and sustainable growth. Discussion also focused on the cultural and pastoral implications of using volunteers to do the work of the church, and how such resources should be used intentionally and avoid over-burdening specific individuals and teams, especially as the church grows and workload increases in key administrative areas. This is part of an ongoing Board goal related to the practice of "*Holding the Fiduciary (Resource) Responsibility.*"
- Susan reiterated that the staffing proposal takes into account budgetary offsets from other areas.
- There is a related proposal to use volunteer efforts for a media/communications position, but the Personnel Committee is still researching the responsibilities and costs involved.
- **There was a consensus poll** to decline using volunteers over paid staff, related to the current staffing proposal recommendations. There was unanimous consensus. **ACTION:** Susan, Reverend Kim, Sue and Board Trustee Patrick Kahney will go back to the Personnel Committee to convey the Board's position and align on next steps.

Nominating/Leadership Development Task Force Update

The Board discussed progress and next steps for the Nominating/Leadership Development Task Force, in light of upcoming needs to fill leadership roles. **ACTION:** Board Liaison Patrick Kahney will invite representatives from the task force to the December Board meeting.

Update on Listening Circles related to Policing and Church Policies

Subsequent to previous Board discussions around our Disruptive Behavior Policy in relation to our 8th Principle, the Right Relations Committee is meeting with the Racial Justice Ministry this month to start developing listening circles around our policies for calling the police. Reverend Kim is involved, and the Right Relations Committee is already involved in researching de-escalation practices.

Executive Session

The Board entered executive session for approximately 10 minutes.

Church Reopening Update

- Susan reported that the limited opening of the sanctuary on Election Day was successful.
- Previously the Board had voted to re-evaluate full reopening on a quarterly basis. Accordingly, **there was a motion to approve** delaying reopening by another quarter, through April 2021. The motion passed unanimously. **ACTION:** Board and staff will continue to communicate status to the congregation via multiple methods.

Housekeeping and Other Action Items

Michael Waas will write the CrossCurrents article for December.

Meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Howe-Smith

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff Reports

Minister's Board Report November 2020 Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

The Sunday services have continued to serve the large majority of our congregation and newcomers. Attendance remains healthy and engaged, including many returning visitors and committed friends.

About 10 visitors attended the first virtual Roots or Curious About UU class I did this month. Though the information (a historical perspective on *how we got here*) still feels important to offer, it no longer feels relevant to preparing newcomers to be part of a modern Unitarian Universalism. I will be piloting a new virtual path to membership, open to visitors and longtime members starting on the 26th, which I am very excited about. There will be three “in person” (zoom) sessions and behind the scenes homework: listening to sermons, readings, and more. We will then connect for reflection, spiritual journey, and a chance to sign the membership book (I need to figure that one out virtually). The last session will be an inquiry on the process: what did they find beneficial or not, so I might pivot the path to membership accordingly.

I have to lift up that having a potential new member class of 10 or more is really something to celebrate for this time! Three cheers for Robin who is making so much of this connection and communication happen.

Because of the election I offered two additional worship services on Wednesday, November 4th, focusing on music and spiritual practice. About 75 people were in attendance between the two. With the help of you all, the reopening team, and the tech team we were able to open the sanctuary on November 3rd for a limited time and with strict covid boundaries for the first time since March. About 20 people attended (good information about interest and risk assessment) including two visitors who have been attending UUCWC since the pandemic and had never been in the building. Susan Irgang was instrumental in every single detail – from candles, to distancing, to music, to tech, to safety, to admin.

I attended a Marcia McFee (Episcopal Minister who holds doctorates in Liturgy & Psychology) webinar in preparation for Christmas Eve. I am working to fill the pulpit for the year with speakers we wouldn't normally have access to: Steven Williams, he/ them (our October preacher) is a hospital and UUMA chaplain from Tulsa; Rev. Tandi Rogers she/her (our

November preacher) is the Learning Strategist and Congregational Life Conflict Engagement minister for the UUA from Washington state.

Pastoral Care continues and I wish I could be more present to many.

Create Community (Small Groups)

I will be helping Robin find and train facilitators for the many new Chalice Circles (a huge success and endeavor!). Robin and I wrote and facilitated the first Tending the Flame (how to raise UUs) class; we wrote the second Family Chalice Circle sessions (two versions, based on age / development of group) on covenant. As someone who is also moving through these sessions with my family and another family, I am looking forward to learning how this very different year changes faith engagement going forward.

Change the World (Serve)

This past month we had more than 70 attendees – members and friends, leaders and curious – attend our Council meeting. I was grateful to help lead with Sue Saddlemire and further the conversation and articulation of Simple Church. How we keep engagement like this in person will be an exciting formula to figure out.

The Leadership Development Task Force continues to meet and has made big headway through a subgroup that has helped state the issues and path forward clearly. I think it would be great to hear from them at the next Board meeting. One issue remains: the current Nominating Committee's need to fill committee openings this year. I think we need a creative collective (transparent marketing to the congregation about our needs, the transition of the Nominating structure, etc) solution to this until we have a new system in place. Or something different than what we've been doing or asking of the Nominating Committee. (Patrick Kahney, I can work with you as their liaison if you'd like).

A follow up on the Malcolm Project and a request: Tara and I joined the UUCWC women who began the Malcolm Project – book donations to local underserved pediatric offices through Reach Out and Read – to deliver boxes of donated books. We met with medical staff and the Executive Director and Program Director from Reach Out and Read who thanked us for the donation and took our picture. They would like to share our story and UUCWC's contribution on their website and FaceBook. **Is it okay to name UUCWC as a contributor publicly?**

Lastly, from both Tara and me: thank you so very much for your kind and supportive words about Tara's pregnancy. Your presence continues to mean so much to us. I wanted to let you know that, with an early May birth, I will likely take the month of May off (the first four weeks of my eight week leave). I will then take the second portion of my leave (another four weeks) in

August so as to push off when we need to put the baby in childcare. I will set up another maternity leave team and pulpit supply between now and April.

With thanks and care,
Rev. Kim

Susan Irgang
Administrator BOT Report for November 2020

To Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World

Create Community

I worked with Denny Rodgers and Pat Czerwonka of Caring Ministry and Steve Saddlemire of Grounds to create *UUCWC Cares*, an outdoor, onsite way to physically express joys and sorrows while the church is closed (see picture below). Inspired by the Gratitude Garden at the UU congregation in East Brunswick and a similar interactive Racial Justice installation at a church in Princeton, UUCWC's offering opened on the Sunday before Election Day; we hope to keep it up if it stands up to the coming winter weather. One participant shared that she was surprised by how moving it was to be at church, engaging in this new ritual.

Preparing for UUCWC's Election Day opening and communicating this and other offerings in various outlets was the main focus in the last few weeks. I operationalized the recommendations of the Reopening Task Force and the Board, both in physical logistics as well as communication of plans. Seventeen people over the course of 6 hours sat in silent mediation in the Sanctuary, and two others used our outdoor spaces only. This event, while offering a refuge on Election Day, also served as a "test" of processes on how to safely be at church; all went well and those who attended were deeply appreciative of the opportunity to be in church in some fashion again.

In other Communications work, I have started using the Soul Matters Social Media Toolkit to improve engagement on the Community Building and main Facebook pages, helping our congregation stay connected during the building closure. While activity on these sites is related to other posts as well, reactions are up 6% and reactions have increased by 16% over last month. Lynne Quinto and I will begin a project to freshen the church website with newer images, changes to layout, and updating pages until her departure, though she has offered to stay connected on this project after her move later this year. Our goal is to create a more inviting and easier to navigate website, especially during COVID closure.

I continue to work closely with MJ Hansen, Lori O'Neil and Laura Brandt on the creation of a library of photos and videos of church, mostly for use in the opening sequence video every Sunday morning but for services as well. The brief video played each week belies the work involved in design, layout and preparation, but we are working to streamline the process for this creative work. MJ Hansen has also edited the videos of the complete Sunday service for posting on Facebook, making services available for those who were unable to attend. At this time, we are working on having this video on the website, though the file size is currently prohibitive.

UUCWC's Annual Report has been compiled, edited and published with help from Lynne Quinto. Read the Annual Report here.

Celebrate Life

Our numbers are 288 members, 28 friends, 47 Participants and 21 Attendees.

Change the (UUCWC) World

The Capital Project team is finishing the final details so the bid can be released, hopefully before month's end. Key members of the team meet weekly with the engineers and architect, with questions and design discussions worked out with the whole team. I continue to support the work answering questions about building needs, providing documentation to consultants, etc.

I worked with Mary Baltycki to locate and gather the documents needed for the refinancing of the mortgage, which is more complicated and requires more detailed submissions than that done in 2014 due to the accompanying construction loan. This has required extensive searching through the archives, files, etc., to meet the list of required items from the bank; once this project is completed I will create a central file for all such documentation for future reference.

Bookkeeping work continues as working at the church at least once a week for mail processing, oversight of repairs or maintenance by outside vendors, and checking the security of the building (plus watering plants, running water through the pipes and other facilities related work). The Facilities Management Team will meet next week to discuss best methods for maintenance/cleanliness/security for the long term/winter building closure.

Staff: As you know, Roberto Santiago suffered an injury in a non-work-related accident at his home, losing the tip of his right index finger; while his short-term disability has ended, we hope to welcome him back, with possible limitations, by mid-November. In his absence, I have covered his sexton responsibilities.



To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Nov 11, 2020

Re: Monthly DRE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I continue to assist the tech team by admitting people to our Sunday services. In addition to telling the story, during the service, I take attendance, and track and welcome visitors. I also generally notice which members attend.
- Visitors continue to find our online services. We've had 53 visitors since August. Twenty-one have come at least 3 times. Sixteen of those have been attending frequently (at least 6 times in 3 months). It would be so nice to be able to greet them at the door!

Create Community (Small Groups)

I've spent much of October creating community for parents, youth, newcomers and adults.

- For adults, besides advertising in the weekly email, newsletter and at Council meeting, I reached out to 45 people to join a chalice circle. Many were people who were becoming disconnected with UUCWC (e.g. I hadn't seen them in service, are newer members and don't know people, or are current frequent visitors), 20 people responded yes and 3 new chalice circles are forming in December. I've been trying to grow chalice circles for years.
- For parents, Kim and I are co-teaching a yearlong UU parenting class called Tending the Flame. This is a class I've been wanting to do for years, but has taken the pandemic to bring it to fruition. This year, I have the time and parents made the time because we are not doing in person RE. The class offers important tools for practicing UU at home, a much-needed opportunity for parents to meet and connect with each other (without their kids in tow) and time to relate to Rev. Kim as a parent and minister.
- For families, Kim and I are co-writing our every other week family chalice circles. Parents and children are connecting with each other as they engage in UU rituals.
- For newcomers, I have 35 people in my frequent visitor email group that I connect with weekly to steer them to opportunities of interest to them. Since my last report, we have 7 new visitors that I've been in contact with.
- For youth, I'm connecting with 10 middle schoolers during junior youth group. I'm experimenting with what works with this group and inviting input from them.

OWL is scheduled to resume in January. I expect 12 high school students to sign up for that.

- Chalice circles have a particular method which make it a successful tool for deepening spiritually. Chalice circle facilitators learn the technique and are recruited for their sensitivity. It is really a ministry. In October, I trained 2 new chalice circle facilitators which I am currently co- facilitating with until they feel confident (a few months) to lead on their own. With the addition of the 3 new chalice circles, I am leading or co-leading 5 of the 6 current chalice circles. Kim is helping me recruit and then train 6 more facilitators.