

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
December 9, 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. Also present were Marianne Alt and Sandy Muccioli representing the Leadership Development/Nominating Task Force; Marty Friedman, Lynne Quinto, Mary Baltycki and Joe Schenk representing the Personnel Committee, and Susan Vigilante and Jayme Trott representing the Capital Campaign Committee.

First Hour

Update from Leadership Development/Nominating Task Force

- Marianne Alt and Sandy Muccioli attended the meeting to provide the Board with an update on their process, methodology, progress and goals for the church year.
- The Task Force read *Simple Church*, to align with overarching church goals and inform their processes. Within this context, a subset of the Task Force reviewed and analyzed the current groups within UUCWC (ministries, committees, etc.) and how they are aligned with each of the 3 church themes (Create Community, Celebrate Life, Change the World).
 - Marianne pointed out that there are still some groups and functions at UUCWC that may not fit neatly into the 3 themes, but are still valuable and we still need to be mindful of that, but that overall, the 3 themes provide a good foundational approach.
- One of the Task Force's conclusions is that there should be a pathway for movement among the different stages, in a cycle of leadership, service and connection - not just to involve new leaders, but also to enable past leaders to recharge, renew and reconnect. There should be connectors among the different areas to lead people from one phase to the next.
- While the Task Force's stated task is to reimagine the way leadership development works at UUCWC, they have realized they can play a more central role in connecting the various groups at UUCWC.
- Communication and accessibility is a key means to achieving the Task Force's goals and expanding their mission. By interacting regularly with various groups at UUCWC, through attendance at committee and ministry meetings, breakout rooms, forms on our website, etc., we can facilitate more intentional, integrated ways to interact with the congregation and discern individuals' needs, skills, passions, and interests.

- This provides the Task Force with a larger pool of people to interview, and represents a more collaborative and inclusive model, which is more aligned with UUCWC's overall journey away from hierarchical structures and toward collective, shared leadership.
- New approach reflects shift toward shared leadership approach without leaving any team under-resourced
- The Task Force recently had the opportunity to pilot this expanded approach successfully with the Stewardship Committee, which served as a positive "beta test" of new processes. In this case, Sandy was able to provide Stewardship with a pool of individuals, and Stewardship will interact with them directly. This decentralizes the traditional role of the Nominating Committee, where they were previously tasked with filling roles as an independent and externally driven function, but were not as not empowered to be collaborative and connected with the groups they were supporting.
- In the future, the Nominating Committee name may be changed to reflect these shifts - for example, to the Congregational Development or Engagement Committee.
- Marianne indicated that as part of the Task Force's consideration of the church's ongoing needs around treasurer/finance functions, they have been brainstorming on shared leadership approaches such as a Fiduciary Team.
- Board President Nathalie Edmond thanked the Task Force for their work, which is aligned with the Board's ongoing goals toward transparent communication, and flexible, shared leadership models. Marianne and Sandy remained in the meeting to hear input from the Personnel Committee.

Update from Personnel Committee

- Marty Friedman, Lynne Quinto, Mary Baltycki, and Joe Schenk attended the meeting to provide an update on the staffing proposal that UUCWC staff and the Board have shared with Personnel and discussed at previous meetings.
- Joe reported that while the Personnel Committee is still refining the details, they have accepted and embraced the Board's charge to develop creative, sustainable staffing solutions that will ultimately result in hiring paid staff where needed in key areas, to ease the burden on volunteers and current staff, and support future church growth.
 - Personnel envisions a step change approach, particularly around Treasurer/Finance/bookkeeping functions, that would leverage Mary Baltycki's analytical skills and institutional knowledge to temporarily shift current work, as a step toward framing out a permanent paid position.
 - Discussion centered around the timing, logistics and practicality of the transition, with the paid position proposed to take effect approximately 1 to 2 years post-pandemic.
 - There was discussion around the Board's concern around not burning out volunteers or depending too heavily on specific individuals to fill roles for too long. Mary and Personnel indicated that Mary does not see the work as burdensome and that all parties understand that this is a transitional and temporary situation.
 - There was also discussion of the idea that the temporary position of "Financial Consultant" would need to balance doing the hands-on work of bookkeeping functions while also documenting processes and procedures, with an eye toward the big picture. Mary indicated that she sees the opportunity to streamline and unify the various systems that are overdue for change, ultimately simplifying things for future staff and volunteers.

- There was also discussion of the fiduciary team concept introduced by the Leadership Development/Nominating Task Force. Personnel sees potential value in the concept but feels a single individual would still need to be defined for focused accountability and the logistics required by the role.
- The Board and Personnel also discussed the current checks and balances in place between the Finance Committee, Personnel Committee staff, and the Board, and how that would be maintained if certain roles were shifted or combined; consensus is that historically there have been strong checks and balances and that would continue to be the case with the proposed role changes.
- Reverend Kim acknowledged the hard work and creative thinking of all parties, recognizing that while the Board and Personnel may represent varied perspectives, we're working toward the same goal and are more aligned than not.
- Sandy also indicated on behalf of the Task Force that they will need to understand what the upcoming slate will look like so they can plan appropriately.
- Nathalie thanked the members of the Task Force and Personnel, who then left the meeting.
- **ACTION:** The Board and staff acknowledge that further discernment and discussion are needed. The Board, in partnership with staff, will continue discussion on Personnel's recommendations at its retreat on 1/9/2021.

Second Hour

Update from Capital Campaign Committee

Susan Vigilante and Jayme Trott provided an update on the Capital Campaign progress. Key points included:

- The Committee has had 5 contractors do walk-through and is still taking their questions, with formal bid proposals due back to the Committee by 12/16/2020, and final award planned for 1/18/2021.
- Farzad Shadzik, working with UUCWC's selected architect, is helping to vet the proposals, and it's anticipated that Farzad will act as UUCWC's Owner's Representative.
- The Committee has attempted to solicit diverse proposals in alignment with the 8th Principle where possible; while one woman-owned firm has dropped out, the remaining bidders have presented a range of approaches and perspectives.
- Estimated timing assumes breaking ground in mid-March, with substantial completion by August, though the timeline could be impacted by various factors (e.g. certificate of occupancy, permit package, etc.).
- Elevator installation will likely be the last piece.
- Details are still being weighed in budget on best use of funds (e.g. trellis vs. upgrades to internal spaces); proposals will be reviewed with these considerations in mind.
- The Committee anticipates making frequent progress updates to the congregation via ongoing communications. This will also tie into a third phase of fundraising.
- Staff will need a plan for moving their things out of their offices, as well as moving other church equipment, during construction. **ACTION:** Staff will begin drafting a plan to address logistics.
- Trustees Jeff Lang and Michael Howe-Smith, as the Board's liaisons to the Committee, will continue to work closely with the Committee to remain in communication throughout the

process; any fiduciary decision points will have to come back to the Board. Jeff is reviewing the relevant legal documents.

- The Capital Campaign voted to fund an investment in the technology infrastructure in the sanctuary.
- Nathalie thanked the members of the Committee, who then left the meeting.

Executive Session

The Board briefly entered executive session.

Corporate Resolution for Bank Loan Process

As a next step in the bank loan refinancing process, Mary Baltycki needs to present a resolution to Northfield Bank, reflecting the Board's authorization to proceed with the previously agreed-upon mortgage loan amounts. **There was a motion to approve** the resolution: it passed unanimously via Zoom poll.

Consent Agenda - **see appendix for complete reports.**

Treasurer's Report and Related Discussion

- Board Treasurer Jim Sanders reported that pledges are off by 20% - we need to see what happens next month and then discuss potential remediation.
- End-of-year appeal is not approaching that of past years; as projected, it's not likely to approach the established goal; **ACTION:** Board Trustee Jamie Evanini, liaison to the Stewardship Committee, will continue to meet with Stewardship and discuss progress.

Housekeeping and Other Action Items

Michael Waas will write the CrossCurrents article for January.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Howe-Smith

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff Reports

Minister's Board Report December 2020 Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

Sunday mornings continue to serve as many or more adult participants as in-person church, including new and consistent visitors.

This past month I led the first of four session virtual (pilot) path to membership. There are 13 potential new members and 2 members participating in this small group ministry; most (9 of the 13) of these potential new members have come to UUCWC since the pandemic and have never set foot in our physical building. They are engaged, spiritually mature and diverse in age and sexual orientation; they are predominately white.

To help with navigating the holidays and Covid restrictions, Susan, Robin and I put together a UUCWC Advent calendar to help people feel connected and focused on the community that is available to them always. *I lift up the very intentional and excellent work of Susan Irgang in recent communications efforts, advertising all of our opportunities, including the Advent Calendar, in all possible arenas and numerous times.*

Our Christmas Eve service will be entirely pre-recorded; I'm working to include numerous UUCWC voices and Caryl is bringing in an equally large number of UUCWC musicians. With the help of our Tech people, most especially MJ Hansen, I anticipate Christmas Eve will be a lovely virtual offering. That said, all other years I take the Sunday before Christmas Eve off so as to plan, write and coordinate. This year I am leading four services in a row and also learning new technology. I am – by necessity and spiritual practice – having to let go of my own expectations of (my definition of) excellence this December.

Pastoral Care has its typical themes but has also notably looped back to frustration over virtual life, pandemic exhaustion, wish for fun and in person connection “like it was”. More of our members are directly affected by Covid19 with adult children and siblings testing positive.

Create Community (Small Groups)

I continue to help write and facilitate the faith engagement offerings with Robin including *Tending the Flame* on raising UU children and two developmentally appropriate Family Chalice Circles. I am, as mentioned above, now preparing for the second path to membership session that will occur this month. I am offering the second Lectio Divina class and participating in the upcoming Faith Forward offering this month.

I once again lift up Robin's excellent work with the small groups: faith engagement, congregational life and chalice circles --- in other words seeing the philosophy and practice of Simple Church through. Robin's work and Susan's work with communications have been essential to the success of this fall.

I also share that the topics we've been covering in the Faith Engagement & Path to Membership spaces have been deep and important. Individuals and families are engaged and *practicing* UU themes on covenant, chalices as centering faith tools, healing, values, and more. There is a holistic UUCWC / UU experiencing happening that is different from the Sunday morning one hour participation.

Change the World (Serve)

This past month I led the second quarterly meeting for the Council for Faith in Action which is so healthy and so productive. Food Ministry has joined the Council, leaving only Earth Ministry to continue in discernment about shared efforts.

I am in conversation with Rev. Rob Gregson (Faith Action NJ) on adopting the 8th Principle for our NJ UU congregations.

I met with the Leadership Task Force who continue to grow in creative discernment about how to recruit and invite members into leadership and service positions at UUCWC. I lift up Susan Irgang who helped make my very simple list (taken from *Sandy Muccioli's good work!*) on what positions we need filled into something reader-friendly and informative, now available on our website and Facebook. We are also looking to utilize Sunday breakout rooms, mimic the Faith Forward program with a Nominating focus, and other virtual offerings to help move us toward a strong and not rushed completed slate come spring.

I am helping the Right Relations committee organize their disparate communications into one shared (but closed) Google folder. We are talking about appropriate ways of sharing and keeping information. They are beginning the work of coordination with the Racial Justice Ministry on alternatives to policing. They will be working with the Worship Associates and Tech Worship Team on creating new covenants in January.

Wishing you all good health and gentle days.

Susan Irgang
Administrator BOT Report for December 2020

Create Community

Communications work has been heavy this month, as Lynne Quinto transitioned out of her key roles and I respond to requests from various groups for website additions and updates. I am learning to create webpages, forms and menu dropdowns and other new skills; an example is the new webpage [Opportunities to Serve in 2021-2022](#) made from Sandy Muccioli's information and Kim's notes, and which may help inform/encourage people to volunteer for the Board, leadership and committee work as well as assist Nominating in advertising openings.

Chris Piatek has assumed editing of the CrossCurrents newsletter; Lynne will guide Chris through the creation of the upcoming December issue. There is some interest in website assistance, notably from Wendy Stasolla who did an excellent job on the layout of the Craft Fair webpage; I still am looking for someone with web hosting and software update experience and the ability to teach Wordpress to new users such as myself.

Social media engagement on the Community Building Facebook page as measured by comments is up 35% this month, and page views on the main (outward facing) church Facebook page are up 33% this week. To streamline the routine posting work, I am creating schedules for the UUCWC Advent Calendar and Soul Matters images to further expand our social media presence and engagement.

This month was notable for assisting various groups figure out the logistics for carrying on UUCWC traditional opportunities for generosity and giving, such as the End of Year giving campaign, Mitten Tree, Turkeys for TASK, etc. We continue to find ways to continue our mission when building access remains restricted.

Laura Brandt brought the idea of a virtual craft fair to replace the prior in person Festival of Fine Arts to Fundraising Chair Wendy Stasolla. This marketplace of vendors advertising their websites and links on the church website and in our emails came together very quickly with an extremely tight deadline. Two considerations for future include determining the cost/benefit of such events when factoring in the amount of volunteer and staff time relative to the profit; and consideration of how such non-program requests fit in with Simple Church. Fundraisers, for example, bring in money for general operations, but do not neatly fit in the program/mission-driven Simple Church model.

Earth Ministry completed a two-year plus process of becoming certified as the first River Friendly Community Partner (gold level) by the Stony Brook Watershed Association. The certification is an acknowledgement of our sustainable practices within the church as well as protections to our grounds and the local watershed. A plaque was awarded and a lovely article will appear in their quarterly newsletter due out this week. Please take a moment to see the plaque presented to UUCWC and read the article and link at

the end of this report. Thanks to Barbara Drew and Steve Saddlemire for working with Stony Brook on the application and certification process.

Celebrate Life

Our numbers are 288 Members, 28 Friends, 52 Participants and 31 Attendees, with the number of Participants and Attendees increasing as we reclassify visitors more accurately as attendees and participants; revised totals will be in the January report.

Attendance comparisons to prior years is a challenging exercise: before virtual worship, total attendance was a compilation of counts of people in the Sanctuary, those “roaming” elsewhere in the building, and children and teachers in their classrooms. With the change in children’s faith engagement during our closure, comparisons of attendance seem best done between those attending online worship vs. only those in the Sanctuary in prior years. Using this model, there is an increase of about 26% in attendance over the same five-week period last year. Attendance at online worship continues strong, particularly when Rev. Kim leads the service.

Change the (UUCWC) World

The Capital Project bid has been released and contractors have toured the building with Farzad Shadzik, who is taking the lead in the next phase of this project. We are beginning discussion on packing and storage with the assumption of ground breaking in late March 2021. As we enter the next phase of the expansion project, we will continue to share information as the excitement starts to build.

I continue to work with Mary Baltycki to finalize the refinance loans and move our accounts to Northfield Bank, including ordering new checks, transferring money and exploring online bill pay and deposits as a result of this change.

The Worship Tech team ran into difficulty last month when the Zoom account for Sunday worship, obtained via the UUA at a discounted rate, no longer allowed recording of services. This led to a flurry of activity resulting in “swapping” the Worship Tech account with the church’s account for committee meetings, as the latter account through Tech Soup does have recording capability. This entailed rescheduling every committee Zoom meeting on the calendar and notifying leaders of the new codes. The switch was completed, recording can now continue, and procedures for video and audio storage guidelines and locations are being documented.

Staff: Roberto Santiago returned to work this past month and seems able to resume all his activities despite his injury. It was good to welcome him back to work!

(Excerpt from Stony Brook Watershed’s *River Friendly Reflections*)

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Washington Crossing (UUCWC) makes sustainability practices a priority for their property and congregation. When the church recently needed to expand their parking, they installed pervious parking areas to reduce stormwater runoff and pollution. They also continuously strive to reduce their waste by

switching products to recyclable or reusable materials. In June of 2020, The UUCWC was recognized as the first River-Friendly Community Partner. Congratulations! [Read more about their certification!](#)

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Dec 7, 2020

Re: Monthly DLFE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I continue to track and welcome visitors during the Sunday services. Most of our online visitors find us by having a connection to someone in the congregation. We've had 63 visitors since August. Of those visitors, half remain in our system! 16 are participants (regular attenders of worship who engage in something else besides worship at UUCWC- Now this means a parent class or ARE class – including 9 in Kim's new path to membership class), 5 are attendees (people who attend regularly about 2x per month) and 10 are on their way to being attendees but have only been coming since October so we don't have the data to make them a participant yet. This is very good news. Other churches do not have the attendance on Sunday that we do.
- There will be no participatory pageant this year using humans, but Kim and I have planned a virtual one using UUCWC's children's stuffed animals. It will be shown during the Time for All Ages on 12/20.

Create Community (Small Groups)

I've spent much of the past month continuing to offer connection opportunities for parents, youth, newcomers and adults.

- For adults, after reaching out to 45 people (who have not been seen on Sundays or who live alone) to join a chalice circle. 25 responded yes! This ministry is needed right now and I spent a lot of my time in November getting 4 new Chalice Circle groups up and running. During the 3 orientation sessions for the 25 people, some of the comments I heard were: "I NEED this, 2020 has been a bad year, I've gotten out of the habit of going to church and I need to be accountable to my spirituality, I need a new kind of existence, I'm not around people, I've been with myself a lot." I hope that chalice circles can offer people a deeper connection to the church and their spirituality during the pandemic.
- With 4 new Chalice Circles launching, Kim and I recruited 3 additional facilitators. I will co-facilitate with them for 4 months as they are trained in the combination of technique and ministry needed to facilitate a Chalice Circle. Additionally, I offer our 7 chalice circle facilitators (5 facilitators have started since October) a monthly training and support group.
- For parents and families, Kim and I are working collaboratively to create great programming for parents (the UU parenting class) and families (2

developmentally appropriate Family Chalice Circles). It's been a gift of virtual church to work creatively with Kim. We complement each other's skills and are able to create something better than either of us individually would create. We are using this virtual church year to offer families a different and complementary church experience to when we meet physically.

- For youth, I'm connecting with 7 middle schoolers during junior youth group. OWL for our 12 high School Students is scheduled to resume in January.
- For newcomers, I continue to connect with all visitors weekly to steer them to opportunities of interest to them and answer questions. Since my last report, we have added 8 new visitors. I believe that one reason Kim has 9 potential members in her class (that have never been to our physical church) is my repeated individual contact with them as well as our fabulous online worship services!