

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
September 8, 2021

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Joe Schenk, Treasurer; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Michael Waas, Wendy Stasolla; Jim Sanders; Michael Howe-Smith; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang; and DLFE, Robin Pugh.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote)

The Board discussed the music program during the pandemic and voted unanimously to provide a letter of support and appreciation for Caryl Tipton in recognition of her commitment and dedication.

Vice President Jamie Evanini and Trustee Wendy Stasolla presented meeting structure and engagement flow techniques from a Board UUA training, for consideration to enhance future Board meetings.

Covenant Review

- Since this is a new Board, we discussed reviewing/revising the current Board covenant. One suggestion was to add collective comments to the current covenant to make suggestions on what would work best for this Board.
- **ACTION:** This will be further discussed at the upcoming Board retreat.

Homefront Project Discussion

- The Board discussed a request from Sarah Burke regarding UUCWC's volunteers to provide tutoring and meal prep services offsite at Homefront's Lawrenceville site, since UUCWC's facilities are currently closed per the reopening guidelines, based on community risk level.
- The Board considered:
 - What the church's role/responsibility would be vs. individual volunteers participating - is it an official or "sanctioned" UUCWC program in these circumstances, even though it may not fit within the gathering protocols observed for our own facilities?

- Historically, this program has not been specifically limited to UUCWC members - there are also other community members who participate - what is their option if we don't continue our program efforts?
- Would it be marketed by Homefront or by UUCWC and how? In whose name? Is it a mixed message to convey that
- How does this fit within our larger spiritual work in the community and what would be lost by not finding a way to continue? This program exemplifies the Simple Church mission, and historically UUCWC has taken an active leadership role.
- We can still support flexible options in these pandemic circumstances while upholding our own regathering protocols within UUCWC's facilities.
- We should be clear about communicating guidelines.
- **There was a pulse check via Zoom poll:** Split results entailed further discussion.
- **ACTIONS:** Maria will follow up with Sarah and possibly set up a meeting to get more specific details from Homefront about logistics and expectations, and will communicate such information to the Board via email.

Second Hour

Capital Campaign History

- Given that this is a new Board, and the Capital Campaign has entered a new phase with a revised scope, Marianne Alt arrived at 8 p.m. to provide the Board with some in-depth historical context on the Capital Campaign. General discussions involved:
 - The history of the original plans, funding campaigns, committee tasks and practices, 8th principle considerations, how the Board liaised with the committee, delays and precipitating factors, changes and evolution of the original plans, etc.
 - The information was useful in planning for the current Board to understand and support the committee's work in relation to the larger church budget, overall Board fiduciary responsibility, project management and scheduling framework, etc.
- Maria thanked Marianne and she left the meeting.
- **ACTION:** Treasurer Joe Schenk will draft a general plan for budgeting and project management that will guide the Board's ongoing collaboration with the committee.

Board Retreat - Sept 25th, place TBD

There was a vote via Zoom poll on whether the retreat should be held in person or virtually. The majority voted for virtual.

Housekeeping & action items

Joe shared that a donor to the congregation gave a \$10,000 gift and said to use it however it may best be needed. **There was a vote via Zoom poll** to put the money in escrow to balance future budget gaps, which passed with unanimous consent.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer's Report

Exec Meeting Sept 2, 2021

The Exec Team met to discuss preparation for the Sept. 8th Board meeting. In attendance were:

Maria Baratta, Jamie Evanini, Colleen McCourt, Joe Schenk, Rev. Kim

Topics discussed include:

- Board members will be asked to review the covenant currently in place in anticipation of updating it over the next few months. The current covenant, which is included in each agenda, will be entered into the meeting pre-reads and should be reviewed by all Board members before the Sept. 8th meeting.
- Reopening updates - congregation is being kept apprised of plans for types and style of gathering for services in the new church year. No changes to plans at this time.
- Retreat planning. The Board must agree as to how the retreat will be held: all virtual or hybrid. If it is all virtual it will be cut to about 4 hours with a future gather later in the fall (hopefully).
- Marianne Alt will be our guest at the full Board meeting to address some history on the capital campaign.
- A major question for the Board now is how to work with the Capital Campaign Project team to create a set of metrics for the Project team that provide meaningful, measurable results in terms of finances and project progress, which they can report on regularly.
- Homefront Request - the Board received a request to determine whether the UUCWC Homefront Tutoring program can continue under that description when held at an offsite location. Essentially, volunteers would prepare bagged dinners at their home, which they will take to the church for delivery to students at the offsite location. Tutors would work with the students on location while following masking requirements. Essentially, the question is if UUCWC will conduct a program offsite at an alternate location when the church COVID opening policies do not allow the same activity within the church building itself based on health and safety protocols. An email from Sarah Burke was placed as a pre-read for the Sept meeting.
- \$10K Gift held in escrow - There is an unrestricted gift received by the church from a donor that is still in escrow. A decision has to be made as to what to do with those funds.

September 2021 Board Report

Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

Throughout August we continued the conversation on the impact of trauma with service topics like perfection as a trauma response, avoidance, and choosing to be counter-cultural in the face of normalization. The latter briefly touched on changes we are making to the faith engagement program for our children and youth.

This month was also when I began leading Sunday services from the sanctuary, with a team of four others: two tech leaders, the musician (typically Steve), and Robin. We continue to follow safety precautions, even with this small of a team in such a large space: masks, distance, and the fan turned on.

We have learned that we need, at minimum, three tech leaders on each Sunday – someone to handle the sound booth, someone to navigate the camera, spotlighting and videos, and someone to do admitting and links. Ariel's skills continue to be a huge asset to the team, but even with an accountable staff person, the job is too large. As such, we looked at the Office Assistant position and realized that, because of Delta, that position was greatly underutilized. The job is now 1/3 office assistance and 2/3 tech assistance. Rachel Hansen has taken on the preparation and editing of slides; editing Sunday service videos and closed captioning; posting and addressing copyright issues. She is also admitting people on Sundays and attending our rehearsal each Thursday.

Though our attendance tracks about the same each week, there is now zero feedback loop to know how or if the services are resonating. I've requested feedback in my email, on facebook, and in the weekly emails but with little to no result. Any creative solutions or encouragement is welcomed!

Re: Covid & Worship Services: On September 12th, we will offer two tandem worship services. At 10am, participants can sign onto a full-length remote Water Ingathering service with music, movement and word. At 10am, others can choose to come to the church and participate in a brief ritual service, led by Robin and me. This ritual service will include 10 minutes of gathering (standing only, no seating will be provided, encouraged or needed) with a welcome and meditation and send off from me, as well as a review of safety precautions (masks remain even outside, distance, etc). Folks will then be encouraged to participate in 6 different self-directed water rituals that invite participants to travel around the grounds. The ritual will be based off the hymn "Peace like a River," and this time is not expected to introduce us to any sort of multi-platform experience, but be an effort of compromise and commitment. I expect a lot of feedback from this.

Unfortunately Tony Panzetta's memorial service that was planned for his community at Pennswood has been delayed due to the rise in Covid cases. I officiated my first in-person wedding (my first in-person anything!), but will be declining a wedding I previously committed to that is coming up in October in an effort to maintain my physical and mental health. Richard

Knight's memorial service will be held outside in the memorial garden for family and close friends in October.

Pastoral Care has been significant these weeks.

Create Community (Small Groups)

Robin and I continue to discuss and revamp the faith engagement program for children and youth. We led two parent meetings to inform and discuss these changes. Overall, there was gratitude, but this was certainly not universal. Our parents are, to say it lightly, overwhelmed.

Beginning in September I will be offering the Pathways (path to membership) classes again and expect a large group of both new and long-term members. I hope to facilitate a book group for the leaders of the congregation sometime in the winter.

Change the World (Service)

I facilitated a mission and planning conversation for the Right Relations Committee as well as the Pastoral Care leadership.

I led the quarterly Council for Faith in Action meeting this month and am prepping to facilitate a retreat / recommitment conversation with the 8th Principle Reading Group later this month.

I am working with the tech team on covenanting, and leading the Worship Associates through the book *Worship that Works* --- which is a very different experience given our online world now.

Next month I need to focus on creating a Stewardship Team and, with your help, need to set out a mission and goal for this group.

To schedule for another meeting: Soon, as part of my contract, we need to discuss the sabbatical section and go over new changes. I think Joe was going to lead that conversation. Additionally, last year's Board, Personnel Committee and I agreed that it would be good to have a meeting in the fall, specifically for these groups to meet and discuss the year's goals and challenges before we get to the budget meeting. I proposed to the Personnel Committee that we should also talk about role and function; a left over conversation from last year, too.

Separately, the monthly meetings with NJ UU ministers begin again this week. Early next month I begin a year long Wellspring course with other religious professionals.

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for September 2021

This month's report is unusually brief, as I took a much-needed vacation from 8/23 through 9/6. Tuesday, 9/7 was my first day back and an email catch up day.

Create Community

I continue to track COVID statistics for Bucks and Mercer, both of which are at the "Very High" risk category according to the NY Times tracking app. We plan to share the risk level info in the weekly email and on the website.

I continue to work with the Communications Team on website content updates; the team meets after this month's Board meeting, so updates will be available for October.

Celebrate Life

Our current membership is 282 Church Members (includes 7 Virtual Members), 21 Friends, 40 Participants and 21 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 282, we are actively serving a system of 364, not counting children or visitors.

Change the (UUCWC) World

When reopening was projected for September, I met with a vendor regarding copier/printer equipment options, as we are operating with only a desktop unit since the lease expiration/copier return in August 2020. There are ways to reduce costs on this equipment in the future through changes in specs; however, we are evaluating how much printed materials are needed in the future as we balance online and in person gatherings. There is an opportunity to significantly reduce paper usage, positively impacting the environment, as well as reducing copier costs. For now, we can continue to contain operating costs by delaying any decision, perhaps until post construction in 2022.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Sept 7, 2021

Re: Monthly DLFE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I started telling the story for all ages in the sanctuary this month to begin to get a feel for multi- platform worship. I am so glad we scheduled this “practice “month so that we can welcome people in person and virtually with our full attention when we return to in person worship.
- I continue to track and welcome visitors in our Sunday services. I am in email conversation with several people who found us in August. They will attend the visitor meet and greet on zoom later this month.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- Planning, recruiting, training, and advertising, for the 7 Adult Faith Engagement opportunities this fall is a large part of my work in August/September.
- Last spring, I was leading 6 chalice circles. I’ve recruited 7 fabulous facilitators (including board members Michael Howe Smith and Jamie Evanini). I am saying goodbye to 3 of the circles this month.
- Kim and I will lead 2 virtual opportunities for visitors this month. One is an informal meet and greet and the other is Pathways, the path to Membership Class. Both have active sign ups.
- Kim and I had 2 meetings with parents this month to share our ideas about the children and family’s program (in person and virtual). Most of the person were thankful for the program. However, there were a couple who wanted to return to the way Faith Engagement was before the pandemic.
- I’m working on several possibilities for OWL 6-7th grade and 9-10th grade (to start between Nov- Jan). I will have the parents vote on which option is best for them.
- At my August 30th class with parents, they shared how overwhelmed they were right now. There is a lot of anxiety for children, teens and parents about returning to school. They felt as if there was no order and rhythm to being back at school. As one parent shared: How did I ever make school lunches?”. The group was thankful for the supportive space we offered.
- Beginning October 1st , if the church is not open, I will be offering a twice a month children’s chapel on Sunday morning and a twice a month firepit for teens on Friday evening.

Professional Development and Support

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

Twice a month I meet with UU religious educators in the metro NY area to share information about programs and offer support.

This fall, I'm taking Beloved Conversations "within" for religious professionals and 2 spiritual direction courses, one for Children and one for adults.

I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

Treasurer's Report

September 1, 2021

Statement of Income and Expense as of the close of the August Month were shared in the pre-reads.

Summary:

- All financial indications are positive with a \$25k positive variance to date!
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.23 million:
 - o \$482k Operating combined balances
 - o \$594k Capital Campaign
 - o \$190k Endowment

Year to Date Finances as of 8/31/2021			
Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	3,381	Staff	50,483
Pledge	95,804	Operations	19,451
Paycheck Protection Forgiveness	5,000	Program	2,437
All Other	603	Debt Service	4,244
	104,788		76,616
Net Income (Loss)	28,172		

Financial highlights are as follows through August 31

Overall Budget Tracking: \$25k Positive Variance Year to Date

Income: Positive variance: \$11k (\$11,000 more income than budgeted)

1. "Plate Income" lower by \$2k
2. Pledge Income positive by \$14k
3. Solar Panels: No income recorded year to date – I will be completing redemption this month

Expense: Positive Variance: \$14k (\$14,000 less spend than budget)

1. **Staff:** positive variance \$5k
 - a. \$1.6k minister's professional expense
 - b. \$0.7k DLFE professional expense
 - c. \$1.7k Sexton expense
 - d. \$0.7k Accompanist expense
 - e. \$0.3k Office Assistant expense
2. **Operations:** positive variance \$5.5k
 - a. \$1.0k Grounds expense
 - b. \$0.5k Insurance expense
 - c. \$0.5k Utilities expense
 - d. \$3.2k Technology - Sanctuary expense
 - e. \$0.3k Miscellaneous other expense
3. **Program:** positive variance \$3.9k

- a. \$1.5k Adult RE expense
 - b. \$1.2k Council for Faith in Action expense
 - c. \$1.0k RE expense
 - d. \$0.2k Miscellaneous other expense
4. **Debt Service:** To Budget (no variance)

Reminder Items:

1. A **looming budget deficit** for the next fiscal year – 2022-2023 based on current and increasing staffing plans including the Bookkeeper role
2. Hiring plans for a Professional Bookkeeper/ Comptroller
3. Bookkeeping software upgrade to Quickbooks Online
4. Financial oversight and management for UUCWC Operating Funds, Endowment Fund and Capital Campaign Funds
 - I have met with George Faulkner and have a meeting set with the remaining Capital Campaign Leadership on September 8th.