

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - FINAL
MARCH 11, 2026
Multi-Platform Meeting

Co-Presidents Bob Alt & Chris Marietti called the multi-platform Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:00pm ET. Also in attendance: Treasurer Denny Rodgers; Trustees: Bob Busch, Joseph Goldfedder, Wendy Stasolla, David Thomas, Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski; Assistant Minister Lisa Schilansky; and Congregational Administrator, Marilyn Gonzalez.
Regrets: Vice President Karen Kent, Secretary Michelle Zechner

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

The board reviewed reports. There was a discussion about proper tax classification of an intern based on feedback from Rev. Lisa that they were informed by a tax professional that their classification while an intern was not correct and had to pay higher taxes as a result. It is not known what the proper tax classification should be, and so this was shared for future reference and investigation for the next time an internship was pursued.

Denny reviewed highlights from the Treasurers Report. The plate is at 120% to budget, pledges 112% to budget, revenues 115% to budget, expenditures 102% to budget. We expect \$94k cash on hand end of this fiscal year.

Marilyn shared the interim stewardship campaign update. Pledges are \$45k short of goal so far with 66% of the congregation pledging. Stewardship will be following up with phone calls to remaining households.

BOARD UPDATES

Chris Marietti shared that he will be stepping down as co-President but remain as member-at-large Board member. Bob acknowledged that this was Rev. Lisa's last Board meeting and each Board member spent time expressing words of appreciation for Rev. Lisa's contributions.

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Reverend Kim shared an update about the Communication Committee. It has recently formed and members are highly engaged and defining ways of working. The plan is for them to come and present their goals and plan at the next Board meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

A closed Board session was held where the preliminary budget for fiscal year 2026/2027 was discussed and Board votes were held to guide decisions for the draft proposed budget which will be shared with the congregation in May and for congregational vote at the June annual meeting.

Upcoming key Board planning dates:

- 4/2 - Exec meeting
- 4/8 - Board meeting, budget vote
- 4/15 - Regular Board meeting
- Early/mid-May - Budget listening circles
- 5/7 Exec meeting
- 5/13 - Board meeting
- 5/31 - Congregational budget meeting

Second Hour

Upcoming Events: Multiple events were identified in the upcoming month.

3/12-3/20 - Marilyn on vacation

3/17 - Final Pathways class

3/18 - final Vespers

3/27 - Loaves & Fishes, transition day for Ronnie and Ed

3/29 - Rev. Lisa celebration Sunday; potluck and big band concert

3/30-4/5 - Rev. Kim on vacation

4/5 - Rev. Lisa last sermon (Hunterton UU minister back-up)

5/16 - New Hope PRIDE. Jen Rehbein will lead.

PERSONNEL UPDATES:

Rev. Kim shared that the UUA has established a new process for filling minister roles this year, which involves a ranked choice process between ministers and congregations. We need to submit our choice(s) by 3/23 and need Board support in advance. Rev. Kim reported that four candidates were considered for the assistant minister position with one candidate making it to final selection. The selection committee will submit to the UUA that individual's name as our first choice. The Board reviewed and unanimously approved the standard UU contract for the assistant minister.

The meeting adjourned at ~9:00pm ET

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Alt, on behalf of Michelle Zechner who was unable to attend the meeting

President, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive, Staff and Treasurer Reports

Minister Board Report
March 2026
Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Create Community

Our recent worship services have been full! Full of information (Endowment, Auction, Stewardship and Right Relations presentations), gorgeous music (our Guest Musician series continues to bring beauty and richness), and diversity of thought and invitation.

On the 15th, we had the great privilege of hosting participants from Ritual for Return, during which we heard the intimate and vulnerable stories of people who have recently come home from incarceration. At the same time, Rev. Lisa and others from the Racial Justice Ministry and Community Opportunity Fund were at Westminster Presbyterian, celebrating our involvement with the microloan program.

Rev. Lisa, our worship associate and tech team once again navigated another snow-threatening Sunday. The next week I spoke about our need to build community as a sacred effort, not just a secular want. OWL continues to create consistency among our 5th & 6th graders, bringing in more engagement from their siblings and parents, too.

Outside of Sunday services, during this last month I began taking over facilitating our parent group, Tending the Flame. Jen Couchoud is beginning a once / month craft circle after services on Sunday. I continue to offer Lectio Divina, weekly. I am working with our new Adult Faith Engagement ministry on securing classes, clarifying policies, and getting clear about the technical pieces of this ministry, including charging non-members for participation.

Additionally, we have one more Pathways class before the end of March. My hope is that half or more of the attendees will become members, and that all will choose to be pledging friends. For the first time, Pam Shadzik, on behalf of Congregational Engagement, will be presenting during our last session. We hope this begins a better onboarding experience as folks move from participant to new member.

Due to the snow days this month, I had to cancel the first Membership Council meeting I had planned. It will likely be rescheduled for April.

Celebrate Life

I am grateful that there have not been any major rites of passage needs since we last met. Hospital and home visits continue as needed and are coordinated alongside Rev. Lisa's ministry. I am looking forward to celebrating their ministry on March 29th.

Change the World

Personnel:

As you know, **Ariel Schwartz** has begun to transition out of his role as the AV Tech coordinator. Though we've posted the position, I've also recruited two members (a young adult and youth) to be

trained by John Harvi. John will be leaving for Japan in mid April and will be gone for 2.5 months.. Though I have some concerns, I am curious to see if we can shift this position into being entirely lay-led. To note: we do have 1 applicant for the AV position. Erin Busch and I will do the first round of interviews and then include John and others as needed.

Erin Busch announced her pregnancy and upcoming parental leave (August through December)! As a reminder, from Erin's note:

Silas Irvine (you may recognize him as the pianist who has played with the big band!), will be playing for services and directing the choir. Silas will be paid the majority of my agreed-upon pay for this five-month period, which will cover Sunday services and weekly choir rehearsal. This will be calculated as a set amount for each week, so that if we need to hire someone to sub for Silas (if he is sick, for instance), we will have money set aside to cover that cost. Silas will assist in finding a sub if needed. I will retain a small portion of my salary as a consultant for this period in order to maintain some aspects of the choir program, such as programming decisions and creating practice parts. I plan to do the vast majority of this consulting work over the summer.

We will celebrate **Rev. Lisa's** ministry on March 29th during the service (also New Member Sunday). A celebratory potluck will follow. The Big Band will follow the potluck!

Staff evaluation season has begun, will be completed by the end of the month, and shared with the Personnel Committee.

The **Assistant Minister** Search Committee and I have, at this time, completed our search and have selected a candidate for the position. As per the new UUA Search process, which is now rank choice, I have expressed our interest in **one candidate** (bio will be included in the pre-reads and should be kept out of the public/published materials) but we won't hear back until March 25th once all congregations and ministers have been matched. The committee and I are very excited about this possible ministry.

Lastly, please see the pre-reads for an update on the recent **Communications Committee** meeting.

With care and thanks,
Rev. Kim

March 2026 Board Report
Minister for Justice and Pastoral Care's Report
Rev. Lisa Schilansky

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

Perceiving that my upcoming departure may not yet be hitting the congregation, I intentionally addressed it in my two most recent sermons. On February 22nd we explored the ways our personal values can help build resilience in the fight for justice and I talked about the incredible justice work this congregation has done with my support and, most importantly, independent of the Minister for Justice and Pastoral Care. This past Sunday I went more direct and spoke about the special time that the congregation is about to enter. I recognize that there is a lot of anxiety in the system and that we will be saying goodbye to each other without knowing if I will have a successor, so it is my intention to preach in a way that helps the congregation have a good goodbye. Together we explored the intricacies of time and the considerations of this time in the life of the congregation as a point of fact rather than a point of crisis.

On February 15th, I had the incredible honor of joining members of our Racial Justice Ministry and Community Outreach Fund as we attended worship at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Trenton for the Trenton Microloan Collaborative Loan Issuance service. Pastora Karen, the church's minister, invited me to co-lead a prayer with her for the loan recipients. This was an important moment of interfaith worship, of community collaboration, and of living into our values. This was the type of ministry that was only possible because we had two ministers and I was able to be away with a portion of our congregation while Rev. Kim led the service at UUCWC.

My other worship focus, of course, is the monthly Vespers service. February's service was powerful and vibrant and well attended in person, though for the first time ever there was a not a single virtual attendee. As I prepare for the final ever Vespers service, I am giving a lot of thought to this ministry and to what it has held for the small number of dedicated congregants. Over its thirteen occurrences, thus far, almost seventy different people have attended Vespers at one time or another. This would not be possible without the volunteer leadership of Rachel Hansen (who while she is a staff member, volunteers her time for Vespers), Jayme Trott, Christa Olson, Holly Bussey, Jim Sanders, and Martha Bell.

One final note, this past month I was notified that a prayer I had written for and delivered at UUCWC was selected to be published by the UUA's Worship Web resource. This honor reflects positively on the congregation and will live in perpetuity on this online resource.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

This past month, I continued to support the pastoral care needs of the church, connecting with those in need in planned and spontaneous ways. I also continued to support the Caring Cohort and am working to bolster the Caregivers' Support Group prior to the end of my ministry.

The 20s and 30s group is growing and is a truly vibrant ministry. We had an all-virtual gathering on Sunday March 1st. The Sunday night online game night was a great success and a new member was warmly welcomed into the group. The group continues to be a good blend of longer term members, those new to UUCWC within the past year, and young adult children of long time members who live locally but are not active attendees of the church. Another gathering is planned for the 24th. The new communications structure, Discord, is going well, and I will plan and advertise three monthly gatherings into the future that Rev. Kim will promote in my absence to help the new group continue on without hands-on ministerial attendance at their events.

Change the World

The majority of my focus in this area has been on overseeing Loaves and Fishes. This thirty-plus-year tradition at UUCWC has us partnering with UU Princeton as we take over one of the weekends at St. Mary's Cathedral in Trenton for their meal program. Food Ministry cooks part of a hot meal, 250 bagged lunches will be packed on March 27th with twenty-five volunteers, ten volunteers will bake dozens of brownies at home, and ten additional volunteers will serve the hot meal to the guests of St. Mary's. This large endeavor is a great opportunity for intergenerational involvement and this year we have a wonderful blend of those new to the church within the past year serving alongside those who have been doing this work for decades. Ed and Ronnie Dobrowolski have been overseeing this for thirty years and are providing invaluable historical knowledge and leadership this year as I bridge the gap between their incredible leadership and train my successor to ensure that the program can continue for years to come.

I continue to meet with each of our CFA ministries, either with the teams themselves or with their representatives depending on scheduling realities. These meetings are an opportunity for me to better understand their needs at this time and also how I can best support them prior to the end of my ministry. As I preached on Sunday, this is a unique time in our congregation. I am working closely with our CFA ministries to help them feel supported during this transition and to help ensure that the systems are in place for creative solutions with reduced staff support either from a four month minister transition or a more long term transition to one minister. These meetings continue to be quite helpful and I am currently about halfway through meeting with the teams. Tonight I will be leading the last coalition meeting of my ministry. These meetings, typically quarterly, are an important opportunity for collaboration and interteam dialogue.

My final Gender 201 offering was very well attended, both in person and online. This was the fifth and final workshop of my ministry. It is my hope to compile both the most common and the questions that feel most important to our congregation into a video that can be disseminated for future watching by those who were not able to attend, or those who want to be

reminded of the information. It is more important than ever before that we learn how to be advocates and allies of the trans community both out in the world, and also here at UUCWC. I will be connecting with the organizers of our Building Beloved Community Beyond the Binary conference to let them know about this experience and the attendees.

Finally, the next nationwide No Kings March is coming up at the end of the month on the 28th. I have started to promote this in our church's Faith in Action Facebook group. It is always challenging to get a mass of UUCWC members at any one site because there are so many sites in this area. If it seems that there is a large interest in attending the march, I will do my best to attend as your minister as well. So far the engagement in the group has been slow, but I will be dramatically increasing the promotion of the march in the near future.

In continuing to work on our congregation's values-driven response to immigration enforcement and the potential for its arrival here at UUCWC, I advised David Thomas about a Faith in New Jersey training on congregation preparedness. Rev. Kim and I do still plan to film a video for the congregation on how best to respond if immigration enforcement officers were to arrive here as an accompaniment for the Immigration Enforcement Officer Engagement Policy that I helped author.

On March 1st I led an opportunity for our congregation to write letters of support to UU congregations in Minnesota and Maine. I have identified four congregations (2 in Minnesota and 2 in Maine) where I will be sending the letters. I know from my UU colleagues how meaningful these notes of support can be, and it was incredibly powerful reading the messages from our congregants as I prepared these packages.

On a personal note, this is my 32nd and final Board report for you all. It has been a deep honor and pleasure to serve this congregation, first as your Intern Minister and then as your Minister for Justice and Pastoral Care. I am incredibly grateful to the Board for your commitment to being a teaching congregation opening the doors to this relationship. I am so glad that I was able to stay on for an additional year to fill the growing justice and pastoral care needs of the congregation and am so grateful that you all took this leap of faith and that it has paved the way for the opportunity for potentially a new Minister for Justice and Pastoral Care to come in and lead you all. Thank you, again.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,
Rev. Lisa

Marilyn Gonzalez

BOT Report for March 2026

Create Community

With Realm rolled out, the Stewardship campaign almost done, and the administrative set up work done for Auction and Endowment, I have a little space to get away. I will be on vacation from March 12 through March 22, back in the office on Tuesday, March 24. I will be out of the country so I won't be reachable via email or text for the first time in a while. Rachel Hansen will be in the office during her normal hours on Tuesday and Thursday to cover for me.

All facilities issues will be handled by the team; Justin Roth, Mike Toole, Denny Rodgers, and our newest team member, Steven Greer.

Last week, a group of us met to discuss communications at the church. I know there is a lot of conversation surrounding communications and how we approach it. There seems to be a disconnect between the communication that is already out there and what is 'perceived' to not be out there. Basically, email fatigue causes people to not read the weekly announcements and miss information. To this end, I will be looking at working with Rachel to revamp our weekly newsletter to contain a 'table of contents' at the beginning so that it makes it easier to read and get to the information needed. The idea of starting with what we already have is to prepare for what we will be creating. Endowment grants are being submitted from this team to get a consultant to help us structure our social media and website to better communicate with the congregation. The (hope) plan is to launch a better communications plan for the new church year in September. Stay tuned...

Celebrate Life

Our membership numbers are 252 Church Members, 44 Friends, 24 Participants, and 52 Attendees.

Change the World

Water: The facilities team has asked for help from Scott Drew and Leslie McGeorge to try and help sort out the state regulations regarding our water situation. I believe the Facilities are going to look into fixing the issue without state involvement. This means having to pay for a UV light or resin based filtration system which will cost us a few thousand dollars, but because we received the refund for the original installation, it will not be an additional cost to what we already paid.

Rentals: We are currently scheduled to have two more concerts this spring through the same booking company that brought the 'Twanguero' concert this winter. If all goes well, we could see a rise in income through these concerts. We are also being asked for the space to be used for fundraiser concerts, as well. With Ariel's recent departure from staff and John Harvi traveling, we will definitely need some kind of support. The scheduled concerts will provide their own sound but John and I have planned to meet after we both get back in late March to do a 'training' of the most basic sound scenarios for me. I also need to find congregants who are willing to help out with the rentals. Mike Muccioli and I are the coordinators but we will need someone to help out with parking during the bigger concerts.

Treasurer's Report for February 2026

February YTD Actual vs February YTD Budget

Operating pledges are at 112 of budget.

Merrill Lynch income is only at 80% of budget.

Total revenue is at 115% of budget.

Expenditures are currently at 102.6% of budget.

Cash Analysis

Projected '25-'26 final balance

\$178,635	Current Unrestricted Cash Reserves (savings)
<u>\$4,000</u>	Endowment grant to Board which <u>WAS NOT</u> included in Budget*
\$182,635	
<u>\$81,000</u>	Anticipated deficit (\$99K - \$18,000 personnel savings)
\$101,635	Unrestricted Cash reserves (savings).
<u>\$7,500</u>	Feb. snow removal
\$94,135	

Projected '26-'27 final balance

\$94,135	Projected Unrestricted Cash Reserves (savings)
\$20,000	Cap Campaign pledges due in '26-'27.
<u>\$15,000</u>	Endowment grant
\$129,135	
<u>\$60,000</u>	Anticipated deficit
\$69,135	Unrestricted Cash reserves (savings).