

First Unitarian Universalist Church Board Meeting --- October 18, 2017

Our Mission: To be a compassionate, welcoming community that nurtures spiritual growth and practices justice.

MINUTES

Board: Jerry Katzmann, President; Gail Bishop, Vice President; Ann Hutton-Secretary; Garth Nelson, Treasurer; Randy Crawford, Greg Turosak, and Chris Wendt, Members at Large; Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer, ex officio

Board Members Absent: Charyssa Cobb and Kate Thompson-Jewell

Guests: George Huston, Ray Phelps Bowman, Bill Thompson, Linda Thompson, and Phil Wheeler

1. **Call to Order and Chalice Lighting:** Jerry called the meeting to order and Rev. Luke provided the chalice lighting. All agreed the Installation Service was a joyous celebration with rousing music, inspirational words and good food.
2. **Consent Agenda:** Motion by Ann, second by Greg to approve the consent agenda including the agenda, previous meeting minutes, and monthly financials. Unanimous.
3. **Review and Document Congregational Voting Process:** Jerry asked the election judges to prepare a summary of the recent process as it occurred, as well as to identify suggested changes. As the Board is responsible for “supervising the voting process” as outlined in the Bylaws, the Board re-affirmed its *get out the vote* responsibility as the best means to determine the will of the congregation. Jerry shared a copy of a letter of concern from Ray Phelps Bowman and asked Ray to share his thoughts. While not challenging the outcome of the vote, he believes some errors were inadvertently made and shared his thoughts in an effort to strengthen future congregational votes.
4. **Sanctuary Resolution and Next Steps**
 - a. **Review of legal implications:** Phil reminded the Board the Dorsey-Whitney opinion is posted on the website and provides an understandable summary. At the direction of the Board President, a subcommittee of the Racial Justice Task Group (RJFG) has prepared and submitted an application to LegalCORPS for pro bono legal services.
 - b. **Procedures & policies:** A RJFG subcommittee of the has prepared draft policies for sanctuary hosting, using Peace United Church of Christ’s language as a basis to start from and checking the draft against our Building and Furnishings Use Policy for consistency. The RJTG offered to work with one or more Board members and/or others the Board may appoint to work further on these policies. They also shared our draft with Rabbi Jean Binkovitz, for her suggestions. RJTF will work with the PAC Team to refine policies.
 - c. **Options for spaces for guests and volunteers:** Jose Rivas, an architect with CRW, has prepared three building plan options, serving pro bono as our architect. Once we select our preferred option, he will work with Rochester Building Safety and take it through the review process for us. There is the option to phase the project and function for a short while without a shower (as is being proposed by Peace UCC). Under that option we can remodel the conference room by simply replacing the door and one window and adding an exhaust fan at a possible cost of approximately \$1,500, not including appliances and furniture. Incorporating a shower in combination with a family assistance bathroom that we need for our members and visitors will add an estimated \$13,500. The RJTG anticipates handing this phase of the effort over to Property and/or the Board.
 - d. **Insurance coverage:** Luke and Connie are exploring
 - e. **Training:** Rev. Luke and RJTG representatives are meeting monthly with ISIAH and community partners. The next meeting is October 25. The agenda includes items related to preparing for

hosting here or assisting with hosting elsewhere, arranging for training for volunteers serving as hosts for guests in sanctuary, engaging additional faith communities, influencing the Sheriff with regard to interactions with ICE, pursuing municipal ID with the City of Rochester, arranging for training in rapid response, and establishing a legal defense fund in the County budget for 2018.

- f. **Sanctuary Team:** Still to be determined is the question of who will manage on-going details surrounding our sanctuary support, whether this will be a new and separate task group or remain the responsibility of the RJTG. In the meantime, the RJTG has created additional subcommittees to deal with recruiting other faith communities, recruiting volunteers, creating a rapid response system, and advocating for just system changes.

- 5. **Special purpose funds policy:** On hold for future meeting.

- 6. **PAC Team Report:** Gail highlighted items from the monthly PAC Team Monitoring Report. We have just received our *Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (Aim)* certification from the UUA. We are among the first churches in the country and had a role in the formation of the award criteria. This news will be announced this Sunday.

Gail presented recommended changes to the Building Use Fees to bring our church in line with other church facilities offering space for rent. **Motion** by Garth, second by Chris to approved the Building Use Fees as proposed. Unanimous.

- 7. **Minister's Report:** Rev. Luke shared a written report which is appended to these minutes. He has asked the staff to prepare short summaries of recent activities and will he incorporate that information into his report.
- 8. **Pending:**
 - a. Review and approve Personnel Committee description: Rev. Luke and Randy will meet.
 - b. Review and Sex offender risk reduction policy and education plan: On hold for a future meeting.
 - c. Propose Bylaws amendments: In process.
 - d. Summary of recent activities: Jerry will draft a summary to share with the Board at a future meeting.

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Hutton, Secretary

Minister's Report to the Board of
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Rochester, MN

Wednesday, October 18, 2017

Worship and Rites of Passage

- We had two guest speakers in October (Karen Van Fossan, M.Div., from the Bismarck UU congregation on October 8th, and Rev. Karen Hutt from Minneapolis on October 15th). Both spoke of justice issues and were well received by the congregation. I was glad to call upon gifted colleagues to hold the space and maintain a consistent quality of services when I'm away. I appreciated being present, also, with a guest preacher. I believe it is an important expression of our wider association and our interconnection with a larger movement when I can be present with our guests.
- I am grateful to so many volunteers and leaders for the success of the Installation Service & Reception this past Sunday. From parking to hospitality to childcare to orders of service to music to food to so many details of setting up, cleaning up, and showing up – I am so grateful for the many who helped make it a meaningful and seamless event. The service highlighted to heritage of this congregation and its Universalist roots, in song and readings, as well as the landscape of the prairie where it resides. It also stressed the importance of our shared ministry and how the values of our heritage are lived out in a pluralistic and modern church. I'm grateful to many colleagues, UU and others from the Rochester community, who came to celebrate with us, and to you, the Board, for receiving with me a blessing from the congregation on our shared work. *Thank you!*

Staff

- Our staff has been stellar at navigating the many details of this fall, including the Installation. They held the details of music planning, orders of service, hospitality and providing activities for children with ease and grace.
- As we move closer to the time when budget reflections will begin, I am becoming increasingly mindful of our staffing needs. There are several needs, of course, in a congregation at any given time, and I will join with you in discerning those needs in balance with the capacity of our budget, and how best to prioritize. Here are emerging needs I have noticed in these first few months, knowing that nuance and refinement of these reflections will naturally come as time goes on:
 - o *Office Staff* – I believe we are in need of increased office hours (as has been discussed in the past) to ease the publication burden on our Co-Administrator, and free that position to focus more on the database (the capacity of which is limited by a lack of staff hours) and other high-level work.
 - o *Building Staff* – Our Custodian, Tom, does amazing work for the small number of weekly hours he holds (and does not seem to wish to add more.) Our Sextons and Property Committee do an incredible job as well, each caring for and tending to the cleanliness, functionality, and hospitality of our building space. I believe, however, this is an area in

which increased hours are essential for the long-term functionality of a growing and vibrant congregation (to ease the burden on lay leaders and groups for setting up and cleaning and tearing down spaces for events; coordinating special volunteers to be in the building for special events or Sunday mornings for emergencies (bathroom malfunctions, HVAC troubles, being sure the building is safely secured in the evenings, etc.) I think this is a good area to think about what we need and want for our building so that members and friends can enjoy the space, know it is well taken care of, and don't feel obligated to carry heavy tables or have an engineer license to volunteer to help with the building.

- *Program Staff* - As our Religious Education program grows, and as we welcome more visitors and deepen the process of becoming a member and getting members involved, I believe there will be a growing need over time to increase hours in both membership and religious education staff. We have already seen a wonderful example of the capacity for vibrant programming and relationship-building that happens with increased staff from the youth program coordinator position (see more below).
- While volunteers and involvement and energy in caretaking for the life of this church will always be not only necessary, but important for a sense of pride and connection to the needs of a church building and programs, there are times that a dependence on volunteers becomes a burden to a small number of individuals. If our intention to visitors and newer members is that our church will be *welcoming and compassionate*, and that our mission is to invite them into a community that *nurtures spiritual growth and practices justice* as our main focus, then there is a need for a professionalized sense of dependability and consistency in what programs we offer and how we care for and utilize our physical space. I look forward to more conversations about how we might move toward these needs over time, as we are able.

Community

- I was glad to offer our space to host a small roundtable conversation, led by Congressman Tim Walz, with DACA recipients in the Rochester area on October 17th. This was not a partisan or campaigning event, but a way to use the resource of our building to bring community members together and share stories and hopes (with news media present) about immigration justice. This seemed like a natural event to host at our building, in our increasingly important role of catalyst and convener of conversations in our community relating to values we hold around human dignity and the common good.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer