

**First Unitarian Universalist Church  
Board Meeting --- February 21, 2018**

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

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attending:** Jerry Katzmann, President; Gail Bishop, Vice President; Ann Hutton-Secretary; Garth Nelson, Treasurer; Charyssa Cobb, Greg Turosak, Members at Large; Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer, ex officio

**Absent:** Randy Crawford, Kate Thompson-Jewell, and Chris Wendt, Members at Large

**Guest:** Phil Wheeler

1. **Call to Order and Chalice Lighting:** Jerry called the meeting to order and Rev. Luke provided the chalice lighting with words from Elizabeth Alexander.
2. **Consent Agenda: Motion** by Ann, second by Greg to accept the consent agenda including the agenda and the minutes. Unanimous
3. **Update from Finance Committee:** Jerry and Gail attended the February Finance Committee meeting and reported on recent Committee decisions:
  - To spend up to \$2,000 for the rebinding of old board minutes and the Universalist Bible at the request of the History Committee and recommended by the PAC Team.
  - To purchase five cloth covered bulletin boards as requested by the DRE.
  - The Church has received a bequest of \$49,741.99 from the estate of Marguerite Smith of which \$37,306.49 or 75% has been placed in the Endowment Fund.
  - **Motion** by Gail, second by Greg to accept the Finance Committee recommendation for the balance of the bequest putting 20% or \$9,948.40 in the Memorial and Commemorative Fund and 5%, 2,487.10, into Major Maintenance/Jumpstarter Fund. Unanimous.
4. **Financial Report:** Garth reported that income is ahead of budget and expenses are on target.
5. **2018-2019 Budget:** Garth reviewed the first draft of the new budget with proposed increases from the current year, \$480,493, to approximately \$541,000. Several downward adjustments will be made due to projected expenses that will either be covered yet this year or by other funding sources. A final decision regarding the 2018-2019 budget will be made by the Board after the Stewardship Campaign.
6. Stewardship Plans
  - a. Cottage Meetings - (Currently scheduled for Saturday 2/24 at 10:00 am, Sunday 2/25 at 12:30, Tuesday 2/27 at 7:00 pm and Wednesday 2/28 at 7:00 pm via ZOOM) Pledge envelopes will be ready to be handed-out and will include several informational pieces. Kickoff Sunday will be March 4. The Board would like a special announcement this coming Sunday inviting people to attend the informal cottage discussions.
  - b. Board Involvement – Board members were encouraged to participate in a sampling of the cottage meetings. Board members will receive updates on who has pledge and, as in previous years, asked to send thank you and/or reminders to those still considering this year's pledge.
7. **Minister's Report:** Rev. Luke shared *Mid-year Reflections on Governance* (attached). There will be additional information from the PAC Team in the coming weeks. The Board and Rev. Luke will prepare a future Venture article on this topic of possible changes in organizational structure.

8. **PAC Team Report:** Gail reviewed the month PAC Team report. Jerry reported on recent discussions with the Nominating Committee. There will be four open positions to fill.
9. **Temporary Legal Defense Fund:** Phil Wheeler provided background information on the initial request for the Church to create a temporary legal defense fund to aid those in sanctuary. However, now that Olmsted County is considering providing public support which would allow for accepting public donations that could then be used to match grant funds this is no longer a topic for our consideration. It also appears that either IMAA or the Diversity Council are interested in supporting such a fund and could be a more appropriate host should the County decide against establishing a temporary legal defense fund.

#### 10. Update on Sanctuary Activities:

The Board reviewed information shared via email from Sue Wheeler, as a member the Sanctuary Steer Committee:

- To date, 36 church members and friends have volunteered for various Sanctuary support duties.
- Our church gathered and delivered twin bed items to help Peace UCC prepare for a possible guest.
- The Steering Committee is reviewing a volunteer handbook provided by a Twin Cities church and adapting it to our church situation. This is proving useful in discovering important questions which will lead to additional discussions with Rev. Luke and the Board.

#### 11. Board Actions on Sanctuary

- a. **Full Sanctuary: Motion** by Gail, second by Greg to approve a move from a Sanctuary-Supporting Church to a Full-Sanctuary Church. During the discussion each Board Member and Rev. Luke offered personal thoughts on the motion. Motion carried five votes in the affirmative and one voting in the negative. Jerry and Gail will prepare a letter to the congregation updating the members and friends on this decision and other related activities
- b. **Accept construction bid: Motion** by Ann, second by Gail to accept the Kramer bid of \$4,600 to remove existing window and install new efficient egress window; remove existing door and replace with 90-minute fire rated door. Unanimous. Jerry will contact the contractor and work with the Property Committee.
- c. **Establish a special Sanctuary Support Fund: Motion** by Greg, second by Charyssa to create a Sanctuary Support Fund. Unanimous. This will be a special fund, separate from the new budget line items handle cash donation from members, supporting churches and other individuals. Gail and Jerry will develop policy language for the flexible management of this special fund to be voted upon in March.
- d. **Follow-up:** Jerry and Gail will prepare a letter to the congregation updating the members and friends on the Board's decision to move from being a Sanctuary-Supporting Church to a Full-Sanctuary Church decision and other decisions related to sanctuary. Phil will inform our sanctuary partners.

12. **Preparation for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Evaluation:** As part of our commitment to shared ministry and as outlined in the Letter of Agreement with Rev. Luke, the Board will be responsible for developing an assessment tool to evaluate Rev. Luke's first year as our newly settled minister. The Board reviewed an initial draft of possible questions prepared by Kate.

13. **Draft Bylaws:** Hold Board discussion for next month. Still on target to gather additional input, hold informational meetings (April) and then vote in June.

14. **Adjustment of Dental Coverage to Comply with Policy:** It has come to our attention that while following the Letter of Agreement we are not meeting our Personnel policy regarding dental coverage for Rev. Luke and his dependents. Upon further review, we are not conforming to UUA recommendations and it has been our goal

to work towards UUA personnel recommendations for all staff. Motion by Greg, second by Charyssa to amend our personnel policy and the Letter of Agreement to conform with UUA guidelines pertaining to dental coverage and to make this change retro-active to the beginning of coverage. Unanimous.

15. Service Animal Guidelines – Gail reviewed UUA and Minnesota statutes regarding service animal guidelines. Any questions pertaining to visitors with animals should be referred to Melissa Egler or Rev. Luke.

16. Follow-up from Meeting

- Jerry and Gail will prepare a letter to the congregation updating the members and friends on the Board's decision to move from being a Sanctuary-Supporting Church to a Full-Sanctuary Church decision and other decisions related to sanctuary.
- Phil Wheeler will inform our sanctuary partners.
- Jerry or Gail will make a Sunday announcement about the Cottage meetings.
- Ann will remind the Board to review the proposed bylaws amendments and send any comments or questions to her.
- The Board and Rev. Luke will prepare a future Venture article on this topic of possible changes in organizational structure

Meeting adjourned

Respectfully submitted,  
Ann Hutton, Secretary

Minister's Report to the Board of  
First Unitarian Universalist Church of Rochester, MN  
Wednesday, February 21, 2018

***Mid-year reflections on governance***

As the PAC team begins crafting recommendations to the Board in the next several weeks, I wanted to highlight a few areas that I have been reflecting upon this first year here at the church. I am mindful of what a colleague said (not to me personally, but as part of a larger collegial gathering, serving a similar size church in a similar size city, that was echoed by others serving in similar settings) that everyone loves mid-sized churches; except the minister and the staff.

This was tongue in cheek, in part, of course, because they have been gladly serving their congregation for many years, and love their ministry. At the same time, the shared expression was that mid-sized churches (for UUs, that's around the 250-450 member range) often seem small enough to have a sense of intimacy and warmth, and large enough to have quality services and programs. The caveat, is that they generally struggle with governance and staffing, particularly a struggle between egalitarian (governance by the whole) and representative democratic (governance by core leaders) approaches. Somewhere in the mix, of course, is the role of the minister, the staff, the committees, councils, and general members of the church.

The reason I raise this is how it relates to the governance transition during the Interim time and during these first few years of a newly settled ministry. We, as a church, from my vantage point, have similar gifts, and similar challenges, to our fellow mid-sized churches. We are small enough to have deep connection, large enough to have great opportunities for services and programs, and we are in discernment about best practices for governance and structure so that we can honor the perspective and opinions of many individuals and groups, while at the same time be nimble, and courageous enough, to lead.

Like any good structure, it must be based on mutual trust and relationship. Right now, I believe we have a beautiful opportunity during this new shared ministry to chart our future. There will be, of course, bumps along the way as we make our structure work the best that it can for our church, but there will

be great learning and possibility that will open as we imagine our role and mission in the world and who we strive to be as a church.

My hope, in conversations with the Board and other leaders, is to find ways to have adequate staffing (which really is an investment in the implementation of the Board's mission), so that we can build collaborative staff liaison relationships with committee and council chairs. This would include charging and equipping the staff to carry primary implementation of programming and the functioning of the congregation, based in the mission set by the Board, in collaboration with committees and councils. It would allow for communication and coordination of the life of the congregation to be shared by staff and lay leaders. This would free up councils and committees to do higher-level reflection and advising for staff and the Board, for more meaningful and nourishing service – what undoubtedly led them to this church to begin with.

Some of the areas that I have been considering and that the PAC will be considering relate to financial decision-making, clarity in role and function of committees and councils, monitoring of the implementation of our mission, and discernment processes around policy changes or questions.

Mostly, I am hopeful that in this time of transition, we can lean into the many beautiful things that already happen at this church – hospitality, compassion, nurturing spiritual growth, practicing justice – and deepening connection with each other and the largest questions of meaning and life. From there, we can nurture close-knit relationships, as well as support quality programming and services, and find ways to function in a way that allows staff, lay leaders, and members to engage with the church in the best way they can, and have the means and support to do it well.

Don't worry; I love mid-sized churches.

And, like any one of us as individuals, church, too, is a place to affirm who we are, and to challenge us to be our best selves. And sometimes, that means some joyful and complicated work of reflecting on our structure and clarifying our governance.

And our church is worth it.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer