



Board Meeting and planning session – July 21, 2021

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

Meeting Minutes

Board: Ann Hutton, President; Kim Reid, Vice President; Greg Turosak, Secretary; Rob Harveland, Treasurer; Dave Siljberg, Joe Lobl, Molly Dingel, Brianna Berg and Walt Rothwell, Members at Large; Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer, ex officio.

Guest: Jill Braithwaite, seminary student

Welcome

1. **Call to Order.** Ann called the meeting to order. Most board members and Rev. Luke attended in person at the church. Two board members – Greg Turosak and Dave Siljberg – attended remotely, as did guest Jill Braithwaite. Ann noted this has been the first in-person board meeting since February 2020. She welcomed guest Jill Braithwaite, a seminary student who is in her 3rd year of a Master's of Divinity program and attending as part of her academic requirements. Ann also welcomes new board member Walt Rothwell. Board members introduced themselves for the benefit of Jill Braithwaite.
2. **Chalice Lighting and Reflection.** Ann provided reflection based on words by Rev. Kimberly DeBus. She noted we are in uncharted territory and expressed a desire that our work today and this year be fruitful and helpful. Ann lit the chalice.
3. **Board meeting agenda and planning session agenda, and previous meeting minutes.** Ann explained one amendment to agenda, a request by Connie Schuelka, congregational administrator, to approve a bank agreement. Motion by Kim, second by Molly to approve the agenda as amended and to approve the minutes from the May 2021 meeting. Approved.
4. **Minister's report.** Rev. Luke shared some words of poetry from Jan Richardson, regarding journey. The journey is uncertain, he said, but we know we're on the journey together as we navigate the unknown. He expressed gratitude to working with the board in the coming year on various matters and on attending to our mission of nurturing spirituality and practicing justice. He shared other items:
 - a. **Sunday services.** Preparations by teams and staff have been underway for livestreaming of Sunday services Aug. 1 and 8, with a planned return to limited in-person Sunday services on Aug. 15.
 - b. **Tech deck.** Darin Podulke-Smith, property steward, will staff the tech deck going forward, as a consistent presence, and will continue with coffee set-up.
 - c. **Potential partnership.** A small team from RASA school visited our building recently, interested in possibly leasing some of our space for their growing school in the fall of 2022. Rev. Luke called this a fascinating potential partnership as we discern our building future.
 - d. **Chalice Camp.** Chalice Camp was wonderful this year, with children back in our spaces, mostly outdoors.
 - e. **Work structure creativity.** He has encouraged staff, building on what has been learned about working during the pandemic, to think creatively going forward about flexible hours, remote work and different office hours.

Board Planning Session

5. Shared Ministry.

- a. **Update from Shared Ministry Team & ongoing implementation plans.** Kim recounted that there is a Shared Ministry Team, whose members meet from time to time to review how the six Shared Ministry program teams are doing. All program teams have been meeting during the past year, she said. We have discussed a calendar for the year for each time, covering responsibilities such as planning and budgeting. We've learned a lot this past year, Kim said. With the pandemic, it was an odd year, so instead of recommending bylaws changes this year related to Shared Ministry, the trial of this governance model will continue for another year, with bylaws recommendations occurring next year. There will need to be some discussions, she said, about how to formalize processes. She thanked the congregation for positive support of the governance model. Ann said there are still some issues to settle, such as how long people stay on the program teams and which team or teams that new board member Walt sits on.
- b. Program Team updates & confirm team rosters.
 - i. **Administration.** Dave and Greg said the team has not met since the last board meeting.
 - ii. **Congregational Life.** Joe said the team has met twice since the last board meeting. He said we're moving in a good direction for limited in-person Sunday services beginning Aug. 15. There will be online sign-up and flexibility. Joe said current plans are for the Sunday coffee hour to offer beverages only, not food. The team is still hoping to have quarterly meetings.
 1. **Congregational Right Relations Covenant.** Joe said there's also been discussion of a congregational covenant, similar to what some other churches have. He said a covenant would be great to have. Joe said a covenant would be positive, giving people an idea of how we deal with one another. Rev. Luke indicated a covenant would be restorative, not punitive.
 - iii. **Faith Development.** Kim said the team has not met recently. She said that Amy Nelson has reported that Chalice Camp went well, with 30 campers, 19 counselors and 19 adult supervisors, for a total of 68 participants. Amy credited Chantelle Feddersen with great help.
 - iv. **Financial Stewardship.**
 1. **Finalize 2021-2022 budget.** Rob said that at the end of the church year, we had a surplus of \$66,193. "It was a good year financially despite the pandemic." A discussion ensued on how to divide up the surplus. A motion came forward based on a suggestion from Ann that was close to what Rob recommended. The motion was to finalize the 2021-2022 budget, with adjustments as follows to use the \$66,193 surplus: \$1,000 for an audit, \$5,000 for legal expenses, \$10,000 for a musical instrument fund, \$45,193 for Building Our Future, and \$5,000 into an innovation fund. Moved by Rob, seconded by Joe. Approved.
 2. **Corporate banking resolution.** Connie Schuelka, congregational administrator, has asked the board approve adding Ann Hutton's name to our F&M Community Bank account. Moved by Rob, seconded by Kim. Approved.
 - v. **Social Justice.** Brianna said the team has not met lately, but there will be a response to comments by some people at a recent school board meeting that were against values of justice, equity and inclusion. There will be an upcoming press conference and school board meeting, and Rev. Luke plans to speak to the issue.
 - vi. **Worship and Music.** Ann said discussions have mainly been around re-gathering.
- c. **Confirm new & continuing relationships.** Ann said that no action is needed, but that people currently serving on various teams listed below will keep serving:

- i. Nominating.
- ii. Shared Ministry.
- iii. Building Our Future – Beyond Ourselves.
- iv. Re-Gathering Team.

6. Building Our Future – Beyond Ourselves.

- a. **Review final report from Rachel Maxwell, *Stewardship for Us*.** Ann recounted our meeting with UUA consultant Rachel Maxwell and receipt of her final report. Ann said there will be a paragraph in an upcoming e-news issue informing congregants that they can access Rachel Maxwell's report on the Building Our Future webpages of the church website.
- b. Recent activities. Greg brought the board up to date generally regarding two items: (1) Clearing of trails on the land that potentially will be donated to the church in preparation for site visits by congregants; and (2) Discussions regarding the designation of the current church property as a potential heritage landmark. Greg said the issue may arise at a September meeting of the Rochester Heritage Preservation Committee. He said discussion with staff indicate they believe the church property has both historic significance as an example of modernist architecture and historic integrity as well. Ann said she has had discussions with a local attorney regarding making an argument of separation of church and state.

7. Congregational Pandemic Guidelines. Joe said we're striving to keep our guidelines based on UU principles. With the delta variant of COVID still infecting some vaccinated people, it makes sense to be prudent as we prepare for meeting in person again as of Aug. 15. Rev. Luke said there had been no direct deaths from COVID in our congregation; there have been a handful of illnesses, but not severe enough to require hospitalization. Walt asked about choir guidelines when in-person services resume. Rev. Luke said there will be very limited congregational singing. He said there is decent circulation in the sanctuary, and that the sanctuary doors will be left open. He said he's looking to Joe Mish, co-director of music, for details of worship practice. But mainly string instruments will be used and there will be a few vocalists. He and Joe have discussed small vocal ensembles. Other precautions at church, Rev. Luke said, include a limit of 80 people per service with fewer chairs and families encouraged to self-distance. There will be no passing of the plate for now.

8. Board Covenant. There being one small correction, it was suggested that board members sign each year. Ann indicated the covenant would be available to sign at an upcoming board meeting.

9. Set 2021-2022 Board goals. Consensus was to retain the four goals the board has had in the past year, with some wordsmithing. An additional task will be added regarding development and adoption of a congregational covenant. The past goals to be renewed include: (1) Connection and spiritual care during the pandemic; (2) Transition into Shared Ministry; (3) Striving to create systemic change for justice within our congregation and community; (4) Continue *Building Our Future* activities.

10. Continue use of monthly Soul Matters themes for Board reflection & identify monthly volunteers. Ann indicated a desire to continue monthly reflections and asked for board members to volunteer for upcoming months. Members volunteered as follows:

- a. August – Play: Dave
- b. September – Embracing Possibility: Ann
- c. October – Cultivating Relationship: Molly
- d. November – Holding History: Walt
- e. December – Opening to Joy: Brianna
- f. January – Living With Intention: Kim
- g. February – Widening the Circle: Greg
- h. March – Renewing Faith: Joe
- i. April – Awakening: Rob
- j. May – Nurturing Beauty: Kim and Ann

- k. Summer – Celebrating Blessings: TBD
- 11. **Identify Grace Notes authors.** Ann asked for board officers to indicate which months they would offer to write for Grace Notes. Sign-up was as follows:
 - a. Fall issue – Sept. 10, 2021, deadline: Ann
 - b. Winter issue – Dec. 10, 2021, deadline: Kim
 - c. Spring issue – March 11, 2022, deadline: Greg
 - d. Summer/Annual Report – May 8, 2022, deadline: Rob

Monthly Meeting Tasks

- 12. **Review financials.** Ann noted this was already covered earlier in this meeting.
- 13. **Topics from previous meeting.** There were none.
- 14. **Adult pilgrimage to Boston.** Rev. Luke indicated that things are in the very early stages of planning.
- 15. **Other topics and announcements.** Rev. Luke indicated that for now there won't be a resumption of Wednesday evening dinners. He also said that there won't be weekly Wednesday evening forums initially in the fall until we're more able to meet in person. Kim suggested consideration of a different night for forums than when the board meets. There also was some board discussion of meeting start time. Ann indicated that, beginning with the August 2021 board meeting, the meetings will begin at 7 instead of 7:30 so that the meetings won't go so late into the evening.
- 16. **Adjourn.** With business concluded, Ann declared the board meeting adjourned.

Next meeting: Wednesday, Aug. 18, 6:45 p.m. check-in and 7:00 p.m. meeting.

Reflection theme: Play

Respectfully submitted, Greg Turosak, secretary