

UUC Board Meeting Minutes September 12, 2024

***In attendance:** Laura Robinson, Wayne Neu, Rachel Craine, Margo Walter, Joe Cooley, Chris Long, Cassy Kost, Beth McClellan*

Chalice Lighting, Reading, and Check-in

- Laura called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, and Joe offered a reading.

- The September agenda was approved.

Approve Consent Agenda

- Reports included the following:
 - Minister's Report
 - Administrator's Report
 - Director of Lifespan Faith Development's (DLFD) Report
 - Previous Meeting Minutes
- Beth moved to approve the consent agenda, pending approval of the previous meeting minutes by email after the meeting (extra time was needed in order to determine and record who made particular motions during the August meeting). Cassy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Wayne discussed the Treasurer's Report and UUA Org Retirement Plan:
 - Brief explanation of upcoming expenses: window cleaning (done), parking lot resurfacing coming up.
 - Retirement plan: UUA has decided to restate the retirement plan with minor changes to comply with new federal laws. The changes don't really affect us, but it does require each congregation to formally vote to adopt the plan.
 - Wayne moved to adopt the plan and Chris seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Subsequent to the meeting, an email vote was held on the August minutes. The August minutes were approved by the Board on September 24, 2024.

Old Business

- Board's covenant for 2024-2025: Do we wish to make any changes from the 2023-2024 covenant?
 - Laura asked for our thoughts. Everyone is happy with it; Cassy suggested an addition to the first paragraph. After a brief discussion. Margo moved that we accept the covenant with Cassy's addition. Wayne seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
- Accessibility and Inclusion (Joe Cooley)

- The consideration of issues continues. A report will be completed when Rev. Pam is back.
- Urgent issue: Street lights in parking lot and back/side lights don't work. Apparently, an entire circuit has been cut. There is an urgent need to fix this for safety reasons. We will hire an electrician to find and reconnect the circuit.
- Safety plan for UUC (Joe Cooley)
 - No updates at present. Rev. Pam chairs Safety Committee. There will be more information coming once she returns.
- Proposed 10 Year Ground Plan and Future of Grounds Committee Discussion (re: Jim Flowers' email):
 - The plan is good; however, the congregation will need to be involved and make some decisions about its priorities.
 - Need to quantify how much the grounds are used.
 - Discussion ensued concerning different points of view about use of herbicide; philosophies of how to maintain the grounds (keeping all areas pristine vs. letting nature take over some spaces such as the meadow).
 - Discussion of Jim's email regarding need for volunteers and request to meet with board members. Question: who is in charge of different zones?
 - One idea is to hire some of the work out, at least for certain parts of the grounds.
 - Displayed as a community space, but the community is not helping to maintain it.
 - Current committee's vision doesn't seem to include having natural, unmanaged spaces.
 - Suggestion: Jim should make an announcement during service; increase our congregation's awareness about consequences if we do not plan; our need for more volunteers and next generation of leadership; and be receptive to new vision from next generations.
 - Suggestion: In regard to Jim's email about new leadership, we need to know what this new leadership looks like; what is their vision. Need to get congregation's ideas for what they want the grounds to be.

New Business

- Preparing for the return of Rev. Pam:
 - The board discussed preparing for the return of Rev. Pam.
 - Laura called for an executive session. A motion was made by Laura. Chris seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Acknowledgement of Congregants who helped during Rev. Pam's sabbatical:
 - Margo asked what we should do to acknowledge the worship and sabbatical committees, and to welcome Rev. Pam back.
 - Suggestion: during service, ask for those who helped to stand up; express gratitude and applause.
 - For Rev. Pam – Sept. 29 is her first Sunday back. Have a social after the service (with cake!). Ask connections committee to help social? Margo will organize, Cassy will order and pick up cake. Possibly have Ellen in charge of asking folks to stand up.

- Playground:
 - Concerns have been expressed about the use of herbicides in the playground area.
 - Joe Cooley will walk the playground Sunday to look at how to build an accessible pathway to the new accessible sandbox.
 - Rachel agreed to make sure the playground is mowed for the next couple of months.

- UUC Auction updates:
 - Chris: The donation site is open. He will be training the committee on software.
 - The board will once again offer Dancing through the Decades. Laura will take care of details. Suggested date is January 25, 2025, 6-9 p.m.

- Freedom Fund Banquet: Does the UUC want to sponsor 1 or 2 tables for Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd County Branch of the NAACP on Sept. 28? (must RSVP by Sept. 18.)
 - We have one table full already.
 - Wayne thinks we should do two – we'll need eight more people. Put in announcements? Must commit by Sept. 18. Irene will likely come up with people to fill the table.
 - Chris moved that we commit to one table, and if Irene can come up with 8 more people we'll sponsor a second table. Laura seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

- FYI - miscellaneous
 - Request for the ComCom chair to have administrator access to the website: This is not a board issue; refer back to the UUC Administrator to provide access.
 - Newcomers' Orientation on 11/9/2024: Laura and Cassy will attend.
 - UUC being honored at VICPP's regional dinner: Sara Dalton will accept the award on behalf of the UUC.
 - Blue Ridge Vocal Connection's request for a venue for a December concert: They can rent the space as others can. Provide them with the link to church rental and see what they say.
 - Postponed: UU Climate Justice revival – we'll know more when Rev. Pam comes back.

Check-out - Did we abide by our covenant? Yes!

Upcoming

Next Board Meeting – October 10, 2024

Reading for next meeting? Cassy

Meeting adjourned at 8:58 PM.

UUC Board Meeting Agenda
September 12, 2024
Location: UUC, Blacksburg, VA

We, the UUC Board, seek informed collaboration and clarity in our work of supporting UUC ministries. We interact with respect, trust, deep listening, and curiosity. We affirm one another, and maintain fierce dedication to diversity and inclusion in our commitment to the community we serve, recognizing experiences and perspectives from all.

We communicate directly and with courageous love. When it arises, we engage in productive conflict. We are focused, accountable, and authentic. We laugh together. We maintain the trust and confidentiality of board members' contributions and speak with one voice regarding board actions.

7:00 PM - 7:15 PM

- Chalice Lighting, Reading (Joe), Check-in

7:15 PM - 7:30 PM

- Member Forum

7:30 PM - 7:45 PM Approve Consent Agenda

- **Meeting Agenda**
- **Minister's Report - n/a (Sabbatical)**
- **Administrator's Report**
- **Director of Lifespan Faith Development's (DLFD) Report**
- **Previous Meeting Minutes**

- **Treasurer's Report and UU Org Retirement Plan (Wayne Neu - presentation)**

7:45 PM - 8:15 PM

Old Business

- Board's covenant for 2024-2025: Any changes?
- Accessibility and Inclusion (Joe Cooley)
- Safety plan for UUC (Joe Cooley)
- Proposed 10 Year Ground Plan - Any updates?

8:30 PM -8:55 PM

New Business

- Preparing for the return of Rev. Pam
- Acknowledgement of Congregants who helped during Sabbatical
- Playground
- UUC Auction - Does the Board want to offer anything?
 - Dancing for the Decades
- Freedom Fund Banquet: Does UUC want to sponsor 1 or 2 tables for Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd County Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on Sept. 28? (must RSVP by Sept. 18.)
- Future of Grounds Committee– email from Jim Flowers
- FYI – miscellaneous
 - ComCom's website access for chair
 - Newcomers' Orientation on 11/9/2024 – Laura will attend
 - UUC being honored at VICPP's regional dinner – Sara Dalton will accept award
 - Blue Ridge Vocal Connection's request (fyi) - normal rental procedures; not free
 - Postponed: UU Climate Justice revival

8:55 PM - 9:00 PM

- Check-out - Did we abide by our covenant?

Upcoming

- Next Board Meeting – October
- Reading for next meeting? Cassy

**Administrator's Report to the Board
September 2024**

- **General:** The Fall Newsletter has been published and emailed out. Thanks to Arthur for his help getting that posted on the website. Member requests for the new directory are continuing to come in. I have printed several rounds of labels for the Voting Rights Committee. Classes and such have been put on the calendar as requested. Rachel and I have worked together to problem solve listserv issues and any scheduling concerns with committees and rentals. Rental requests have been steady. I have prepared and sent out 3 visitor letters this month. I am also working with the Memorial Garden Com to update their bookkeeping and make it more easily accessible. It would be very helpful to have an updated list of committees and their chairs. Rental requests have been steady and the calendar is filling up. Things have been quite busy.

DLFD Report to the Board – September, 2024

Children and Youth Programs:

- **Registration Numbers:** We have 45 families with 75 children registered for 104 activity positions. This represents about 75% of the families who were registered last year returning, but tracks with where we were at this time last year in terms of total number of families and youth. I am identifying a concern, though, that our youngest (nursery/preK/K) are the classes that are missing the most. Actively recruiting more families with young children would be nice, but I'm not sure how. Carolyn Kogan, mother of a preschooler, was interested in exploring this possibility. I have connected her with Ashley Dugan, to discuss our instagram presence.

- **Programming:**
 - 4-5 OWL has begun, with a successful parent orientation and 10 kids registered.
 - YRUU has begun, and will host their book sale on Sept. 15 and 22
 - MSYG starts this Friday, the 13th.

- When should RE start? The first year I was here, we started RE after Labor Day. Last year we started right after summer RE ended, and when MCPS started, my thinking being that we should start with the school year. This year I left one weekend between summer and fall RE, which made the transition easier (for re-setting classrooms), however on 8/18 we had 25 kids, whereas on 8/25 we had 37 kids. Clearly more kids are not showing up earlier. I am considering moving back to an after Labor Day start for next year, and perhaps having a special open house type day the last Sunday before Labor Day, and extending summer RE by a week or two.

Adult Programming:

- Soul matters groups have formed, with 40 participants in 6 groups, with 4 groups meeting in person and 2 online.
- A new adult offering will begin in October, the Synapse Salon. This will be a book/discussion group led by Todd Holland that will explore the mind/brain and the science and philosophy related to them.
- Parent Covenant group will start up again on Sept. 20, and many newer families have expressed interest.
- On September 27 we will have an all-ages game night—please come out to support this if you can! 5:30-8:30, with light kid-friendly food provided.

Other DLFD Activites:

- I have updated the Learning section of the website with the 2024-2025 curriculum information and put out a 2024-2025 Prospectus.
- I have spent several hours on worship, and on playground/ grounds related activities and communications.
- 2 Stumps in the playground have been ground, and I am getting estimates for various mulching options and for the creation of a wheelchair accessible path in the playground area. Thank you Sharon Day for donating a raised, wheelchair accessible sand box! Playground will be having a workday after the service on Sept. 15 if anyone wants to lend a hand.
- At the end of August I was 45 hours over my time, and my current load is not sustainable. Unfortunately, fall is the busiest time for me, but I will try to reclaim these hours by the end of the calendar year. I have asked to no longer be involved in worship communications and tasks, and I hope to be less involved in playground going forward. Carolyn Kogan is an amazing volunteer and though I have been “co-chairing” with her, I am hoping to step back a bit as she is getting more comfortable in the role.

Picture of the Turtle Shell collage K-1 made last Sunday, just for fun.

