

UUC Board Meeting Minutes October 10, 2024

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

Chalice Lighting, Reading, and Check-in

- Laura called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm, and Cassy offered a reading.

- Joe moved to accept the October agenda, and Chris seconded. The agenda was approved unanimously

- Committee on Communications (Guest speaker Graham Glynn)
 - Graham became chair at their last meeting last spring.
 - The committee's goal is to improve communications; get the word out on how we're building a more tolerant world.
 - Also interested in recruiting more members through better communication.
 - He has experience in building online communities through WordPress; would like to improve website, expand Wordpress capabilities through plug-ins, expand on social media (pushing out blogposts etc.).
 - Our Instagram could be more active.
 - Thought question from Laura – how did each of us find out about this congregation?
 - Graham mentioned that many churches actively recruit, but UU doesn't seem to do that. Why not? Thoughts expressed by board members:
 - Many folks don't know what the UU is. Need to grow diversity.
 - We have done advertising (ads in paper, newspaper) in the past, but these efforts were not very successful.
 - Graham: What distribution of age would we like to have? (Can target demographics.) Do we want to grow? If so, how and why? It's a conversation that this group can discuss, Currently we're mid-size, the next step is corporate (way too big). Discussion ensued:
 - Having to do two services if we get too large.
 - What about friends who don't actually join – they are part of the conversation. Rev. Pam doesn't see that as an issue.
 - In a certain demographic we're well known; others not.
 - Some members would like to see growth, especially more diversity.
 - UUYAs are hoping to attract more young people; would be willing to help.
 - Graham's idea of online community is to give everyone access so they can create their own access to the website.
 - Rev. Pam discussed problem of online hacking (such as just happened).
 - Having one person to review posts and push out would help.
 - Graham would like to be able to access and explore the Wordpress website in order to make suggestions for improvements.

- Administrator has primary responsibility for web materials (per P&P section on communications), and may appoint a Webmaster. This is currently on hold until we have the new administrator trained and in place (couple of weeks).

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; Wayne seconded.
- Very brief discussion about treasurer's report.
- The consent agenda was approved unanimously.

Old Business

- Updates on the UUC Administrator position (Rev. Pam):
 - There were 60 applicants and 2 interviews.
 - Jenny Fairchild hired, is fine with 30 hrs. She will go on her husband's insurance; we will pay difference.
 - She moved here two years ago and is very invested in the community.
 - Our budget may take a small hit because of overlap between Bekah, Di, and Jenny. Wayne is not concerned about that. We may come out a little better because of the insurance.
 - Di will help document and standardize procedures on the financial side.
- Update on auction planning (Chris Long):
 - Planning is coming along well.
 - We don't have as many good items as we did this time last year; only have 44 items in live auction (where we make most of our money), still trying to come up with a couple more.
 - Do a 'flash sale' at very end to sell left-over seats at half price? This could be problematic – would it be fair to those who bought seats at auction price?
 - Distinction between online vs. silent auction? Doesn't seem to be a place on the website to differentiate.
 - Live auction catalog doesn't have to be finalized yet, time to find more items.
 - Need additional volunteers to help set up on Friday, and take down after auction.
- Grounds/playground update:
 - Rachel got an estimate for accessible walkway in playground; it is way too expensive. Same for playground-grade mulching (thousands of dollars).

- Jim Flowers is enthusiastic about finding new leadership; we should not lose that momentum. Laura thinks we need to keep this on our radar; we'll have to deal with this at some point. Keep eyes and ears open.
- Updates on Accessibility and Inclusion (Joe Cooley):
 - Some months ago Joe offered to assess building and write report. The report is almost completed; should be wrapped up by end of next week.
 - We're not in bad shape overall, but some things we could do to be compliant (improve slope of parking lot, walkways etc.) are cost-prohibitive. There are no complaints on these issues at the moment.
 - Inclusion: referring back to Marilyn Dupont's email from a couple of months ago: she had some suggestions we could implement (e.g., more armed chairs to help those needing help getting up).
 - Joe is not sure how to handle all the requests, but he's looking into it, and is aware of issues.
- Updates on Safety Committee (Joe Cooley)
 - Lauren Oliver is the new chair, and the committee will meet in 2 weeks. No update at this time.
 - Will need fire drill, active shooter plan, etc.
 - Rachel - update on lights in parking lot: Electrician fixed some lights (most pole lights, around building) but still have a section not fixed because they couldn't find the circuit.
 - Solar lights along pathway would help but we need more.
 - Will discuss with Liz during Safety Committee meeting.
 - Discussion: Need to get parking lot redone ASAP before weather gets colder (Note: this is not a Safety Committee issue).

New Business

- Impact of Hurricane Helene?
 - UU organization has given us \$3000 to us to help out our congregation and community. Discussion on how to use the money:
 - Giles County disaster relief – possibility.
 - Holler to Holler?
 - Would like to use it for someone locally. Any in the congregation truly need help? Let's keep looking, put announcement out. If none here, look elsewhere such as Giles County?
 - Step 1: get the money in our hands. Step 2: give it a week to see if we hear from anyone who needs support. Step 3: if we have money left over after supporting congregation, can discuss where to send.
- Trustees (Rev. Pam)
 - Jim Kern, Dan Brown, Judy Snoke are our current trustees.
 - There was a discussion about planning for future leadership in the event that one or more of the current trustees should ever decide to step down.
 - The Board can appoint, but the congregation has to vote on appointees at next annual meeting.

- Should be someone trustworthy who has strong ties to the church.
- Fiduciary position, legal entity responsible ... see bylaws.
- Music program
 - The Board approved a new direction for the music program and not renewing the contract for the choir director Ella Kromin.

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

Upcoming

Next Board Meeting – November 14, 2024

Reading for next meeting? Margo

Meeting adjourned at 8:57.

UUC Board Meeting Agenda
October 10, 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 - 7:20 PM

- Chalice Lighting, Reading (Cassy), Check-in
- Review and Accept Agenda

7:20 PM - 7:30 PM

- ComCom (Guest speaker Graham Glynn)
- Member Forum

7:35 PM - 7:40 PM

- Approve Consent Agenda
 - **Minister's Report**
 - **Administrator's Report**
 - **Director of Lifespan Faith Development's (DLFD) Report**
 - **Previous Meeting Minutes**
 - **Treasurer's Report**

7:40 PM - 8:20 PM

Old Business

- Updates on the UUC Administrator position
- Auction - need any help? (Chris Long)
- Grounds/playground?
- Updates on Accessibility and Inclusion (Joe Cooley)
- Updates on Safety Committee (Joe Cooley)

8:20 PM - 8:50 PM

New Business

- Impact of Hurricane Helene?
- Trustees (Rev. Pam)

8:50 PM - 9:00 PM

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

Upcoming

- Next Board Meeting – November 14
- Newcomer's meeting on Nov. 9 - Laura and anyone else?

- Reading for next meeting?

October 2024 Minister's Report to the Board
Submitted by Rev. Pam Philips

Leads Worship and Officiates Rites of Passage

Gratitude to all the worship associates and guest preachers who filled the pulpit during my sabbatical. The worship team gave me a document of things they learned in my absence that will help us moving forward.

My first service back was a kind of report on my time away and included wonderful gifts – a song from the worship team and Jared, flowers from the board, and acknowledgement of all the groups and congregants who worked hard to fill gaps during my sabbatical. Jim Kern did a reflection during the service when I preached the sermon on the holy spirit that he purchased at last year's auction. I hope it was good advertising for this year's auction event.

I officiated at the wedding of Adam Magee and Ricardo Acevedo, who returned from Michigan to be married, and will officiate at Sharon Crane and Jean Elliott's ceremony this weekend. I've also met with a bride who will be renting our space NEXT October.

Provides Pastoral Care and Presence

Gratitude to Jane Mahone and Ellen Plummer, along with the rest of the Lay Pastoral Care Ministry team for providing pastoral care in my absence. They had no need to call on Rev. Emily Rhodes Hunter. I've been able to visit with members in a health facility and have had meetings in my office since my return. This Sunday, part of the LPCM team will participate in the service to explore how pastoral care relates to our monthly worship theme of Deep Listening.

The Surviving Spouses reconvened after my time away and I attended Sages.

Encourages Spiritual Development for Self and Others

Gratitude to Rachel Craine for getting this year's Soul Matters groups up and running. Thanks, too, to all those who have volunteered to facilitate the groups. I was pleased to find the Tuesday meditation group is meeting in-person and on Zoom (they've been meeting virtually only since the shutdown).

My sabbatical gave me the opportunity to attend worship services, both in local churches and in UU congregations in Oklahoma, Colorado, North Carolina, and Virginia. Our time with family at a our lake-side cabin in the Columbia River Gorge was also renewing. Our trip to Italy spending time with my sister Brenda and her family and visiting many beautiful churches. It was a time of renewal.

Witnesses to Social Justice in the Public Square

Our Defending Democracies group has been busy. I saw many congregants at a program they co-sponsored on Disinformation in the Digital Age on September 5th at the Lyric Theater. They also presented a program on Faith and Democracy at the Blacksburg United Methodist Church. They helped promote a showing of *Bad Faith: Christian Nationalism's Unholy War on Democracy*. I was pleased that we were able to sponsor a table at the NAACP Freedom Fund dinner. The Religious Affairs Committee of the NAACP is sponsoring Faith & Social Justice: A Multi-Faith Panel Presentation on November 14th (7:00 pm) at the Church on Main. (Board members won't be able to attend, but I think other congregants will find it interesting). I was sad to miss the Dialogue on Race summer summit, but I'm meeting with the Jim Crow/White Privilege subgroup today.

Leads Administration

Gratitude to the board for all they did to manage the personnel issues in my absence. I met with Bekah to get up to speed on all her tasks before her last day and then with her and Di Ross, who is completing many of tasks (mostly financial) on an interim basis. I advertised the position on Indeed and received 60 applications,

which were reviewed by members of the search committee (including Jim Flowers, Jane Mahone, and Kristine Reid, along with Rachel Craine and Laura Robinson). We interviewed two qualified candidates, I called references, and we were pleased to recommend Jenny Fairchild to the board. Because she wants to see her current employer (a church in Richmond) through their stewardship drive, she will transition into the position slowly. She will begin working on an hourly basis on October 22nd, learning the aspects of the position that Rachel and I have been covering (sending out email announcements, doing Sunday morning slideshows, responding to requests for rooms and rentals, etc.). She will begin to work the full 30 hours on November 12th. Gratitude to Di Ross for offering to work for us as the interim administrator.

I've met with people considering renting space at UUC, including a bride who will be having her wedding here in October 2025 and a community member who rented Elarth for a master naturalist meeting.

I've met with the Sabbatical Committee, Connections Committee, the Right Relations Team, and Worship Team and look forward to meeting with the Safety Committee soon.

I understand that the Choir has been taking a hiatus due to only three or four members being able to attend rehearsals. I've met with Ella Kromin to discuss the situation, as well as having conversations with Jared Gibbs and several current and former members of the choir. I'd like to discuss possible solutions with the board.

I spent some time responding to emails, phone calls, and texts from people who received an email from revpam.uucnrv@gmail.com (**not my address**) asking for discreet help – a scam trying to get someone to buy \$600 of eBay cards and send them the pin numbers. One congregant got as far as trying to buy the cards at a store, but the clerk alerted them that it was a scam. We sent out an email warning people to NEVER respond to requests for any kind of help for staff from an email or text. We need to emphasize, still, that people should never share the directory.

Serves the Larger Unitarian Universalist Faith and Leads the Faith into the Future

I will be attending the Southeast UU Ministers Association retreat at the Mountain in November, assuming that they've been able to clean up after Helene took down trees and power lines. They have been in touch with me in my capacity as president of SEUUMA and believe they will be hosting groups by then.

I look forward to attending the Joseph Jordan Cluster of UU professionals again and was pleased to meet the new minister at the UUC in Roanoke, Rev. Jen Raffensperger

Time away from Blacksburg

October 15th – Richmond (JJ Cluster)

November 11-14 – The Mountain (SEUUMA) – I'll be back in time for the board meeting!

Administrator's Report to the Board

October 2024

- **General:** Di Ross started work 9/30 as interim administrator and sent our bookkeeper the week's financial data to record deposits and generate payroll and checks. She will be documenting procedures and developing detailed training materials for the next administrator.
- Di and Rev Pam have been processing rental requests.

DLFD Report to the Board –October, 2024

Children and Youth Programs:

- **Registration Numbers:** 48 families, 78 children registered for 107 activity positions.

This registration number is below this time last year, and below predicted amounts.

However, our attendance has been up—from an average of 28 children September 2023 to an average of 39 children September 2024. This is the largest growth in average attendance in a month since I've been in this position. YRUU, Coming of Age, and 4-5 OWL have been driving these numbers. I am still concerned about our youngest cohort, nursery through 1st grade, as the numbers there remain low.

- **Programming:**

- YRUU raised \$767.25 in their book sale. Remaining books have been sorted and donated to the library, the Montgomery Co. Christmas store, and Total Action for Progress in Roanoke.
- October youth groups go to Sinkland Farms: MSYG on 10/11, YRUU on 10/18
- Curriculum—the 2-3 class is using a new curriculum, Superhero Academy, this semester. I am finding there is much that needs to be adapted in it, for a variety of reasons—from references to violence (superheroes) to not having enough material to fill the class time, and I don't think we will use it again. Mindy Quigley has offered to help adapt the lessons for the rest of this semester. We will be using the Bluey curriculum next semester, which should not have the same issues.

Adult Programming:

- Sunday Circles begin again in October, meeting on the first Sunday of each month at 8:30.
- The Parents as Tutors class offered by Daniel Vogler has been attended by 3 families, so although small, the group seems to be getting a lot out of it. They will finish up in October.
- The September parent covenant group was very successful, with 15 adults and 13 kids in attendance. I think providing free food and free childcare was helpful in getting families to come.
- The first “Synapse Salon” was held October 3, with about 7 people in attendance.
- The first Date with Death Club will be held on October 21, and we already have over 20 people signed up. It looks like it will be a popular offering.
- Our first all-ages game night was canceled due to weather, but I am hoping to have a big turnout for the next one, Saturday October 26 from 5:30-8:30.

Other DLFD Activites:

- The LFD Committee met and discussed curriculum, attendance, volunteers, and events.

We decided to:

- Start after Labor Day next year
 - Get more OWL facilitators trained this year—Angela Parrish and Peter Binkley, possibly Patrick Feucht and Molly or Peter Lazar (for 8-9 OWL)
 - Move the Buddy Project from November/December to February/March—a less stressful time of year that may make participation easier (and certainly my life...)
 - Discussed the absence of a Library committee and decided making targeted asks for library help, rather than asking people to join a committee, might work better. Suggested reaching out to Paul Metz for help.
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- I met with my mentor for the credentialing program and we decided to revise my timeline so that I will complete the program in Spring of 2027 (3 years instead of 2.) This will allow for more flexibility, processing time and less stress.
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- I have been trying to work fewer hours this month, and I will be taking Sunday, October 20 off. Niko Rensberger will be covering for me with RE.