

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Atlanta Board of Trustees
September 28, 2010
Chapel

Call to Order/Organizational Matters - Marshall called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. In attendance were Marshall Orson, President, Ellen Beattie, President-Elect, Cyndi McFarland, Secretary, Beth Valentine, Clarke Weeks, Conrado Marion-Landais, Eric Pohl, Joetta Prost, Pam Kilmer, Penni Dudley, Anthony David, Executive, Scott Howell, Executive Director, and Marti Keller, Executive.

Chalice Lighting – Pam

O sacred season of autumn, be my teacher for I wish to learn the virtue of contentment. As I gaze upon your full-colored beauty, I sense about you an at-home-ness with your amber riches. You are season of retirement, of full barns and harvested fields. The cycle of growth has ceased; the busy work of giving life is now completed. I sense in you no regrets; you've lived a full life.

I live in a society ever restless, always eager for more mountains to climb, seeking happiness through more and more possessions. As a child of my culture, I am seldom truly at peace with what I have.

Teach me to take stock of what I've been given and received; may I know that is enough. I know the contentment that allows the totality of my energies to come to full flower. May I know that like you, I am rich beyond measure. As you, O Autumn, take pleasure in great bounty, let me also take delight in the abundance of simple things in life that are the true source of joy.

Edward Hays – The Book of Wonders

Finalize Agenda – A revised agenda was distributed with the inclusion of an LRP update, and the need for an NLDC liaison.

Review Minutes from August 2010 – The minutes from August were approved via e-mail prior to the meeting.

Long Range Plan (LRP) Update – The five members of the LRP Steering Committee have been named, following a review of 15 candidates. Serving on the committee alongside Chair Mary Ann Oakley will be Lanie Damon, Mary Anne Gaunt, Wynn Montgomery and Gary Moss. Their first meeting will be October 5th. They will be commissioned during the October 19th, Living Our Mission celebration service.

New NLDC Liaison – Having taken on many heavy Board commitments this year, Eric asked to be relieved in his role as NLDC liaison. Beth Valentine agreed to replace Eric as the Board liaison to the NLDC, but Eric will continue to be involved in the Leadership Development efforts that have begun.

Executive Report –The Board received Anthony's report as submitted with further clarification on the new gates and fences that have been installed in the overflow office parking lot. Parking for UUCA is only allowed there on Sundays and the gate to the pedestrian path will only be open on Sundays. The Executive is working on developing alternatives for overflow parking and will notify the Board of any changes.

Anthony also reminded us of the change in worship times the day of the December Congregational meeting. The first service will begin at 9:12 and he will be “advertising” 9:12 very aggressively in an effort to help everyone remember.

Anthony commented on the proposal by the Executive Team to change the fiscal year from a calendar year to one that would start and end in the Spring or Summer. He expressed their strong interest in moving forward with it, but pointed out that it will need a Bylaws review, study of needed steps and implications, as well as much further discussion by the Board and Executive Team. IRS approval may also be required. The biggest advantage to the proposed change is the separation of the Stewardship campaign and the budget process, giving the Executive Team accurate information and sufficient time to formulate a budget.

Bylaws and Policies Committee (Kristen, Penni, Jerry and Cyndi) – Penni presented the proposed Bylaws amendments needed to allow for absentee voting for the slate for the Board of Trustees, officers, NLDC, and Search Committee. Our current Bylaws do allow for Absentee Voting but only when there is more than one candidate for any position. The proposed amendments stipulate that the absentee votes can only be counted towards the quorum for the specific election on which they are cast. Penni clarified the phrase “in paper and electronic form” to include any form of electronic means. The Board will be asked to vote on these proposed amendments at the October meeting.

The Committee is also refining the policy on Resolutions Concerning Taking a Public Stand, but will need to involve the staff and Board in the conversation about what constitutes an official UUCA group. Anthony has given them several resources and they will also look at the requirements other congregations are using. The Congregation will not be voting on this before the May 2011 meeting.

Congregational Life Committee (Eric, Conrado, Pam and Beth) – Eric reviewed the results from the Focus Group that met August 29th noting that it was a big success. The event was well attended due to the personal invitations given to the attendees. The 10 person group had a lot of diversity as well – length of time at UUCA, age, ethnicity, family status, etc. A lot of food for thought was provided during the discussion and it was felt that the newer UUCA members walked away feeling heard and energized. The Committee has planned the next Focus Group for November 14th.

The big topics of discussion were volunteerism, the meaning of membership, and perceptions of the Board’s roles and responsibilities. Eric highlighted the discussion on the Board’s role, noting that it was generally not well understood by the group. He suggested that Above Board articles on our activities and an annual report by the Board, available outside the annual meeting, were two ways the Board could keep the Congregation updated on what the Board does.

Finance Report – Executive Director Scott Howell reported that as of August 31, total YTD income is in line with budget and expectations. Pledge payments are still be received in response to the letters sent out in July, and the percent of persons with no payment made has dropped while the percent of persons with overpayment has risen. The most significant variation in expense is the maintenance and repair of the HVAC system. The HVAC budget line is depleted and Scott is working on proposals for a new system. We will need to use emergency capital reserves if any other HVAC expenses arise. Contributing to the revenue projection is the existence of the surplus carried forward from 2009.

2011 Proposed Budget (first draft) – Three different draft version of the 2011 budget were presented by Scott and Anthony to the Board for review and discussion, based on varying pledge revenue levels: a conservative budget with \$870K in pledge revenue (Budget A); a likely one at \$910K in pledges (Budget B) and an optimistic one with \$930K I pledge income (Budget C). An updated version of one of these budgets will be voted upon at the October Board meeting.

Income Notes: The Phoenix 5K will not be included in the three budgets until a group commits to sponsoring it in 2011. The YRUU and YRE Coming of Age Program Income will be raised by participants and their families, and offset in the Youth Religious Education expense section towards their service projects and other activities. APP is increasing its tuition and fees, as well as its fundraising goal, but will not be doing the Blue Grass Festival fundraiser in 2011. Marshall requested that the Prior Year Carryover Reserve be removed from the Income portion so we can see the true picture of our Income in the 2011 fiscal year in comparison to same-year Expenses. Showing that the carryover is what allows the budget to be in balance is a clearer representation of the financial status, and will allow the Board to deliberate if we do want to continue passing budgets with higher total expense than income in the same year.

Expenses Notes – With respect to 2010, Personnel Costs for total compensation are reduced in model A (-9%) & B (-3%) and maintained flat in version C. The increase in APP expenses is due primarily to a more accurate reflection of what it costs to do business. The Board budget increases were due to the retreat being added back, travel to the triannual Large Congregational Gathering (Minnesota), proposed stipends for congregants to attend GA (Charlotte), and in Budgets B and C only, monies for a proposed audit. Some of these Board expenses might be moved to the Denominational Affairs or Operations categories. A proposed reduction in Accounting Consulting services is due to more bookkeeping being done in house. Some Social Justice budgets are still outstanding. The Emergency Capital Fund and Contingency Fund Expenses will increase proportionally to the total Operating Budget according to policies and Bylaws.

Before going into Executive Session, Anthony spoke about the necessity of staff cuts for 2011 and how painful they are as everyone is needed; but a “pruning back” is needed so we can grow in the future. All has been done to prevent the cuts and he doesn’t believe it is fair to keep rallying the congregation for more money. The following costs need to be absorbed: the full cost of the music director, as well as the Executive Director, restoring the full salary of one staff member, pension and professional expenses at full levels, insurance increases, and full dues to the UUA and Mid-South. Fair compensation is also a concern. (Laura DeCastro is working with the Executive Team to produce a fair compensation analysis in the Spring.) Anthony will be meeting with staff individually on Monday, October 4th.

Things to Share – Penni shared a letter from Atlanta Legal Aid detailing how they used their Give Away the Plate money to help a single mother who was being evicted from her apartment.

Adjourn – 9:36pm

Next Meeting - 6:30 – 9:30, October 25th

Chalice Lighter - Penni

Wisdom conversation - Alignment and Allies—Expanding the Impact of our Faith

November Above Board Article (due 10/17/10) - Ellen

