

Minutes of the UUCA Board of Trustees September 29, 2015

Attending

Board Members: Amelia Shenstone (presiding), Melissa Marion-Landais, Karen Martin (recording), Howard Lewis, Marie Palena, Christian Harden, Cindy Hoffner, Erin Stanfill, Jon Johnson, Mike Kuhar, Jane Mengel

Staff: Senior Minister Rev. Anthony Makar, Director of Administration Karen Roy, Director of Music Don Milton

Absent: Grier Page

Amelia called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Spirit & Community

Small group discussion over dinner: Board members and other attendees discussed aspects of the Board Member job description and the skills and qualities needed on the Board next year, to pass on to the Nominating Committee.

Chalice lighting: Melissa lit the chalice with words from Lao Tzu.

Introductions and Welcoming Guests: Sarah Patterson and Roger Easley representing the Nominating Committee were introduced and welcomed. Members and staff introduced themselves.

Announcements: Christian made announcements as listed in the agenda.

- Congregational meeting Dec 13
- Adult OWL: Mondays Oct 5, 12, 19
- Your Weekly Touchstone: Wednesdays
- Black and the Blue: Oct 10 1-5pm
- Building Your Own Theology: Tuesdays starting Oct 13
- **Board hosts Wonderful Wednesday: Oct 14**
- Pride Oct 11-12: march in the parade & volunteer!
- Underground Coffeehouse: Oct 24

Thank you messages: This month's *Thank You* cards were written to Mary Sherman for leading the first quarter's Generosity Circle and Candi Reddick for her work with EnterCulture.

Circle of connection: All members were asked to identify the best thing about being a Board member.

Decisive Action 1

Approval of Minutes of August 2015 Meeting: The minutes from the August Board Meeting were approved via email.

Approval of Reverend Rogers' REVISED Housing Allowance: Amelia explained that Rev. Rogers has requested a revision to the housing allowance passed last month. She made the following motion.

"In accordance with UUCA's policy of providing salary and housing allotments in line with the minister's preference for allocation of total salary and housing payments, and recognizing that adjustments to this amount may be made at any time prior to such expenditures (but never

retroactively), the board moves to allot the entirety of Rev. Rogers' salary and housing amount for the remainder of the 2015 calendar year to the category for housing allotment."

Melissa seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Compensation Plan: The Compensation Plan was provided to the Board prior to the meeting. The Board responsibility is to determine whether the Compensation Plan written by the Executive falls within Executive Limitations. Members were asked to consider this question prior to tonight's meeting. Amelia moved to approve the Compensation Plan. The motion was seconded by Christian. The plan was approved unanimously.

Funds from Wonderful Wednesday: The Board voted to use proceeds from the Oct. 14 Wonderful Wednesday to create a scholarship to help send a member of a smaller congregation to next year's SUULE.

Board Education

Making Pledge Calls: Board members who were part of the first quarter's Generosity Circle reported on their experience making calls.

- We are asked to call about 5 members/friends a month for 3 months.
- The process is very well organized.
- Training is good. Talking points for a variety of scenarios are provided.
- Contacts are recorded on a spreadsheet.
- We are not asking for dollar amounts of pledges.
- We send a thank you note after a pledge is made.
- The process allows congregants an opportunity to share information/concerns on other topics.
- We should refer pastoral care concerns to Lay Ministers as appropriate.
- People with accounts on The City can pay on their pledge but cannot make a pledge on The City at this time.

Need to Know

Executive Report:

Year 4 implementation plan: Rev. Makar reviewed the Executive Report sent to the Board via email. He highlighted the following:

- The consultation proposal from Rev. Peers has been approved. Dates are set and Rev. Makar is building a Steering Team to support the work.
- We are exploring the possibility of going to a middle hour model for Sunday programming with a vision of providing enriching spiritual experiences for all ages.
- The process for the congregation to Take a Public Stand on AR/AO/MC issues continues.
- The Black and Blue Forum has lined up an excellent panel of speakers and will be held on Oct. 10.
- The Year-round Stewardship process is very well organized. The team continues to meet weekly.

Report on Status of AVOM items: see above

Attendance Data: Attendance data was sent to the Board via email. Overall attendance is good but Children's RE attendance is down.

Financial Health of the Congregation: Rev. Makar reported:

- Revenue received for the year to date is on target although pledges received are slightly lower than previous months.
- Rentals, sales and fundraisers are going well.
- Plans to rent space to Pride School of Atlanta are proceeding well.
- Progress is being made on spending the 2014 surplus. Chairs in the sanctuary will arrive in October. The LED sign installation will be scheduled soon.
- We have hired Mr. Carl Lashley as our new Facilities Administrator.

Proposal for Don Milton Sabbatical : Amelia stated that the Board was to determine whether the Sabbatical Plan for Don Milton adequately provided for coverage of his job duties during his absence and whether we believe that the sabbatical will benefit UUCA.

Rev. Makar stated that we should see the sabbatical as a point of pride; that we are able to send Don on a journey of growth that will benefit the Congregation. He is confident that we will be able to maintain excellence in our Music Program and that the sabbatical will provide long-term benefits to the Congregation.

Don stated that the plan has been though many changes with the assistance of Melissa, Amelia and Rev. Makar. It is not a survival plan but a plan for growth. He has identified a Sabbatical Choir Director who is highly qualified and talented. He has identified people who have agreed to be part of the Sabbatical Music Committee. He will identify a Worship Leader who may not necessarily be the Choir Director. The plan calls for a 6 month sabbatical from January 2016-June 2016. The timing allows for Don to be with us in December and August.

Member comments included:

- well-conceived and well thought out plan
- personal experience of having a sabbatical was very positive
- concern that we will "feel the gap" , missing the teamwork between Anthony and Don
- it may be challenging to maintain spiritual maturity- we need your personality
- this may be an opportunity for others to grow into those roles
- if you have to be here for things to work, you have not done a good enough job
- concern that the plan will place more responsibilities on Travis (Don does not believe that the plan increases Travis' workload.)
- suggestion that the Sabbatical Music Team have a chair who is not Travis
- Does the plan indicate that you will take music lessons or give music lessons? (take) Is there any restriction on your earning money elsewhere while on sabbatical? (only beyond what I would normally do)
- Has the book already been accepted by Skinner House? (unsure)
- concern for leaving the newly formed Theater Arts group at its beginning (John Clum has taken the lead on that team. They are already exceeding their goal of one event per month.)
- disagreement with giving retroactive credit to qualify for a 6 month sabbatical and 3 month notice (This has been a long time in planning. The Jan.-June timeframe was carefully determined to have Don

in place for winter holiday services and for the start of the “new church year”. The 6 month length of time is very important for adequate spiritual growth and learning. We have a new understanding of the importance of a sabbatical for a spiritual Leader like Don. Better to have the sabbatical before the new settled Associate Minister begins.)

- Does Rev. Makar have any comment on how this will affect his own workload? (It is my vision, an excellent investment and worth any increase in my workload.)

Amelia read prepared questions/comments submitted from Grier prior to the meeting on this issue, in order to give the fullest possible hearing on the proposal.

Amelia asked whether anyone had a preference for waiting to vote next month. Group decided to proceed with the vote. Amelia moved to approve the plan. Christian seconded. The plan was approved with one opposed.

Budget: The Proposed 2016 Budget includes:

- projected income increase of 1%
- projected fundraising of 25K
- increase in personnel cost with new Associate Minister, FICA, pension adjustments, professional expenses
- competitive compensation for staff
- paying full UUA dues
- increases in Music and Membership Programs
- 10K in a Sinking Fund for long term expenses (development of a maintenance schedule)
- consideration of paid lead teachers for Children’s RE

To fully fund this budget we will need an 8% increase in income. We need to share the exciting things the budget offers as we continue the year-round stewardship process. The Board is asked to suggest the most appropriate places to cut if needed. Members are asked to participate in a conversation about the budget in the Board Group in The City.

We will vote on the budget in October.

The Work of the Board

Open Question- Generosity and Engagement: What will motivate greater generosity and engagement at UUCA? Members and staff are reading the book The Other 80%: Turning Your Church’s Spectators into Active Participants by Scott Thumma and Warren Bird.

Members met in small groups to discuss the chapter they read and reported back to the whole group.

Reading Assignments for October: Holy Conversations

Chapter 4- Bylaws and Governance, Rev. Makar

Chapter 5- Finance, PEM, Rev. Rogers

Chapter 6- Congregational Life, Karen Roy

Finance Committee: Jon reported that the committee reviewed the August financials and the first draft of the proposed budget. They reviewed the Compensation Plan. They also began to discuss the Sinking Fund which would be used to cover large, long-term expenses. Howard Katzman and Bailey Pope will meet with the committee to suggest costs for items the Sinking Fund will cover.

The office park next door has agreed to reopen the pedestrian gate between our properties. We can continue to use their parking lot on Sundays. It was suggested that signs to indicate additional parking in that lot might be helpful.

Bylaws and Governance: They have re-worked the proposed attendance policy and will share it next month.

Congregational Life Committee: Christian reported that he and Jane participated in the Southeast Large Congregations President's Cluster phone call. Unity in St. Paul shared information about their congregational survey and how they use it to measure and revise their Ends Statements. Their Ends are divided into three categories: Within (the individual), Among (the Congregation) and Beyond (the Congregation). The Committee is continuing to attend UUCA events and start conversations about them in The City.

PEM: PEM conducted a direct inspection follow-up on EL B. Treatment of Staff. Huge work has been done and the review went very well. Areas of concern have been "tightened up". The Executive was given provisional compliance on this EL.

Huddle: Amelia reported that she was invited to make a five minute presentation to the UUA due to our stepping up our GIFT payment. Fiesta de Libros is separating from UUCA because the group has found an external sponsor which will allow them to accept corporate donations.

Closing

Observer's Insights: Erin shared observer's insights.

Extinguishing the Chalice: Melissa extinguished the chalice with words from Noah Porter III.

Amelia adjourned the meeting at 9:27 p.m.

Next Meeting: October 27, 2015

Meeting Host: Mike Kuhar

Process Observer: Karen Martin

Chalice Lighter: Jane Mengel

Above Board [*due November 8 at 5pm*]: Erin Stanfill

Upcoming Committee Meetings:

- Bylaws and Governance:
- PEM Committee: 3rd Tuesdays

- Finance Committee: 3rd Mondays
- Congregational Life: 3rd Sundays, 10:00am
- Signup Genius for meeting roles:

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0948abae2ca75-uuca>