

UUCSC Board of Directors Meeting
September 21, 2022 via Zoom

Present: President Elizabeth Donovan, VP Trish Hindley, Treasurer Mary Alice Kimball, Clerk Mary Fulton, Directors Charlie Donnelly, Elaine Stannard and Russell Stokes, Rev. Denis Paul

Guest: Nancy Richman

Call to Order: 6:00 PM by Elizabeth Donovan

Reading of Covenant and chalice lighting: by Elizabeth Donovan

Invocation: by Rev. Denis Paul

Check in

MOTION: Elizabeth moves to ratify the July Board minutes that were approved via email. PASSED unanimously.

Staff reports: Questions were asked regarding the Our Whole Lives (OWL) that will take place at UUCSC on October 7-9. Lee Cowan is seeking assistance during the workshop. Her request will appear again in the e-news.

Treasurer's report: Printed copy on file with the clerk.

The Finance committee has moved \$100,000 dollars from the Washington Trust account to Schwab Treasury Bills to take advantage of a better interest rate. There are some pledges to the Our Living Legacy campaign that remain unpaid. When the Finance committee sets goals for one year, and three years, they will determine how to address these pledges.

Old Business:

MOTION: Russell Stokes moves to donate 5% of any fundraising to the UUA. PASSED unanimously.

New Business:

Covid Policies: Much discussion took place about whether to change the current policies. Concerns were voiced about protecting the health of an aging congregation, moving fully indoors due to colder weather, the coming flu season in addition to covid, the lack of testing leading to poorly informed positivity levels, the difficulty of wearing a mask for long periods of time, the loss of choir members who find singing while masked difficult and how to best balance the various needs of the congregation. The discussion will continue as the covid situation continues to change.

MOTION: Elizabeth Donovan moves to maintain the current covid policies with the exception that the choir members can decide whether to mask or not while singing. They will all remain masked when not singing. PASSED unanimously.

Fundraising:

Mary Alice Kimball reviewed the money raised by past fundraisers. Trish Hindley will coordinate a Holiday Fair. A spring plant sale, reinstating the Fair Exchange sales, and a fall concert were also discussed.

Opening and closing on Sundays: Elizabeth Donovan will set up a volunteer schedule for Board members to assist Membership with this.

Streaming service review: The people who attended the Zoom service on 9/17 were contacted for their input. It was generally agreed that the simulcasting was a success. The Board felt that there is a mandate to continue Zooming as much as possible for the sake of those who are distant, immune compromised, or unable to wear a mask for long periods.

Changing the mission statement: This topic was tabled as it was agreed that this is a congregational decision, not a Board decision. Consequently, no new T-shirts or business cards will be made at this time.

Out reach: URI has a group of students who have a website: sojourn_uri who might be "UU's who just don't know it yet". Elizabeth found them on Instagram.

Online comments about the congregational meeting: Generally the same as those expressed at the meeting with 2 negative comments. Elizabeth is reaching out to those respondents.

Signage: Elizabeth met with a South Kingstown official who indicated that nothing could be posted on the road. A small sign identifying the congregation might be possible but further investigation is warranted.

Adjourned: 8:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Fulton, Clerk

Next Board meeting: October 19, 6-8pm via Zoom

Next Coordinating Council meeting: November 9, 4-6pm via Zoom

**Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees
UU Congregation of South County
Rev. Denis Letourneau Paul**

September 18, 2022

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

There has been a lot of conversation in our community of faith over the the last month regarding worship and congregational life, especially about the future of both.

Worship

I have led every service the last five Sundays, including during my furlough week (how could I miss national Bow Tie Day?) and a new midweek service:

8/21 “From Shadow to Light,” with Aline Couture, introducing the concept behind the new monthly midweek evening service

8/28 “The Art of the Tie”

9/4 “Back to Work Blessings,” with Lee Cowan

9/8 “Shadow to Light,” Thursday evening service

9/11 “Sparkling or Still,” with Lee Cowan and Betty Kornitzer

9/18 “making God Together,” with Sky Kimball

After a bit of beta testing, the midweek evening service I will be leading each month is based on Sunday morning’s liturgy, minus the sermon, with most of the time devoted to on Joys and Concerns, beginning with concerns and ending with joys. The point of the service is to provide more space for that beloved part of the service, for deep sharing and lifting up the idea that we can all hold the hope for one another when grief or loss are particularly troubling. After a test run in June, the introductory service in August, and a kind of soft opening in September, each with helpful feedback from participants, it’s ready to roll out in October.

On the worship committee, it’s been our goal for a while now to get more lay people involved in presenting services. To that end, I’ve invited more people up front as the committee has devoted a significant amount of creative energy to defining the roles of “Worship Associates,” (those responsible for producing worship on Sundays when I am off) and “Worship Assistants,” (those who will do readings, share spiritual reflections and otherwise assist without being active members of the worship committee.) Job descriptions, lists of tasks and responsibilities, explanations of our liturgy, a covenant, and examples of spiritual reflections are currently being compiled into a *Worship Manual*, a living document designed to aid all worship leaders, participants, and committee members into the future.

This morning, September 18, we simulcast worship for the first time since my arrival. After important discussions about music quality, the nature of recordings, privacy, and copyright issues, we went onto Zoom during the service, using only one camera and a “virtual usher” welcomed participants and managed microphones. It seems to have gone well, like it is simple enough to be easily repeated on a regular, if not weekly basis. If this service met the needs of the participants, this may likely be the way we move forward. I will keep you posted as we who were involved (and served) engage in a process of evaluation.

Congregational Life

Yesterday, September 17, we gathered for a congregation-wide town hall-style meeting in the sanctuary, a meeting I co-facilitated with Board Chair Elizabeth Donovan and Director of Religious Education Lee Cowan. Our goal was to listen after we asked big questions, including:

- Name an event, or a program or a service, that has moved you or inspired you?
- What are the characteristics of this congregation that keep you coming back?
- Given the challenges we've faced in the last couple of years or more, what are we doing well?
- What more can we do to better take care of ourselves and each other?
- How can we reach out to the wider community? To meet the needs of the community? And to draw in new potential members?
- Which of these things can we do now?
- What's next? Where should we go from here?

Most of the board chairs and members of the board of directors were present among the 39 people, so thank you all.

My first impression of the feedback was that there was a lot of appreciation and patience present in every aspect of our congregational life. Quite a few expressed preference for working groups and getting things done over meetings, with a couple suggestions that we should think about reducing the number of committees we have.

Together, we decided that next steps should include:

- Committees focusing on mission and our future with a "leadership development" style of facilitation
- The Coordinating Council taking the lead on next steps, by setting goals and asking "where are we going?"

The coordinating Council may want to consider

- Regular "chalice-side chats" after worship to continue the conversation and gathering of feedback and input
- Reading together one book on congregational challenges and solutions
- Providing access to professionally facilitated training workshops for anyone interested in leadership

Community Life

With everything going on over the last three weeks, I have had no chance to engage in community activities outside of the congregation, though I know that will be changing soon as fall arrives and requests for my present increase.

One-to-One conversations: 74 as of 9/18

Next Furlough Week: September 19-16

In Peace,
Rev. Denis Letourneau Paul

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Rev. Denis Paul
Unitarian Universalist Minister

September 2022
DRE Board Report

Dear Board,

It's so good to be back!

Since starting again for the congregational year, we've had two multi-gen services (Blessings of the Backpacks and Water Communion) and one Time for All Ages. We are exploring what it's like to have kids up front on a rug again. I welcome feedback from anyone about how that is going. I will be having individual conversations as well as group discussions about what is appropriate and expected of kids in the sanctuary: helping to keep a tone of worship and reverence for our time together and about not running.

I was honored to help facilitate the congregational meeting on Sept. 17th. I thought it went really smoothly and we got a lot of wonderful ideas from it, as well as some clear next steps.

The RE Committee has had one meeting and came up with a list of goals. We'd like to add to and refine that list at our next meeting. I will be typing that up in a separate document to present to the board next month.

We are very excited to be hosting an Our Whole Lives (OWL) training Oct. 7th-9th. We have four volunteers from the congregation who will be trained and then be certified to teach OWL. I will also be taking the training. We are partnering with Westminster UU to coordinate this training and to run OWL classes. They will be hosting an 8th-9th grade class starting at the end of Oct. and we've invited our 2 youth in that age group to join them. And we plan to host the 10th-12th grade class starting at the end of January and they will send their interested youth down to us. Providence UU is also interested in being involved in some way. We're excited for this cross-congregational connection for our youth. I have reached out to Peacedale Congregational and Kingston Congregational to tell them about the training, but haven't heard back. We could use a few volunteers to help pick up and deliver food during the training.

Pam Santos is excited to coordinate junior youth gatherings this year for 6th-8th graders. They will be fun, social gatherings at first to gauge interest and hopefully inspire them to continue meeting. We have 6 kids in this age group.

I am excited to continue to grow and support the connections between our 4th-5th graders that was sparked at the 9 yr old affirmation service when they asked their big questions. I plan to set aside time and space on Sunday mornings (hopefully once/month) when they can connect, keep asking questions, and hopefully plan the puppet show that they're excited about. :)

Thank you all. I'm loving deepening our relationships and time spent together.
Lee

Office Administrator Board Report, September, 2022

Website Due to a misunderstanding on my part about which bills get forwarded to whom, the website domain fee was not renewed and went down for a few days earlier this month. Many thanks to congregants Etta Zasloff, Will Bender, to Sue Rogala and to Jim Hermann, the UUA Hostmaster for working together to get the website back up. I am working with Jim to implement changes that will keep this from happening in the future.

Facilities More groups are returning to in-person meetings, so the calendar is fuller than it has been. It is encouraging to see! I am working on a system for people to let me know when supplies, such as paper goods, need to be purchased or ordered so that we get them before we run out.

Winter hours I am adjusting to the return to winter hours and hope to have time to take on some larger projects to make use of the time in the office, such as getting the keyless entry codes sorted out and organizing the notebooks in the office.

Ongoing I continue to work with Etta on the newsletter and website, and to take care of the mail, email and phone messages and getting the bills to Sue Rogala.

Best,
Sara Kaplow
Office Administrator

**September 2022
FA Report to the Board**

Dear Board members,

This month was very busy, catching up after a vacation and an illness. The August financials have been completed and I have been able to work with Mary Alice on completing the year end activities and reporting. Mary Alice has also spent a lot of time with me on Google Sheets. Hopefully all year end reports will be finalized soon.

Regards,
Sue