

UUCSC Board of Directors Meeting
April 18, 2023 via Zoom

Present: President Elizabeth Donovan, Clerk Mary Fulton, Treasurer Mary Alice Kimball, VP Trish Hindley, Directors Charlie Donnelly and Nancy Richman, Rev. Denis Letourneau Paul. Nancy Richman was welcomed to the Board to replace Elaine Stannard who has resigned due to health issues.

Absent: Russell Stokes

Call to Order: 6:00 PM by Elizabeth Donovan

Reading of Covenant and chalice lighting: by Elizabeth Donovan

MOTION: Mary Alice moves to ratify the March Board minutes that were approved via email. PASSED with Nancy Richman abstaining.

Staff reports: Appended.

Treasurer's report: A possible deficit of \$17,000 is predicted for this fiscal year. If needed, a restricted fund of \$15,000 is available to cover most of the deficit. \$170,000 is currently in savings. Rental income is being evaluated. Discontinuing the copier contract will reduce expenses but a new copier will need to be bought. Someone is needed to research and expedite both this purchase and the purchase of a new computer for the office. A preliminary budget proposal for 2023/24 was presented. Staff salaries and a probable deficit were discussed. The Board wishes to continue paying the staff in line with the UUA's fair compensation guidelines. Leadership funds will be provided to assist a GA delegate who is attending in person.

Stewardship: Mary Fulton. At the end of the Stewardship campaign \$162,000 was pledged. President Elizabeth Donovan made a plea to the congregation to consider raising their pledges. Consequently, \$16,000 has been added bringing the pledge total to \$178,000. This is still less than the \$200,000 goal; so another deficit budget is likely.

Nominating: The committee is still seeking a treasurer. Interested people with the appropriate skills should contact Linda Whyte Burrell, Gail Burchard or Val Follett.

Fire Drill: Rev. Denis and DRE Lee Cowan are planning a drill on May 21.

Absentee voting: The clerk will see that ballots are available.

Tree of Life: During a chalice side chat people will be reminded that the tree is for recognizing anyone, whether living or dead.

Liaisons: Remind all committee chairs that annual reports are due to the office administrator by May 19th.

Policy Manual: A task force of 3 Board members will meet to compile suggested revisions.

Adjourned 8:00.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Fulton, Clerk

Next Board meeting: May 17, 6-8pm Zoom

Next Coordinating Council meeting: May 10, 4-6pm Zoom

Staff reports

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

April 14, 2023

Dear Members of the Board of Directors,

Following are my thoughts on the three areas of ministry:

Worship Life

Since my last report, I've been involved in the following services:

4/2 "Isn't This A Time," with Sky Kimball

4/7 "Tenebrae," evening service with many readers

4/9 "New Beginnings," Easter service with Bethany Sorrentino

4/16 "the Hammock of Life," with Penny Hall

The ten-part sermon series on the Principles conclude with "Hammock of Life." I'm still planning on assembling all of the sermons, reflections and reading snippets into one document.

The Tenebrae service went well, though the Easter service felt a little chaotic, because of technical issues related to Zoom.

On 4/2, we had our first Zoom simulcast with truly good sound quality. It felt like a minor miracle, requiring countless correct settings on two devices up front: an iPhone as camera at the pulpit, and an iPad at the choir, logged on as host of the meeting, with original sound on and video off. I worried my movement around the chancel would be distracting in the sanctuary, but nobody seemed to notice. The following week, everything that could go wrong did go

wrong. We'll see how it goes on 4/16 with me handling everything, then the following week with Nancy Richman handling everything. Fingers crossed.

I've been feeling like my sermons have been getting shorter and shorter to make room for spiritual reflections and the wildcard that is Joys and Concerns. I don't want to cut spiritual reflections because this kind of worship involvement models deep reflection and nurtures a laity that understands of the hows and whys of worship, which can only benefit the congregation in the long run. Some have suggested that I should "cut off the people who talk too long," but I won't be the GenX white guy who silences women and elders. I have some ideas for how to cut back on and/or limit other elements, so please know that I'm aware of how things are going.

Congregational Life

It looks like we'll have nine people to celebrate at the new member recognition ceremony in May, including two returning members, two (among several) who joined during the worst of the pandemic, and five newbies. The whole membership committee is involved in the ceremony. During the New to UU class I spoke, with input from Elizabeth Donovan and Mary Fulton, very frankly (face to face!) about stewardship. Coming on the heels of Elizabeth's discussion about the state of the canvass, we saw a jump in pledging and the bottom line for the coming year. The lesson is clear: we simply must be more forthcoming about the needs of the canvass and what is expected of each able household. Our folks want facts.

Once again, scammers set up a bogus email address and pretended to be me. Over Easter weekend, I receive 40+ emails, phone calls, text messages and even social media messages that fell into three categories:

1. "You've been hacked and I thought you should know."
2. "Is it really you asking me for gift cards," and
3. The most shocking category, "can I bring you the gift cards at church instead of telling you the numbers in an email?"

This happens every time the scammers strike. I never thought anyone would fall into category 3, but they have. I want to respond to folks in category 2 before they act, but it takes a lot of time to get through all the messages in category 1.

I have felt like we do a good job of letting people that I will never ask for money in a message, and to respond by ignoring and deleting. But even after I made an announcement from the pulpit, two other members responded to the scammers and procured gift cards. One told me they weren't paying attention in the service! I just don't know what else I or we can do to protect our members from scams we are powerless to stop.

Community Life

Community involvement is picking up. I recorded a 60-second radio spot which is running on WCRI.

We're working with Westminster in East Greenwich on OWL programming for three different age groups. They've also invited us to take part in their "Gender 101" training by Rev DL Helfer.

I'm planning on being present for the April 21 interfaith service at an interfaith service at Congregation Beth David in Narragansett, in response to the "day of hate" perpetrated against Jews and other minority groups in February. That will be Friday, April 21 at 7pm. Our whole congregation is invited.

I've also been drafted onto the planning team for the UU Ministers Association Ballou Channing District Retreat May 1-3. DRE Lee Cowan will join us that Monday evening as a song leader. And it looks like I've been roped into chapter leadership for the coming year. It's one of those things that you never *want* to do, but can't reasonably say "no" to and still remain in good standing with colleagues.

Next Furlough Week: May 15-22

In Peace,
Rev. Denis Letourneau Paul

Office Administrator Board Report, April, 2023

Membership Materials have been updated for the new members information packets and printed out for the committee to assemble and distribute

Stewardship In support of the stewardship campaign, pledges were recorded and information conveyed to Mary Fulton and Jeff Berry.

Meetings I attended a meeting with Mary Fulton, Linda Dupuis, Elizabeth Donovan and Val Follett to refine the system for updating the directory, membership lists and the membership book.

Leftovers Food which was leftover from the New to UU meeting on April 2 was donated to Welcome House. While the Johnnycake Center cannot accept food that has been opened, Welcome House gratefully accepts donations of leftover food. Please help me spread the word to anyone who may be having an event.

Ongoing I continue to perform various tasks in support of the work of many of the committees. I continue to maintain the online calendar, to produce the order of service weekly, 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, and to Linda Dupuis with maintaining the directory.

Best,

Sara Kaplow

Office Administrator

April 2023 FA Report to the Board

Dear Board members,

I did complete estimating various administrative expenses for the upcoming fiscal year budget with the help of Mary Alice. In March I also was able to successfully submit the cash pension data for Rev Denis on the 1st date that the blackout ended. I also was able to submit the April payroll data successfully online. The process for payroll with the new Pension recordkeeper seems to be going smoothly. There is still some work to be done to upload all W2 employees. I believe that Mary Alice has been discussing this with the Personnel Committee.

Monthly and daily financial activities and email activity continue to take the majority of my time. This includes reviewing and making all payments in a timely manner, bank account reconciliations, updating QuickBooks, completing all General Ledger entries requested by Mary Alice and running all monthly financials for Mary Alice.

Regards,
Sue

April 2023

DRE Lee Cowan Board Report

We've been outside every Sunday in the last month, except for Easter, which I heard was a wonderful multi-gen experience for all, I was sorry to miss it.

In RE, our month started with a lovely spring Equinox circle outside where we shared signs of spring and imagined what kinds of seeds we want to plant in our lives. We did an egg divination ritual to see what most wanted to come into our lives. Then we spent two weeks painting and then smashing and gluing flower pots. It was part of a lesson in vulnerability, perfection, letting go and rebuilding into something beautiful. I told the Chinese wisdom tale of the Cracked Pot and reminded the kids that (as our 1st Principle states) we are all important and worthy, even when we are imperfect.

Two weeks ago, we planted peas in the raised bed and they've poked their little heads up. Go say hi!

And last week we planted into our cracked pots using fruit from the store! We smashed blueberries and planted them, separated blackberry seeds and wrapped them in a moist paper towel and planted them, sliced the seeds off the sides of strawberries and planted them. And even planted a pineapple top! We're excited to see what comes of our seed experiments. And

we were reminded (as our 7th Principle says) that we are all connected in this beautiful web of life.

The RE Committee and I wrote up our annual evaluation at our last meeting and reviewed the RE Handbook.

We are excited to be starting a small version of the program we're calling "Sidekicks: Spiritual Partners helping U be U". Families are signing up to be paired with an older adult in the congregation. They will then get together to spend some time together, either working on a craft project or asking each other questions. Our hope is for this to expand to anyone in the congregation who would like to be matched up with someone to get to know a little better and to feel a sense of mutual support and belonging. We would love for everyone to have someone to call when they need a friend.

We're looking forward to a kid-centered service on May 28 that will hopefully include some of our teen OWL participants, and maybe a puppet show from our 4-6th graders?

Thanks all,

Lee