

UUCSC Board of Directors Meeting

December 4, 2024

Oneto Room

Present: President Nancy Richman, VP Russell Stokes, Treasurer Mary Alice Kimball, Clerk Mary Fulton, Directors Kelsey Briggs, Chris Johnson and Bethany Sorrentino and Rev. Denis Letourneau Paul

Call to Order: 10:32 am by Nancy Richman

Invocation

MOTION: Nancy moves to ratify the November minutes as well as the email vote to add Dorie Lawson to the Music Director search committee, all of which were approved via email. **PASSED** unanimously

Staff reports are appended.

Treasurer's report: Trish Kelley is heading a search committee for a new Financial Administrator. In the meantime Mary Alice Kimball is performing the tasks.

- Pledge receipts are coming in and we are on budget. Many folks pay the full pledge by Year End so receipts may slow down next year.
- Dining for Dollars - Sue Strakosch is following up with monies owed. Of approximately \$11,000 sold, \$9,500 has been collected to date.
- Mary Fulton and Mary Alice are heading the Chalice Days fundraising. We are soliciting donations during the month of December. The funds will be split 3 ways - UUCSC, Habitat for Humanity (also our Share the Plate in December) and UU Service Committee(UUSC) Guest at Your Table.
- The Year End Schedules are not yet complete. Sue Rogala was asked to assist, however, she does not have any available time.
- We are coming up to many calendar year end reporting.
- We are getting ready for the 2025-2026 Budget preparations including Salaries.
- \$18,000 of unexpected expenses has been paid using the mortgage payoff funds, not savings.
- \$8250 of the Hurdis Fund has recently been granted.
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OLD BUSINESS

Reviewed the steps taken so far and made recommendations to support a wide vision of the music director's future role at UUCSC:

1. Add another voting member to the search committee who is not a choir member
2. Hold another congregational meeting to solicit more input as to hopes, views, and desires
3. Hold chalice side chats with written information to be shared
4. Have a Board member speak with the search committee about the issues discussed

5. Have the search committee spend time downstairs with the families to get their input

MOTION: Russell moves that Lee Cowan, DRE be invited to join the search committee as an ex officio member. PASSED unanimously.

Adjourned 12:45.

Submitted by
Mary Fulton, clerk

Next Board meeting: **Thursday** January 2, 10:30 - 12:30 via Zoom

Staff Reports

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

November 29, 2024

Dear Members of the Board of Directors,

Since my last report to the board back in late October, I've been involved in the following worship services:

11/3 "A Straw Hat and a Handshake," with Lee Cowan
11/10 "There is More Love," with Adrian Evans
11/17 "What Now?" With Sue Strakosch
11/24 Assisted guest Rev. Joe Cherry, "The Imperfect Cookie People"

These are my thoughts on three areas of ministry:

Worship Life

I'm currently in the midst of leading (or in one case assisting) eight Sundays in a row, being present during the tumult of the presidential election. The 11/24 service was a lesson for all of us, I think, about the centrality of music in our liturgy. The combination of the poignant music of the guest cellist with Mike Galib o piano and the emotional words of Rev. Joe made manifest the ways in which words and music can combine to be transformational beyond the sum of their parts.

The Music Director Search Committee has met for the first time, and is beginning the work of creating a timeline, a plan for networking and advertising, and writing a job description and interview questions that leave room for "thinking outside of the box," and the possibilities for new ways of "doing" music; ever mindful of the shared hope that the whole congregation (not just the choir) may be more involved in making music.

Congregational Life

During the first week of December, we will be celebrating Chalice Days (the UUA weeklong festival formerly called Chalica). Using worship, art, a congregational dinner, and take home materials to encourage celebration, Lee and I are encouraging new traditions and rituals for families to go deeper into our shared faith at home, in ways that are fun, generous, and uniquely UU. It's a challenge making the dinner happen during the same week as the annual Holiday Fair, but it's also worthwhile.

Last week, Carey McDonald, the UUA's Executive VP, sent out an email to congregations with the subject line, "Adopting a new sensibility about safety and security," which has generated some interest and discussion here at UUCSC. In it, they invite conversation about the challenges to safety in both the psychical and virtual realm, and the the tension between protecting ourselves and our beloveds while also being open and welcoming in an increasingly hostile environment post-election.

Community Life

During the November 8 Social Justice Advisory meeting, we talked about the incredible number of demands that may be made of us in defense of communities at risk as well as democracy itself. We agreed that while UUCSC can't be everywhere all the time, our social justice priorities would present themselves soon enough. It looks like that may already have happened. Transgender Americans are under attack, being scapegoated by the left and the right; and less than two weeks ago the US House passed HR9495 which — if passed — will give the secretary of the treasury the authority to unilaterally revoke the tax exempt status of any organization that the secretary deems to "support Terrorism." It's very likely that the senate and the president will pass it when congress reconvenes in January. Given the incoming president's track record for demonizing anyone who disagrees with him, and his penchant for revenge, it feels like this legislation will have the chilling effect of putting faiths with liberal theologies like ours in the position of defending ourselves, rather than showing up for our neighbors at risk.

The challenge in the coming years is going to be responding to needs as they arise, while defending democracy and our right and responsibility to speak truth to power. I said in my 11/17 sermon, "An Open Letter to the President-Elect," that I refuse to give him power over my emotional state as I did in 2016, but HR9495 is a clear indicator that we have a lot of work ahead of us. We may have no choice but to take bold action.

Housekeeping

My next furlough week is December 24 to January 1, including the two holidays. I will be in Dallas TX visiting my husband's family December 25-30.

Since my last report, I have made two disbursements from the Agape Fund:
\$289 to a non-member in the community for assistance with utilities
\$250 to a member for assistance with medical bills

In Peace,
Rev. Denis Paul

Office Administrator Board Report, December 2024

Facilities

I coordinated various facilities and repair projects this month, including the repair of the heating system. I continue to support the other groups that make use of the space.

Facilities Rentals

I met with Russell to provide input on the updating of the facilities rental policies.

Membership

I met with Mary Finnegan and reviewed some of the tools in Breeze and how they can be used for processing yellow cards more efficiently.

Holiday Fair

I helped Trish with some of the artist/vendor applications and payments, and helped Mary Fulton with reserving the library for sorting and pricing items for the White Elephant Sale.

Ongoing

I continue to work with Etta on the newsletter and website, and to take care of the mail, email and phone messages. I continue to produce the weekly order of service and the monthly announcements insert, and to deliver the food donations to the Johnnycake Center.

Best,

Sara Kaplow
Office Administrator

December 2024
DRE Board Report

Dear Board,

RE continues to feel vibrant and fun. We have another new family who has started coming consistently, and now our numbers are closer to 15 each week. Having everyone upstairs on November 10th, singing “there is more love” was really meaningful to me and the families. We then went downstairs and had a really good sharing time and drew full body pictures of ourselves as super heroes, complete with what our powers are. The last two Sundays, we have been crafting small items to sell at the holiday fair. And we made salt dough chalices and decorated the 7-pointed star in preparation for Chalice Days.

Wünder Revels on November 3rd was really wonderful. If you haven't seen the beautiful woven nest fort we built, go check it out in the backyard. Many thanks to Kelsey and Jason Briggs for bringing all the materials and making that happen. And our stone soup is probably the best soup I've ever had, full of wishes and blessings from the kids and families. We now have a very extensive costume closet that I hope all will feel free to come try on some new characters in the coming year! I hope that whoever missed it can join us for our next one at the beginning of February. Next time I'd like to have more intentional time with the kids from 10-11:30 so we can focus on our Wünder characters and the world we are creating.

I love being part of service, and I'm happy the families and I can join the congregation for the first two Sundays of December to celebrate Chalice Days. I love that you all are up for anything I bring to you, and I'm excited to see the origami stars we made shining in our windows this week. I'm also looking forward to the congregational dinner this week and will be setting up the sanctuary with all our chalices to get ready for that.

There are a couple items of support that I'd love to have help with: I'd love to have an adult to spend time in the youth room with the middle schoolers during the second half of service on Sundays. They need encouragement to keep the room tidy and care for their space. I'd also love to coordinate an evening time when they can hang out together, which might include DnD in the new year. Second, I'd like to hire a second RE staff person to be in the nursery, so let's ask around in our circles and I'll check with the URI child development center again. And lastly, I'd really like to clean out my “office” and the space in front of it and would appreciate someone to help me get rid of things!

Thanks all,

Lee