

## **UUCSC Board of Directors Meeting**

May 14, 2025

via Zoom

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

**Guest:** Donna Caldwell

**Call to Order:** 7:04 pm by Nancy Richman

**MOTION:** Nancy Richman moves to ratify the April 30 minutes approved via email. **PASSED** unanimously

**Staff reports are appended.**

**Old Business:**

**Budget review:** Mary Alice Kimball

Input was solicited from the informational congregational meeting and from the Coordinating Council.

**MOTION:** Russell Stokes moves that the budget be approved as presented to the congregation on May 11.

**PASSED Unanimously**

**Bylaws:** Governmental structure recommendations will be reviewed by the new Board after the Annual meeting. Wording to reflect current practices was reviewed and revisions will be presented for a congregational vote on June 8. The president will discuss the reason for the proposed changes in the e-news and provide a link to the document with the proposed changes noted.

**Financial administrator search progress:** Mary Fulton

Three good candidates are scheduled to be interviewed. Hiring is expected to take place about May 20.

**Committee on Ministry:** 8 people were listed for the minister to contact about replacing 3 members of the committee. One would finish Donna Caldwell's term and the other 2 will fill 2 year terms

**New Business:** Board members are encouraged to attend the listening session after the Sunday 18 service.

Adjourned 8:41 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Fulton, Clerk

Annual Business Meeting: June 8, following services

## **Staff Reports**

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

May 15, 2025

Dear Members of the Board of Directors,

Following are my thoughts on different areas of ministry:

#### Worship Life

Since my last report to the board, I have led the following worship services:

- April 18, Sundown Tenebrae service with 6 incredible readers
- April 20, "Faith, Trust and Pixie Dust," with DRE Lee Cowan
- May 11, "The Crisis of Masculinity," with Sky Kimball

In the last month, I've tested the congregation's trust by leading worship services that really stretched us all, by going beyond expectations of the norm. The Tenebrae service used five stories of oppression and abuse by the regime; the Easter morning service used the Disney portrayal of Peter Pan to talk eternal life/youth and faith; and on Mother's Day two men talked about the isolation of caused by masculinist extremism and how, in the tradition of Julia Ward Howe, women can help.

After I held a class on the basics of sermon writing, Sky Kimball was the first Worship Assistant to deliver a homily (short sermon with personal reflection) during a service he co-lead with me. We both got great feedback on his work, so hopefully more Worship Assistants will be open to the experience in the future.

The arrival of our new Music Director Ami Pienknagura has provided us with the opportunity to rearrange the sanctuary to reflect the changes we seek to make in the music program, bringing the choir together with the rest of the congregation. The new arrangement is also allowing us to imagine what the sanctuary would have to be arranged in order to accommodate projecting the new UUA virtual hymnal in the future.

A meeting of some of the interested stakeholders last week made clear to us all that UUCSC need not be in a rush to be an early adopter.

### Congregational Life

On May 18, the Committee on Ministry (COM) will be hosting the second of the proposed regular congregational conversations it has been charged with. This one, and another in August or September, will be lead by professional facilitator Rebecca Foster. Meanwhile, the COM conducted the annual evaluation of ministry on May 8, with input from representatives of the Board, Worship, RE and Music committees. The final edit will be available soon on the website.

The evaluation has left me thinking critically about how I can teach classes that really meet the needs of our adult learners, and about re-distributing my time while in Peace Dale during the week. Perhaps I should be spending less time with committees in or order to spend more time with congregants pastorally?

Planning for the Wunder Academy of Metamorphosis is under way, generating lots of excitement for its expansion this year. Lee and I have enjoyed watching its values and style infuse everything related to children and families throughout the congregation, and I'm looking forward to my evolving involvement. Meanwhile, for the first time in my career, I am thinking about what I could do for sabbatical which could happen as early as 2027. There's a lot of planning that has to happen between now and then, both for what I could do, and for how the congregation will operate for a few months in my absence.

### Community Life

Our April 26 Beyond the Binary Conference was a great success. These events were happening that day in UU Congregations all over the US, and ours — aside from the main event in Syracuse — was BY FAR the biggest. I'm grateful for all the work put into it by the Social Justice Team, especially Cathy Solomon. I'm grateful for the incredible presence and generosity of the speakers and panelists. And I am moved by all the folks who showed up not knowing what to expect, but knowing their presence would make a difference. We all learned something unexpected and left feeling empowered as allies, not just for our gender-expansive loved ones, but for anyone who lives outside of hegemonies. Now, the planning begins for future following up.

While our folks are showing up for justice events all over RI, and teaming up with justice organizations in South County, a few people have joined Linda Whyte-Burrell in the Witness Stones Project, presented by Kingston Congregational and funded by our Hurdis Fund. It's even been suggested that I do pulpit exchanges with UU and non-UU neighboring congregations. I'm excited to make the proposals to my colleagues.

On June 14, UUCSC will have a booth at South County Pride in Wakefield. If you can, please show up to represent our inclusive faith, reach out to neighbors, share blessings of and for authenticity, and brag on all that we have to offer. It will be on the same day as the \$92M boondoggle military birthday bash that so many of us plan on protesting, so hopefully there will be time for each of us to do both. The juxtaposition of events reminds me of an Emma Goldman quote on a button I used to wear in the 80's: "If I can't dance, I don't want to be part of your revolution."

### Housekeeping

Monday is my regular sabbath.

My next furlough week is May 20-25.

Since my last report, I have made no disbursements from the Agape Fund.

In Peace,

Rev. Denis Paul

### **Office Administrator Board Report, May 2025**

#### **Annual Meeting**

(Most) Committee chairs have submitted their reports, and I am working on producing the packet for the upcoming annual meeting. The absentee ballot has been updated and made available.

#### **Changing of the Guard**

Amber and I met briefly to discuss keys, where things are, and other important information. I am confident that we will work well together.

#### **Ongoing**

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

Sara Kaplow

See the Annual Meeting reports for the DRE report.