

## **UUCSC Board of Directors Meeting**

June 24, 2025

**Present:** President Amber Collins, Treasurer Karen Ellsworth, Clerk Mary Fulton, Directors Donna Caldwell, April Ruedaflores and Rev. Denis Letourneau Paul

**Absent:** VP Russell Stokes, Chris Johnson

**Call to Order:** 2:00 pm by Amber Collins

**Check in**

**Covenant:** Consider the need for good communication strategies among the board members as well as with the congregation. Respect others time commitments.

**MOTION:** Mary Fulton moves to ratify the May 14 minutes approved via email.

**PASSED 1 abstention**

**Staff reports are appended.**

**Treasurer's report:** Karen provided copies of the May cash position.

**Old Business:** Facilities will hire a cleaning service.

**New Business:**

**MOTION:** Karen moves to change the event access code and the key locks on the doors.

**PASSED unanimously**

**What are items of concern right now?** Who decides what outside groups might rent our space on an ongoing basis (consider further revision of policy for more than one time use; oversight of policy implementation)? Is our governance structure serving well? Could it, should it, be changed? How best to educate the congregation as to how the governance process works? How do we determine the congregation's capacity to take on new work, or continue past efforts (consider Board members rotating providing announcements at the end of service, including requests for volunteers)?

Adjourned 2:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Fulton, Clerk

Next Board meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month – July 10 in person in the Oneto Room  
10:00 – 11:00am

## Staff Reports

Report for June Board Meeting  
Director of Religious Exploration

Dear Board,

Planning for the Wunder Academy continues to buzz along. We have 14 kids registered and several more thinking about it. We had a fabulous meeting with volunteers a few weeks ago where we talked about the schedule of the days, the characters and roles of our village, the activities and high quality crafts that go with some of the characters and the social justice training we will be doing together. I've contacted several people about doing trainings on anti-racism, allyship and bystander interventions.

The South County Pride celebration was wonderful as always, even in the rain. I love connecting with our community.

We have an OWL training for the middle/high school curriculum set for November 7-9th with the same two trainers coming back to lead it. We have interest from Peacedale Congregational and Westminster to send a few people to be trained. I will be putting out the registration form this week. We're looking for more people from our congregation who are interested in being trained and facilitating this class for our older kids. Let me know if you're interested!

Sundays have been active and interactive in RE. We've had several guests join us this month to spend time with the kids and families. Allie Rice and Mary Finnigan came to do crafts and Barbara Pagh made paper with a big group, many of whom came just for that. Katt Lockwood and Nancy Dean came to help in the nursery. Mac Richardson started some tromboncino squash for us and is building arbor arch/tunnel for them to grow. Ray Smith came to spend time and helped tend our raised bed garden. During our monthly Breakfast Club for our middle schoolers, Bethany Sorrentino joined Sky Kimball and led a conversation with our middle schoolers about guns. It was a really important continuation of thinking about the ethics of making model guns and listening to the kids' thoughts and interests on the subject. I want this to be a model for next year: having a guest from the congregation downstairs every week.

I have been hearing a lot of comments about the kids not being upstairs as frequently as they used to be. We continue to plan time for them to be in the sanctuary when it makes sense, which ends up being about twice a month. When there is a way to fit in Time for All Ages, then we do. And I'd like to plan times for them to come up at the end of service as well, as we did on Imbolc. I've helped plan two services for June, which the children will be part of: the music service and Breakfast Church. I led a full multi-gen service on May 4th for Beltane and they were also part of service for the 9-10yr old Affirmation service on May 18th.

Thanks all!  
Lee

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

**Annual Meeting** Preparation for the Annual Meeting included collecting and editing committee reports, uploading the reports to the website, producing the annual report and sending that to the congregation and uploading it to the website by the deadline delineated in the bylaws, collecting completed absentee ballots

**Hiring a Financial Administrator** I have been supporting Mary Alice and Ami Botus in getting Ami up to speed on the accounting system. They have already come up with a few changes that will make things easier to keep track of.

**Office Cleanup** Mary Fulton continues to work diligently to clean out the OA office and get rid of accumulated papers that we don't need to keep.

**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.

Best,

Sara Kaplow ,Office Administrator

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

June 11, 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 (or will soon lead) the following worship services:

- 5/18 "The Attention Economy," with Lee Cowan, which included the Affirmation of three youths
- 6/8 "Thick Faith"
- 6/15 "We, the Sabbatarians," with Adrian Evans

The last two services of June (and the congregational year) will be different: a lengthened service built around the GA Hymn sing on 6/22; and "breakfast church" on 6/29.

The Worship Committee has had a slight re-formation. Amber has left to focus on her work as board chair, and Kerri Lyn (who happens to be a legitimately ordained interfaith minister) has joined the committee, already signed on to lead a service in July.

The experiment in space use during service, intended to bring the choir into the congregation, continues. It's not perfect, but we're tweaking a bit and learning a lot. The space will return to "normal" for the summer.

Perhaps the best news with regard to worship is that Ami Pienknagura will continue for the coming year, resuming in September.

Congregational Life

The COM has continued in its charge from the congregation to facilitate listening sessions with the whole congregation. May 18 was a mixed bag, mostly successful but leaving some feeling like we didn't "fix" anything. Subsequent conversations have been fruitful, and after my 6/8 service I heard a common refrain: *People are people; we're all a little messy, with our contradictions and mixed emotions; I want to be more hopeful and curious in living with the ambiguity.* Perhaps that will be our guiding principle in the coming year. Tom Magliocchetti and Danielle Bilecki have agreed to join the COM and continue the work, even as they help me in fine-tuning my priorities.

Lee and I (and possibly a trusted lay person) will be working on rejuvenating Small Group Ministry. We think we've hit on a way of meeting a variety of needs to include a whole lot of newer and older members for short-term commitments to deep dive into important topics and build community. Our hope is that we'll be able to not disrupt the existing small groups, while also not creating another entrenched long-

standing small group. Stay tuned!

The Nominating Committee did a great job inviting in new leaders from all over the congregation, including RE parents in key roles on the board and nominating Committee. I want to especially thank Kelsey Briggs for her great work on the board, the Clean Team, Helping Hands and keeping in touch with members in need. She's been a quiet force for good, and I know she will add so much to her new role on the Nominating Committee. Thank you to Donna Caldwell, Amber Collins, Karen Ellsworth, and April Ruedaflores for joining the board; and everyone else who is staying on to continue the good work! It's a privilege to work with you all.

### Community Life

Every day feels like another *month* of horror as the administration looks more and more like an autocracy, but our folks keep showing up for community events, protests and work with organizations in the resistance. The difference our folks have made in the ChaRiHo school district humbles me, and most of them don't even have kids in the system.

New people show up every Sunday, hoping to have their souls fed and to counter the impulse to isolate in the madness. It helps that we're doing things like showing up for South County Pride, now that the administration is trying to send a message that protestors will be punished. This is the inclusive, justice-oriented work of democracy that we are called to do. And we will do more as needed. Bravely and compassionately, as throughout the year we share our Pride blessing: "May you be loved exactly as you are."

To that end, the Wunder Academy of Metamorphosis is deepening its justice focus. My hope is that we'll be able to build a huge (ten-foot plus!) protest puppet of a frog covered in spirals, the mascot of the Wunder Academy. It will hold a protest sign with evolving messages, drawing attention to the issues and to our congregation.

### Housekeeping

Monday is my regular sabbath.

My next furlough week is June 17-22, though I will be spending three hours a day on Thursday, Friday and Saturday as a virtual delegate at General Assembly, along with Mary Fulton. I'll also be co-leading the Sunday service, built around the GA sing-along broadcast on Zoom.

Since my last report, I have made no disbursements from the Agape Fund, though I've been talking with Helping Hands about providing them with a number of gift certificates for ride share apps, to benefit folks in the congregation needing essential transportation.

In Peace,

Rev. Denis Paul